

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



**THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN
WAR POETRY**

M.A. Thesis

FARIDA ISAEVA

**SUPERVISOR:
ASSIST. PROF. DR. FERMA LEKESIZALIN**

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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

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1. INTRODUCTION: LITERARY ATMOSPHERE AND MAJOR TRENDS OF THE PERIOD

June 19, (August 1 by new calendar) 1914, Russia entered World War I, a war that took millions of lives. This war, in which thousands of soldiers and officers were rewarded for their courageous deeds, has taken a small place in the memory of Russian citizens. In a country that has lost more than seven million people, there is not a single monument for those who struggled and died in WWI. Decades after the war, even those who are well versed in Russian 20th Century history and culture, are hardly able to name any work of literature depicting the war and artist's attitude towards it. The names of authors, poets, musicians and artists, volunteers and war correspondents have been long forgotten and simply left behind. The role of World War I in public conscience as a psychological question became more and more attractive for scientists towards the end of the 20th Century, wrote Anatoly Liferov. It seems as though none of the great wars that Russia took part in during the last centuries have been subjected to such a mysterious silence and a deliberate distortion of public conscience as of 1914-1918.¹ Historians and literary critics are studying war poetry and prose to help them answer the questions of war and its impact on literature. With their help we can find answers to the many questions that caused the decline of the human spirit in Russian society and observe the difficulty a culture has returning to its prior ethical values after such devastation.

The gap in studies about the connections between Russian literature and the political atmosphere of 1917-1918 was remarked by Russian poet, playwright and literary critic, Vyacheslav Ivanov. He pointed out the moral opposition of literature and revolutionary longing of politicians, as well as the

¹ Liferov, 1994: 3-5.

role of literature in the culture making.²

Russian poetry and prose between 1914-1918 reflected the public disposition during the different stages of war. Literature about the war period contributed to the preservation of the spiritual memory of war, namely its fixation in on national consciousness. The “World War I and Literature 1914-1918's” problem became the part of the “Literature and Society” problem. Studying the Russian literature of 1914-1918's in this refraction conduces to understanding of complicated historical and cultural facts connected with the war. It also helps to find the answers about the influence of subjective perception and interpretation of the war by veterans and contemporaries. We can learn how individual experiences of war transformed to a collective experience of the war period and what role literature played.³

World War I brought together representatives of different literary currents of the Silver age in their tendency to convey feelings over the events on planetary scale. Loss of people and destruction of national sacred places provoked wrathful reactions in the works of Aleksandr Blok, Mikhail Kuzmin, Konstantin Balmont, Fyodor Sologub, Nadezhda Teffy, Anna Akhmatova. Some poets turned out to be on the battleground such as, Nikolay Gumilev, Sergey Gorodetsky, Igor Severyanin, Sergey Yesenin and others as Valery Bryusov, went to the front working as a war correspondent.⁴ During World War I, there was intense interest in indigenous Russian folk art that specifically reflected the hardships of war. The tendency to see in people the outset of becoming original and the dawn of moral powers explains the use of folklore in the works of poets. One of the first poetical anthology “Sovremennaya voina v russkoi poezii” (“The modern war in Russian poetry”), contains a section named “Folk literature”, where we can find songs and epigrams about war and mobilization. There are poems of Anna Akhmatova, Zinaida Gippius and other nameless writers compiled into a

² Ivanov, 1994: chap. 2.

³ Svilas, 2004

⁴ Gerasimova, 2011: 249.

single volume.⁵ Most poems of the first year were addressed to the cognate “brothers” - captive Slavic nations. The mission of Russians in these works are clearly defined – to fight “for just cause of the fatherland, for the honor and freedom of aggrieved countries, for the glory of nation, for the Slavonian brothers,” as the unknown author is writing in his “Song of Russian women”.⁶ We can find similar motives in the prince Golitsin-Muravlin's poetical letter “To Slavians”: “Slavs, we are coming! That day will come soon, when in the shine of love and triumph, Slavic streams will merge in Russian sea.”⁷ An analogous position was claimed by Ivanov “To West Slavs”: “Hurry, hurry to the battlefield for the common work, Slavs!.. And the unrighteous kingdoms' thrones will wreck for the glory of Slavic kingdom!”⁸ According to many Russian poets, the war contributed to the unification of the nation and the Russian emperor. We can agree with the claim of modern researchers, Ernst Topich And Petr Bunyak, that in the beginning of World War I the emotions of the Russian intelligentsia not only had an anti-Germanic characteristics but were also obviously Slavophile. However, the aims of Russian foreign policy went further than Slavic world. This tendency is reflected in the poetic works of first period of World War I. Dmitry Tsenzor in his poem “Stanzas in War” defined a bigger aim than the poets addressing only brother-Slavs, “ Let's set free the whole world from oppression!.. The peace will become immortal in the world!”⁹

The war brought changes to literature and poetry. Critical realism in poetry of the 2nd half of XIX century was superseded by the innovative, whimsical and mystical poetry of Silver age, built on the hovering of artistic imagination. The rise of artistic associations, which professed different principles, was a characteristic of the poetic environment of that time, as historian Vadim Dolgov wrote in his “Brief Description of the History of

⁵ Glinski, 1915

⁶ Glinski, 1915: 74-75.

⁷ Glinski, 1915: 7.

⁸ Glinski, 1915: 87.

⁹ Gerasimova, 2011: 250.

Russian Culture”.¹⁰ The flow of Symbolism appeared. That was the most meaningful modernistic movement in Russia. It was formed in between 1890-1900. The first generation of symbolists that was called arch-symbolists included Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Zinaida Gippius, Konstantin Balmont, Valery Bryusov, Fyodor Sologub. The second generation is considered to have Aleksandr Blok, Andrey Bely, Vyacheslav Ivanov. They were called “young symbolists” as they renewed the shape of the flow. These two generations were separated not by the age, but by the differences of attitude and creation tendency. The philosophy and aesthetics of symbolism were formed by contemporary philosophic systems of Vladimir Solovyov, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson. Symbolists understood creation as a subconsciously intuitive contemplation of lurking meanings, that are straightaway only for the artist-creator. It is impossible to transmit contemplated mystery rationally. Dominant symbolist and theorist, Vyacheslav Ivanov, argued that poetry is a cryptogram of the unspoken. The artist had to have not only super-rational sensibility, but also superfine mastery of allusion. The value of poetic speech laid in omission, a hidden meaning. Symbol was the main way to transfer contemplated mysterious feelings. Symbolists taught how to open additional gradations and distinctions of meaning. The works of symbolists were built as a charming stream of oral-musical elements. They were successful in the sphere of poetic phonetics and some poets such as Konstantin Balmont, Valery Bryusov, Innokenty Annensky, Aleksandr Blok, Andrey Bely became the masters of expressive assonance and effective alliteration. Rhythmic capabilities as well as strophes of the poem were developed and broadened out. The main achievement of this literature flow is that it tried to create a new culture. Symbolists aspired to elaborate a new universal ideology during the agonizing soul-searching period.¹¹ The tendency to transmit the perception of the world through poetic “symbols” and unique allusions was the key for the aesthetics of symbolism. It was necessary to prescind from straight recognition of reality and intuitively see, or even, to feel the sign of

¹⁰ Dolgov, 2001: chap. 10.

¹¹ www.slova.org.ru, 2014

the highest mystical essence in the ordinary forms, to touch the global secrets of the universe and the eternity. Alexander Blok was, perhaps, the brightest poet among the symbolists. His "Verses About the Beautiful Lady" (1904) embodies the best features of Silver age poetry. Akhmatova called him the "the man of the epoch", "the most characteristic representative of his time". The works of Blok can be distinguished by the sharpness of form, humanistic orientation and refinement. He welcomed the October Revolution, although afterwards he had difficulty blending in with the reality of the new Soviet order. He wrote the first poem about October Revolution - "Twelve" (1918). It was symbolically polysemic, filled with mystical images, not similar to what was written about the revolution later on, and it became significant phenomenon in Russian literature. Soviet writer, dramatist, playwright and actor Mikhail Bulgakov commented on this poem as it is a shrill, probably, the only intense work of those which appeared during the revolution. The poem is written in a peculiar form where nature, life and art take part. "Twelve" became an innovative, unique work built by the principle of montage. Besides the author's voice we can hear the characters' voices and the voices of the city. The poem sounds like a work of folklore by its intonation, structure and included in the text are folklore genres and stylized fragments.

Another poetic movement called Akmeist poetry (from the Greek "acme" meaning *edge* or *zenith*), was a reaction to the extremism of the symbolists. Akmeists used sensory, figurative and clear imagery. They surpassed symbolists' in their use of the "super real" polysemantic and fluent imagery and over-structured metaphors. Their poetry is aesthetic and poetically portrays the feelings of a primeval human. Akmeism is densely apolitical and unconcerned with contemporary problems. Akmeist poetry was written as an organized flow with a common theoretical platform, by a group of talented and very distinct poets that were united by their friendship. They gave a significant name to their union "Tsekh poetov" ("The house of poets"). The idea of the new style was widely printed on the pages of "Apollon," a Russian magazine about art, music, theatre and literature. Before 1910, Russian poet Mikhail Kuzmin anticipated the debut of Akmeism by writing

about it in his article "About Glorious Clarity" which was published in the magazine. He opposed the weird and vague revelations of symbolists, preferring "glorious clarity", "clarism". In his opinion, the artists should bring clarity to the world, they should not make it cloudy; they rather should seek harmony with the outside world. Three years after publication of Kuzmin's article, Gumilev's and Gorodetsky's manifestos premiered. This is the commonly accepted as the starting point of Akmeism as a literary movement.¹² The works of Nikolay Gumilev, the early works of Osip Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova, Sergey Gorodetsky, Mikhail Zenkevich, Vladimir Narbut also belong to this period. Akmeists declined "the aesthetics of hints," which are common in Symbolism. Rather, they returned to clear, simple poetic language. The use of exact, "tangible" imagery was the qualifying, differential characteristic. Akmeists, unlike symbolists, had no elaborate philosophic-aesthetic program. While the poetry of symbolism was defined by fugacity of being and some mystery, Akmeism poetry had a realistic outlook on things. Ambiguous symbols were replaced by precise verbal imagery. The word, in their opinion, had to be brought back to its frontal meaning. Symbolists were guided in their creative work by music. Akmeists directed their attention toward architecture, sculpture, painting. This bent for a three-dimensional world was expressed in the denotation of Akmeists. Graphic or even exotic detail could have been used with only pictorial purpose. That means that Akmeism, according to symbolism, was developing in the sphere of poetic stylistics. In that sense Akmeism was conceptual in succession to symbolism. At the same time, rejection of the surrounding reality was inherent to Akmeist poets no less than to symbolists. They were carried along by the world of "genuine" beauty, distant from the ordinary world. Both were searching for their source of inspiration in the artistic expression of centuries past, in the elegant, exotic character of faraway countries along with pictures of nature.¹³ Akmeism, as a literary movement, lived for only two years and in February 1914 it split. "The house

¹² www.slova.org.ru, 2014

¹³ Dolgov, 2001: chap. 10.

of poets” was closed. In comparison with other poetic flows of Silver age, Akmeism seems marginal by many features. It has no analog in the European literature.

Unlike Akmeism, Futurism as a poetic movement did not begin in Russia. That phenomenon was introduced by Europe and the home of this new modernistic movement was Italy. A well-known litterateur Filippo Tommaso Marinetti became the main Italian and world Futurism ideologist. He published the first “Manifesto of Futurism” in February 1909 in the Parisian newspaper “Figaro” where he declared its anti-cultural, anti-aesthetical and anti-philosophical views. Basically any modernistic flow was establishing itself by rejecting old standards, canons, and traditions. Futurism was notable for its radical orientation. This flow claimed to build the new art - “the art of future” by advancing a nihilistic slogan denying all preceding artistic experience. Futurists propagated to preach destruction of forms and conventionalities of art for its merging with the twentieth century's fast paced life-style. Admiration for action, motion, speed, power and aggression, self-exaltation, a disdain for weakness and rapture with war and devastation were their distinctive features. Futurism, by taking these views, was very close to right-wing radicals vs. the left-wing radicals, who were characterized as anarchists, fascists and communists who were oriented to a revolutionary overthrow of the past. The Russian avant-garde went down in cultural history as innovators. They accomplished a turn-over in the world of art and poetry. Many of them also became famous for being great brawlers. Moreover they turned out to be the pre-heralds of contemporary artistic strategies. That means they knew not only how to create gifted work, but also how to find successful ways to attract the public and the attention of patrons and buyers. Russian Futurism did not take the form of an integrated artistic system. Different Russian avant-garde tendencies appeared under this term. Avant-garde itself was a system. It was given the name “futurism” by an analogy with the Italian movement. That movement turned out to be more varied than the preceding movements, such as Symbolism and Akmeism. The poetry of Russian Futurism was also very involved with the avant-garde

movement in painting. It is not by chance that many futurist poets were quite accomplished painters. Velimir Khlebnikov, Valery Kamensky, Elena Guro, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Aleksey Kruchenykh, and the Burliuk brothers are good examples. At the same time that many avant-garde painters were writing prose and poetry, they were also involved in futuristic publications as designers, and critics.¹⁴ Daring experiments with words in poetic forms are the main features of futurists. There were many numerous and talented poets such as Mayakovsky, Kruchenykh, the Burliuk brothers, Severyanin, Khlebnikov, and Pasternak who came out of this movement. The works written by the Futurists or “poetry of the future” received a cold reception by the literate public. However, the artistic the explorations they were conducting made a great impact on the further development of Russian literature.¹⁵

During the first post-revolutionary years, a new movement appeared in Russia based on Futurism. This new movement was called Imaginism. Imaginism was the last sensational school in Russian poetry of the twentieth Century. This movement was created two years after the revolution, but its ideological purpose had nothing in common with the revolution. The first poetic evening of Imaginists took place in the Moscow municipal department of the All-Russian union of poets in January 29, 1919. The following day, the first manifest was declared, deciding the creative principles of the new movement. It was signed by the poets that called themselves “the progressive line of Imaginists”, Sergey Yesenin, Ryurik Ivnev, Anatoly Marienhof and Vadim Shershenevich. Like symbolism and Futurism, Imaginism was born in Europe and from there it was transplanted to Russia by Shershenevich. Just as Russian Symbolism and Futurism, these poets differed from that of their European counterparts. Russian Imaginism was also considerably different from the European Imaginists. The term “imaginsim” was taken from Anglo-American poetry avant-garde school and was used for the first time in an article by Zinaida Vengerova in which he writes about a London group of poetical imagists. At this time, we cannot call

¹⁴ www.slova.org.ru, 2014

¹⁵ Dolgov, 2001: chap. 10.

Russian Imaginists the successors of imagists. Although the theoretical orientation of English poets corresponded with Shershenevich's search in many respects, Imaginists themselves never identified with London Imagists as their predecessors. One of the reasons for the theoretical sensation of the post-revolutionary years was an effort to generate new poetical systems using rational and scientific methods using the concepts of craft and mastery. Imaginism was, without question, one of the most viable poetical flows of that time. The theory of Imaginism declared a primacy of the image as such, as the main principle of poetry. The foundation of Imaginism was not the word-symbol with the endless number of meanings as in symbolism, not the word-name of an object as in Akmeism, but the word-metaphor with a definite meaning.¹⁶ Shershenevich summed up the theoretical and practical activity of the group in the article "Do Imaginists Exist?" He admitted that Imaginism had vanished as a flow and as a school. He explained the decrease by the fact that the core of poetry had been switched and it had turned from art to polemics. The lyrical part had been removed from poetry. For this reason, Imaginism, which had its foundation in lyricism, eventually broke down.¹⁷

World War I left an indelible trace, not only on the history of the nations that took part in it but also on the history of European literature, in this case, Russian literature. The representatives of all literature movements of the Silver Age responded to the world tragedy. The symbolists (Bryusov, Balmont, Blok), akmeists (Gumilev, Akhmatova) and also poets who changed their literature leanings afterwards (Ivnev), and those whose creation was developing beside schools of literature (Tsvetayeva) were affected. Among the poets who did not take a stand in the war were well-known authors Fyodor Sologub, Zinaida Gippius and Mikhail Kuzmin as well as those who were just beginning their creative expression like Sergey Yesenin. Despite their difference of aesthetic platforms, they are similar from the ideological point of view. Foremost, their similarity laid in pathos of patriotic enthusiasm innate for almost all Russian poets at the outset of war, which was assurance

¹⁶ www.slova.org.ru, 2014

¹⁷ Shershenevich, 1928

of Russian victory up to the conquest of Constantinople. One of the founders of "The House of Poets" and a theorist of Akmeism, Sergey Gorodetsky, asserted in his poem "Tsargrad": "Russia will come again to Tsargard... / And minarets will crash down." Those kinds of corresponding moods in Russian poets became a reflection of the main idea in the October Manifesto (The Manifesto on the Improvement of the State Order). It contained the idea that Turkey was an old oppressor of Slavic Christianity which was against imperial Russia.¹⁸

Many poets responded to the actions of war. The war changed their life and thereafter affected their works. Analysis of these transformations can show the true spirit of the nation going through the hardships of war. Among the above mentioned poets, Blok was a romanticist. His poetry's contents depicted the Russian reality and human nature. Centuries-old Russian culture, historical being of the nation and connected to it a feeling of homeland were incarnate in Blok's poetry. The poet personified this patriotic ideal in the poem: "Oh, my Russia! My wife!"¹⁹ Blok wrote about war: "War is foolishness, trash. Idiomatic drip – the war." Despite all his love to Russia, he perceived the war as apathetic. However, quite soon he understood that war "was a worthy crown for these lies, filth and vileness, the country was indulging itself in". He saw national grief, tears and death in the war. He wrote to his wife, who served as a nurse in a hospital in October 1914: "I feel the war and I feel that it is all on Russia's shoulders, and it hurts me."²⁰

Another romanticist poet of the period is Anna Akhmatova. Her poetry represents the world of tragedy. The poems of Akhmatova are impregnated with motives of love, distress and bitter emotions. She tended to have ideal dialogues in her works. Her bent for speech in the poems, their colloquial character, exact details, ordinary background, seeing a human in a gesture, motion and absence of special lyric world made Akhmatova's poetry different from symbolists. Unlike Blok, Akhmatova's poetic voice became the voice of

¹⁸ Gerasimova, 2012: 108.

¹⁹ Solovyov, 1971: 326.

²⁰ www.gumnaziya.narod.ru, 2014

national mourning and at the same time of hope. Many of her poems are addressed to the tragic destinies of Russia.²¹ As well as Akhmatova, another romantic poet, Marina Tsvetayeva perceived the war not from a political perspective but from humanistic point of view. She saw nationwide sorrow in the war. Tsvetayeva's poetry shows humanity as it is, all shining through. She wrote everything openly. Romantic motives of being ostracized, homelessness and sympathy are distinctive features of Tsvetayeva's lyric. World War I brought the theme of Motherland and Russia in the poetry of Marina Tsvetayeva. Countless Russian landscapes, villages, churches, fields and roads appeared in the poems of that period. Her poetry became almost like folk songs by their melodiousness.²² Tsvetayeva wrote from her memoirs about the poet Valery Bryusov, the hero of the laborer. Despite his anti-musicality, Tsvetayeva loved his poetry.²³ Though Bryusov V. was confident that a poet is a freedom singer, he was also a poet of a painting. He orientated his poetry on measures, numbers and plans. Bryusov was always glorifying the laborer and saw it as the main meaning of life. During the World War I, he was on the front working as a correspondent of a Saint Petersburg's newspaper. It was in this setting that he wrote some patriotic poems. Later, the poet came back from war understanding the inanity of that war for Russia.²⁴

History consists of conflicts, though the real idea of war we get from various imaginative expressions affected by it. Looking at art produced in World War I, we can see the personal views of people who took part in it and responded to its actions from different angles according to their perspectives. Their political and social positions show us the uniqueness of each and every war experience with no permanency both in the battles and in houses. "In fact, we could say that British artists and writers witnessed and experienced different wars even though only one conflict is recorded in history. War-related art also had many purposes, whether to document, commemorate,

²¹ Dobin, 1968

²² www.tsvetayeva.com, 2014

²³ *Tsvetayeva*, 1999

²⁴ www.stihi-rus.ru, 2014

appeal, revise, expose, obscure, or protest.” as Dr. Fiona Robinson wrote in the article named “British Art and Literature During WWI.”²⁵ Hence literature is the main source of feelings, emotions and reactions depicted in history. It gives us a chance to look at the doings of war and their reflection in people's minds.

At the Silver age in Russian poetry, the beginning of the twentieth Century brought up a new era of literature in Great Britain – modernism. The authors of that time wished to break with the previously accepted forms and subjects. Throughout the pre-war years, modernists concentrated more on the means of expression. Writers were escaping from traditional parameters of form and imagery and turned their attention to the materials of their crafts. The bond between representation and meaning was no longer solid. “Works like T.S. Eliot’s poem, “The Waste Land,” Mark Gertler’s “Merry-Go-Round” (Tate Britain), or Virginia Woolf’s “Mrs. Dalloway” sought to shock, alienate or provoke the audience and thereby explore new sensory and intellectual effects in art and literature.”

During the modernist movement preceding the war, the conflict's enormous scope, savagery, and costs captivated many artists and writers. Many social and cultural traditions were definitively ended by the war that made the new world modern and mechanized. This world did not accept the older expressive forms and techniques that seemed inappropriate and no longer compelling or adequate.²⁶

One of the earliest modernist movements was Imagism which arose from Thomas Ernest Hulme's ideas of poetry formed on the completely precise presentation of its subject with no extra verbosity, which he suggested to the Poets' Club in London in 1908. The group of poets was formulated by Ezra Pound and included American poet Hilda Doolittle and English poets Richard Aldington, Frank Stuart Flint. Imagism was a reaction to the intangible language of Georgian Romanticism. Afterwards, some researchers say, the term of Imaginism in Russia came from Anglo-American

²⁵ Robinson, 2014

²⁶ Robinson, 2014

Imagism, though the connection of the term and the concept are controversial. The poetry of that movement intended to get rid of abstraction and substitute it with exact, detailed and metaphorical language. Ezra Pound defined the term of image as “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.” The group of imagists also included such poets as John Gould Fletcher, Harriet Monroe, Conrad Aiken, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, David Herbert Lawrence and Thomas Stearns Eliot. As the head of the group, Pound left it to Amy Lowell to take leadership and turned to Vorticism. The ideas explicated in the imagist manifesto influenced free verse poets of the twentieth century as imagists believed that free verse represents the poet's individuality better than conventional form.²⁷

Vorticism as an avant-garde British art movement was started in 1914 and mostly involved visual arts but also included literature. This movement was related to Futurism and mainly influenced by Italian futurist Marinetti, as well as Russian Futurism. The head of that movement was Wyndham Lewis, a British painter and novelist. The main figures of Vorticist literature were Richard Aldington, Lawrence Atkinson, and Ezra Pound. The term was offered by Ezra Pound, who claimed vortex to represent “the point of maximum energy.” Developing his theory from Imagism, Pound defines the image as “the primary pigment of poetry” in the Vortex theory.²⁸ As the parallel movement to Russian Futurism, Vorticism also consisted of artists involved in literature at the same time such as Lawrence Atkinson and Wyndham Lewis. The main figure of Vorticist poetry was Ezra Pound. He developed metonymic relations between the images in his poems. Literary and visual works of Vorticism were published in the artistic magazine BLAST. Though the movement and its publication lived for only a short period in history due to the beginning of war and the fact that many of its members were sent to the front, they left a significant contribution to literature and art.²⁹

The contemporary of the Imagist movement was Georgian poetry.

²⁷ www.poets.org, 2014

²⁸ www.poetryfoundation.org, 2014

²⁹ Chilvers and Graves-Smith, 2009

Unlike Imagism and Vorticism, it had no agreed principles and did not relate to a literary school. The name of that period referred to the King George V of the United Kingdom as this poetry flow was founded during the early years of his reign. The term first appeared as the name of the anthology by Edward Marsh, which was published in five volumes (1912-1922) and included forty writers. The common characteristics of the published poems were romanticism, sentimentality and hedonism. The poets searched for the inspiration in natural world and tended to describe their reaction. The idea of creating a book of poems not fitting the standards of that time belonged to Rupert Brooke. He suggested publishing his poems in a manner that concealed his name by publishing under the names of twelve imaginary poets. Edward Marsh decided that all those poets might be real. At that time, there were a lot of young poets who could have been published in the book. That way Marsh used Brooke's idea for creating his own book. The "Georgian poetry" was intended to find meaning of the new and energetic, as its poetry was positive and full of hope. The success of the first volume that included; Lascelles Abercrombie, David Herbert Lawrence, Rupert Brooke, Gordon Bottomley, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, William Henry Davies, Walter de la Mare, John Drinkwater, James Erloy Flecker, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, John Masefield, Thomas Sturge Moore, James Stephens³⁰ and others led Marsh to publishing the second volume of Georgian Poetry (1913-1915) was also successful, despite the fact that it occurred at the same time as the war. The popularity of these volumes turned out to be the engine which generated three more published volumes. Georgian poetry had no complex forms and used simple language so that more people could read and understand them. It is these sentimentalities that caused these poets to be blamed for traditionalism and for nurturing an artificial simplicity. Nevertheless the five volumes introduced to the public a lot of young and worthy poets of the prewar and postwar periods.³¹

The scientific progress of the world during the prewar period could not

³⁰ Marsh, 1920

³¹ Hibberd, 2013

fill up the empty parts that appeared in social cognition. New theories and discoveries led to a significant review of the world. Recognition of falsity and the imperfection of previous knowledge was driving the search for new ways of comprehending reality. One of these methods was the way of creative revelation that was suggested by the symbolists, who claimed that a symbol was unity and therefore provided a holistic conception of reality. The emersion of symbolism was a reaction to the crisis of religion and the overcoming of positivism. Nietzsche's proclamation "God is dead" expressed the feeling of the depleted traditional dogma of that epoch. Symbolism aesthetics was incarnated in different forms, becoming absorbed in an imaginary world of dream and death, a world of magic. The central figure of English symbolism was Oscar Wilde with his love to paradox and aphorism, hedonism, frequently used fantastic, fabled plots. The poetry of that movement is described as melodious and repetitive thus includes an element of incantation.³² Among other symbolists there are such poets as Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, John Gray, William Butler Yeats, Thomas Stearns Eliot, Edith Sitwell, Ezra Pound. In 1891, some of these and other poets with the active participation of William Butler Yeats, formed the "Rhymers' club". Symons and Yeats were well-known among Russian poets for their approval of the eternal beauty of art, not only in harmony but also in disharmony. For Russian and English symbolism there are three conceptual oppositions related to mythologization of beauty: natural beauty against artificial; useful beauty against useless; and good beauty against vicious. Symbolism was one of the strongest and most influential movements of European literature. It gave a powerful incentive to re-comprehend the role of art in the contemporaries' life.³³

The period of modernism, followed by changes in literature and history, brought a lot of authors and poets together to form different ideologies. Many of them became well-known and respective literary men. But the upcoming war measured the periods and their representatives before

³² Yeats, 1907: 258-78.

³³ Khorolsky, 2005: 217-22.

and after. In British literature during the war period, we can define the conflict between realism and idealism. Ideological propaganda of bravery, faithfulness and manhood that was to compel men to join the army was on the one side of war art. These works were meant to arouse the positive reaction of a viewer by depicting strong and sturdy soldiers or national symbols. The war propaganda artists were neither accurately depicting the facts of war nor the true conditions of service. In order to form a group of authors who would write the propaganda pamphlets, at the outbreak of war British government created a British War Propaganda Bureau, as they needed national support and the people's opinion was influencing the whole war and opportunities to win. All leading British writers were invited to Wellington House, where they talked about the methods they could use to promote the benefits Great Britain would gain from the war. Those authors were Arthur Conan Doyle, Arnold Bennett, John Masefield, William Archer, Ford Maddox Ford, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, John Galsworthy, Sir Henry Newbolt, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, Gilbert Parker, George Macaulay Trevelyan and Herbert George Wells. By common consent, all of the attendants kept the meeting at utmost secrecy. Some authors agreed to write and publish books in order to help the government and present its interests. During the war over 1160 pamphlets were published by this committee including "To Arms!" by Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Barbarism in Berlin" by Gilbert Keith Chesterton, "The New Army" by Rudyard Kipling, "The Two Maps of Europe" by Hilaire Belloc, "Liberty, A Statement of the British Case and War Scenes on the Western Front" by Arnold Bennett, "Is England Apathetic?" by Gilbert Parker, "Gallipoli and the Old Front Line" by John Masefield, "The Battle of Jutland and The Battle of the Somme" by John Buchan, "A Sheaf and Another Sheaf" by John Galsworthy, "England's Effort and Towards the Goal" by Mary Humphrey Ward and "When Blood is Their Argument" by Ford Maddox Ford. There was also a history of the war published in a monthly magazine by John Buchan. That is how Nelson's

History of the War appeared in twenty four volumes.³⁴ Russian government at the outbreak of war did not spare forces and resources for ideological work. Many well-known writers took part in the creation of propaganda such as Fyodor Sologub, Aleksandr Kuprin, Sergey Gorodetsky, Igor Severyanin, Vladimir Mayakovsky and others. This genre has certain differences from literature itself, primarily it has adjusted and illustrative character, clear relation to specific occasions, ultimate concreteness and lack of implication.³⁵

On the other hand, there were artists who tended to portray the reality of war scenes and all its desolation. The work of Charles Carrington "A Subaltern's War" was a memoir, but not similar to most British memoirs of that time. The author through the book expressed his argument against the "disillusionment" of British literature. Although he described life in trenches and soldiers panicking under fire, he also had an enormous hatred of the enemy soldiers. "A Passionate Prodigality" by Guy Chapman is neither showing a nationalistic view, as Carrington, nor pessimistic, as Sassoon. His book is ambivalent and contains both the terror of the war and the attraction of it for soldiers. The writer himself hated the war, but at the same time felt a strange fascination for it. This state of mind was shared by most of the war survivors, although some of them became pacifists and others were awaiting the next war.³⁶

The early ages of war poetry represent the patriotic spirit, as in the "Poems 1914" the collection of sonnets of Rupert Brooke. Many people were affected by these poems, which bring out the heroic spirit of soldiers. At the outset of the war, this nationalistic feeling compelled the members of British army to fight. Military service was pictured as noble and purifying. Brooke became an idol for many of the British soldiers at the start of the war. The same patriotism and belief in victory of Russia is felt in the poems of Gumilev "The Attack", Gorodetsky "Tsargrad", Sologub in his anthology "The War" and Bryusov "The last war" and "The Cup of Trials," though afterwards he gave

³⁴ www.spartacus-educational.com, 2014

³⁵ www.gumilev.ru, 2014

³⁶ www.firstworldwar.com, 2014

up on the emancipative purposes of war.

With time passing and the continual destruction of the war with no clear or imminent solution, poets describing the true hardships of war gained acknowledgement. For example, "Anthem for Doomed Youth" by Wilfred Owen depicts the war's fallen "dying as cattle". While Siegfried Sassoon's "Counter-Attack" shows us the horrible vision of a battlefield "place rotten with dead" where corpses "face downward, in the sucking mud,/Wallow..." which reminds us of the repulsive Nevinson's painting picturing dead soldiers lying face-down in the mud. Charles Sorley is called a forerunner of Sassoon and Owen for his anti-war and unsentimental spirit as in his last and most popular sonnet "When you see millions of the mouthless dead". Along with Sassoon, Owen and Sorley, Russian poets such as Konstantin Bolshakov in his collection "The Poem of Events" with such poem as "The Killed are Breathing" and Velimir Khlebnikov in "Dark" speak out against war. Bolshakov's "The Poem of Events" that consists of a prologue and six chapters represents the whole world overcome by war as the main character. The poet emphasizes the catastrophe that conceived Belgium and Poland.³⁷ The theme of tragedy in the war is traced in the poems of Robert Laurence Binyon in his "For the fallen" and Mayakovky's "The war is declared." The most well-known Binyon's poem was written in the beginning of war, inspired by the event that caused first casualties of British army. It depicted the historical value of the retreat from Mons and victory of the Marne.³⁸ At the same time, Mayakovsky's poem was also written at the outset of war. It reflected the poet's disgust towards the war and its bloody vanity of war. Among poets protesting against the war are Thomas Hardy with his "The Pity of It" and Nikolay Burlyuk dreaming of peace in his poem "I know they frighten by dead for nothing...". Hardy's poem is known for reflecting the uselessness of war. The protest against the futility of war is also felt in the short poem "I know they frighten by dead for nothing..." where the poet writes:

³⁷ Gerasimova, 2012: 112.

³⁸ www.allpoetry.com, 2014

People break joints of generations

To experience the power of blood.

These lines clearly show Burlyuk's position to the war and its destruction.

This study is dedicated to the poet at war, his delicate and sharp views, and his influence on nations. Their life experience, war excitement and emotions, its impact on both poets' works will be examined in the third chapter of this work. In this study, I will try to expose the unique experience of the poet during the military service. The theme of the poet on war is a juxtaposition of contradictory ideas, experiencing war and writing poetry. The uniqueness of the emotions that the poet feels is drawn directly from their personal connection to the horrors of war alongside their artistic expression of nations suffering. My main focus is on the British poet Wilfred Owen and the Russian poet Nikolay Gumilev. They represent two different perspectives, two nations, two allied countries in the same war. A comparison of their works reveals their similarities and differences in the use of imagery, symbols, metaphors, rhyming, structure, and style.

2. A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THE RUSSIAN AND THE BRITISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY DURING WW I

The mechanisms of war were based on the world's industrial machines and the balance of power over them. The technological progress in weapons happened to coincide with the explosion of World War I in 1914. Both sides, the Allied powers of the British Empire, France, Russia and others and Central powers of Germany, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary and their allies were equipped "with an endless supply of weaponry that had never been used in such a war before: the machine gun, artillery, chemical warfare, grenade launchers, jelly bombs, airplanes and zeppelins."³⁹ Millions of British people were hoping for a quick resolution of the war that would take only several months. On the contrary, the Russians also believed they would have success and victory along with a reunification of the Slavic nations. Many volunteers from British Empire rushed to cross the Channel and fight with the French in hopes of a quick resolution. Many had volunteered from Russia to defeat the Germans and get back Constantinople from the Ottoman Empire. But the war took over four years to end and caused 37 million casualties. Over 1 million of those died in battle. Over 100,000 lives were taken by the Zeppelin attacks on British civilians in London. Unimaginable bombing from the sky had terrorized the city. "In the Battle of Somme alone, over 1 million soldiers died. In one day of that battle, more soldiers died than in the entire Vietnam War."⁴⁰ According to the records of historians, Russia had the least amount of casualties than the other countries like the British Empire and Serbia. Fatal casualties that totaled about 1.7 million and 5 million wounded cannot be compensated for and it is hard to make an accurate comparison.

³⁹ www.masterworksbritlit.wordpress.com, 2014

⁴⁰ www.masterworksbritlit.wordpress.com, 2014

For both the Russian and British nations, World War I had an enormous impact on history, philosophy, literature, and art. In 1914, the outbreak of war was started with optimistic beliefs that the people of the Western World were the masters of civilization. The ending of the war in 1918 brought a devastating halt to such beliefs. The industrial machine that made these countries powerful was now responsible for millions of losses. Philosophical matters such as humanity and civilization were questioned for the first time.

These years of big change for Russia and the British Empire influenced the lives of people all over the world. People transformed the way the war was fought as they brought change and impact to the battlefield. Examining the effects of war on entire nations by looking at it through their eyes can help us understand the true feelings of its people. How did they live through the severity of the most violent and hopeless of times? What were their thoughts and emotions?

The influence of war on Russian culture and society has been researched by historians for a long time. But, a contemporary researcher Kuptsova noticed that this problem “was studied selectively for the identification of only two aspects: the material damage to the monuments of architecture, art and literature and the evolution of the writings' topics”.⁴¹ Only recently, researchers agreed with the fact that the main task of the scientists is to analyze the whole scale of deformation in the Russian culture during the period of war and the reaction of society to these deformations. That means we need to define the level of influence the war had on the cultural development overall, as well as its individual angles.⁴²

The 4-year of war did not only consist in denial and acceptance of war in Russian literature and society but also it largely informed the works between 1930 and 1980. There are periods when the intellectual and emotional outbursts regarding the outbreak of the war in 1914, Russian's entry into the war and the comprehension of its protracted character in 1915,

⁴¹ Kuptsova, 2004

⁴² Ivanov, 2005

and the pre-revolutionary period, that required an understanding of the danger of defeat and the consequences it would bring in 1916. The study of the influence of front-line literature's ethical experience on the spiritual life of the country elicits the singularity of each period, and the features of the art intelligentsia's attitude towards the war.

The literature that experienced war set the ethical guide and moral limits. The literature contributed to transfer the war from high philosophical thoughts to the human plan. The literature took a worthy stand in the question of Russian withdrawal from the war. The writers expressed their anxiety about the accumulating anger, and the danger of the war of all against all. Those poets were Voloshin Maksimilian, Ropshin V. also known as Savinkov Boris, the leader of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and others. The war gave an artist a dramatic opportunity to remind a politician of the fact that the people of today should not be forgotten with the concern for humanity's future.⁴³

The war poetry is a powerful field that influences the human mind, thoughts and feelings. According to Dr. Santanu Das, war poems like “Dulce Et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen and “I looked Up from My Writing” by Thomas Hardy tend to ask difficult moral questions. These kinds of effective poems bring hope, relief, and unity to the feelings of pity and anger, putting ethical complexity and linguistic pleasure together. They recollect in the reader's mind characteristics such as idealism, kindness, and most importantly, humanity.

Corresponding to the male poets, many poetesses have powerful lyrics in which they depict the impact of the war on people's minds. The author suggests the poem “Afterwards,” written by Margaret Postgate Cole, as a bitter and influential critique of the war. The change from the scene of a battlefield to the postwar time full of feelings, like vanity and destruction:

And peace came. And lying in Sheer

⁴³ Ivanov, 2005

I look round at the corpses of the larches
 Whom they slew to make pit-props
 For mining the coal for the great armies.

...

And if these years have made you into a pit-prop,
 To carry the twisting galleries of the world's reconstruction
 (Where you may thank God, I suppose,
 That they set you the sole stay of a nasty corner)
 What use is it to you?⁴⁴

World War I, as well as a period full of shock, was a time when the human mind and consciousness were opened up. It affected the nations and their future, though not less than the people influenced the process of the war. Particularly, the poets of the war period made a big contribution to the perception of the war by questioning human fields such as belief, hope, courage and patriotism. With their verses, recruits were inspired to fight, soldiers were moved to think about the meaning of the battles, women were supported and inspirited to help, and nations arose in unity.

2.1. WAR POETRY

The poetry of World War I is one of the main sources to experience this historical trauma. According to Dr. Santanu Das, it is hard to categorize this poetic era and divide it into "pro-war" and "anti-war," combatant and non-combatant and women's poetry. Instead, they all belong to a poetic field, where both the intricacy of each work and poet as well as the shared common ground of these poems should be considered. Labeling war poems limits the poem's meaningfulness. World War I poetry combines the times "before" and "after," along with the soldiers and the civilians. According to the author, this poetry represents a huge variety of themes that go beyond

⁴⁴ Das, 2013

combat, such as religion, beauty, longing, nature, animals, intimacy, historical change, race, democracy and empire. All of these are affected by the war.⁴⁵

World War I became a precursor to a series of destructive wars and social disturbances in the 20th Century. It affected the developing of all the vital activities in society, causing the transformation of cultural life, the rise of nationalism in Europe. WW I also led to an outburst of literary activity. The idea of courage and patriotism have affected philosophers, artists, poets, and writers. Writers and poets were called to join the army, participated in the construction of defensive installations, or were on the front as war correspondents. From the first days of the war, literature was the reflection of the combats. Poets and writers were the main mouthpiece for public opinion as it related to the war.

The most important war actions of the modern age caused a ready response among British and Russian poets. The importance of comprehending the tragic experiences of World War I in contemporary literature was mentioned by professor Tarasov: "The dramatic character and vivid expression of war imagery in English poetry was emphasized there."⁴⁶ War poetry was published in all the newspapers, from city centers to the countrysides as well as in literary miscellanies. The collections of Russian war poetry, including those published for charitable purposes such as "The War", "The War in Russian Lyrics", "In the Year of War", "We Remember Poland", "Songs About Belgium", "The Captive Poet", "Songs About Russian Sister of Mercy" and others, reflected the state of the Russian society. Russian war poetry, which was written both at the war front and at the rear, makes a huge corpus of differences in artistic degrees and is impressive in its emotional impact.⁴⁷

It is important to note that the critics went on acknowledging the phenomenon of war poetry and noted its power to affect the masses with its representational form. They also displayed essential differences in war

⁴⁵ Das, 2013

⁴⁶ www.litinstitut.ru, 2014

⁴⁷ Gerasimova, 2013

interpretation by the direct participants of war actions and those who wrote about it at the home front. The works of the critics contributed to the formation of civic and creative image of Russian war poetry as a special cultural phenomenon.

In particular, the view of a well-known critic Koltonovskaya Yelena drew attention to the principal differences in the reconstruction of war actions between the writers who took part in battles and those whom she called “theoretical” authors. She explained the blunders of the “theoretical” authors that happen because of their quick responsiveness for actual events. That leads the poems of such authors as Gippius Zinaida, who at the outset of war started writing letters to soldiers in poetic form stylized as lubok letters, to have works of public rather than poetical value.⁴⁸

Another critic Ivanov G. reacted enthusiastically to the book of Blok Aleksander “The Poems About Russia,” that included the works of war subjects. The critic claimed that all twenty three poems represented a new step in the perception of Russia. This book was highly appreciated by another contemporary critic Asheshov N., that singled it out among “military” poetry. He distinguished the poems as inspired by the love to the motherland, cast by the war, but bearing the stamp of objectivism, tranquility and the aestheticism of truth. By the critic's words, the poems reflected the contemporary horrors but stayed in the realm of conceptual balance. In his opinion, those poems had a big value for standing out among the agitational literature and poetry of that time in Russian.

One of the most significant critical works of the war period was the article “Those Who Got Over Symbolism” by Zhirmunsky Viktor. The critic wrote about the works of Nikolay Gumilev and Anna Akhmatova: Gumilev's war poems, and next to them Akhmatova's war poems, reflecting the war in a woman's soul, are the best and the most meaningful from what World War I has created so far in Russian poetry. The emotions of a woman reflected in Akhmatova's poems and her poetical gift make her one of the most

⁴⁸ Zhirmunsky, 1916: 30.

significant poet of the young generation. On the other hand, Gumilev's poems are not centered on the emotional or musical contents. He rarely speaks of intimate private experiences. The poet creates the objective world of bright visual images that make him special among the poets of his period.⁴⁹

The critics note that the poetical works reflect different distinctions of the perception of war in Russian society, such as the attitude towards displaying heroism on the battlefields, the mood in the home-front, and the participation of women in the mercy movements. Attempts to create the typology of Russian war poetry were made. Yesenin S., for the first time, denoted the phenomenon of woman war lyrics, dividing the poetesses into "Yaroslavnas" - the cry of poetry and "Joan of Arc" - the poetry of appeal, in the article "Yaroslavnas Are Crying".⁵⁰

As for the British war poetry, it is considered to be more expansive than just the "trench verses". It also includes such women poets as Mary Borden, Vera Brittain, Charlotte Mew, Rose Macaulay, Margaret Postage Cole and others. They depicted their war experience involving weapons production, nursing, their loss of the loved ones in the trenches, women who took an active part in the battlefields, and women who were involved in the war at the home front.⁵¹ The most popular poet was Vera Brittain that worked as a nurse during the war. Her dreadful experience at the hospital with wounded and dying soldiers filled her poems with pain and disillusionment. She wrote in the letter to her fiancé that was a soldier: "I have only one wish in life now and that is for the ending of the war. I wonder how much really all you have seen and done has changed you. Personally, after seeing some of the dreadful things I have to see here, I feel I shall never be the same person again, and wonder if, when the war does end, I shall have forgotten how to laugh." Her distress is reflected in the poem "Perhaps", where she wrote about the loss of her fiancé. The role of women in the war that changed their

⁴⁹ Zhirmunsky, 1916: 30-31.

⁵⁰ Yesenin, 1915: 179.

⁵¹ Fussel, 1972

lives was very essential. The poetesses of this period showed the strength of women through their experiences, feelings and grief.⁵²

The Russian literary critics of the post-war years had a tendency to study the war from the imperialistic perspective that left a negative imprint on war perception by social conscience and literary activity of the soviet period. The modern historians and litterateurs declared the fact that this perspective led to significant deformation in historical conscience of the nation. Decades later this ideological tendency still remains. The literary critic Vilchinsky V. in his work "The Literature of 1914 – 1917 years" claimed that, World War I complicated the process of the development of realistic art, and reinforced the delimitation of the writers. He declared that as a result, a substantial part of the writers were isolated from the bolshevism ideology, and did not perceive the fact that the war of bourgeois governments was not the national war. The researcher distinguishes three main tendencies in the poetical reflection of war; they are: the emphatic bellicose and patriotic trend, the reserved attitude to war, and the clarification of Bolsheviks politics, peculiarly as they relate to proletarian literature.⁵³

The researchers showed interest in three related issues: exposing the views of art intelligentsia on the war, studying the influence of the war on the literary process, and publishing and identifying of the subjects and features of the war events reflected in literature. The monograph "World War I in the Russian Literature of 1914 – 1918 Years" by Ivanov A. is considered to be one of the most detailed works about the literature of the World War I period. The author analyzes the aesthetic aspects and the ethical potential of war poetry and prose, specifically its contribution to the comprehension of the ethic problem "the person and the war". The critic made a significant deduction about the existence of such a poetic movement as the national civil poetry, formed owing to military lubok. Lubok is a type of Russian popular visual art related to folklore and is characterized by simple technique and narratives taken from literature and religious stories.

⁵² www.spartacus-educational.com, 2014

⁵³ Gerasimova, 2013

Similar developments take place in the British poetry of that period. A part of British war poetry, called “the trench poetry,” appears in parallel with Russian war lubok. The events of the war defined the fate and the main problems of “trench poetry.” The anti-war subject matter was spoken mainly in the works of such “trench poets” as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke, Edmund Blunden, Robert Graves, and other participants of the war. They experienced the hardship of the war and the deceitfulness of the imperialistic propaganda. Many of them died in the war, but their true voices fearlessly sounded, asserting the hatred of the war. These names are not a complete list of British war poets. There are other influential civilian poets such as Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, and David Herbert Lawrence.⁵⁴

The literature of the war period was remarkable for the transition from the narration of the events to the troubles of those who withstood all the severity of the war. The Russian civil poetry gave voice to the opposition of Bolsheviks' defeatist ideology, and conveyed the search of the ways into the thoughts and feelings of the reader, the soldier. The humanism of war literature became apparent most vividly in the direct portrayal of war participants. Russian literature peered into the image of the Russian soldier – a peasant, a workman, a student volunteer of yesterday, to see the influence of war on the morale image of a person with a gun.⁵⁵

As a comparison, the subject matter of British anti-imperialistic “trench poetry” was tragic, current reality, and the main character was the participant of the war in his front-line life. The “trench poetry” reflected the profound changes in the disposition of the war generation. If poets like Brooke had lived through the war, maybe the romantic ideas of war reflected in his poems would have prevailed. Instead, these ideas were soon destroyed and replaced with the stark reality reflected in “trench poetry.”

Each and every poet had his own insights. The ideal and artistic evolution of Sassoon is the representative of this. The main feature of his

⁵⁴ Fussel, 1972

⁵⁵ Ivanov, 2005

poems is the accurate depiction of reality that brings an understanding of the nature of war. Sassoon showed the war as a monstrous slaughter where thousands of lives end in blood and dirt as in the poem "Counter-Attack". His compassion for the soldiers is integrated with the rage and hatred toward those who profit from the war. We see this in poems such as "Blighters," and "The Rear-Guard." The object of his critique and satire is the old England and its hypocrisy, as in the poem "The General". A similar response from the older generation of poets came from Thomas Hardy. His anti-war poems uncover the intensity of his emotions and doubts. He urged the unity of the people and declared the necessity to overcome nationalism. Likewise Hardy, Sorley, Sassoon, Owen and other "trench poets" shared the same humanistic idea.

Another "trench poet" is Isaac Rosenberg. His "Break of Day in the Trenches" shows the irony and pity of the war with the help of a "droll rat," which has more of a chance of life than the dead "haughty athletes". The poet also points out the main peculiarity of war, where people turn into heartless machines. This theme is referred to in Gumilev's poem "The Second Year."

Another poet true to the reader by depicting everything he felt and saw is Richard Aldington. With the outbreak of the war, his poetry changes from being an esthetic imagist to a poet focusing his mind on the details of the trench life. Opposing Rosenberg and his idea of the soldier as a part of the war machine, Aldington portrays them as people who do not lose hope, and who still feel the beauty of life even in the cruel conditions of war. Two themes are connected in his poems – the war and love. The evolutionary changes in this poet came during his fifteen months spent fighting in the trenches.⁵⁶

The best poems of another war poet were also written in the trenches. Wilfred Owen pictured agonizing, nervous tension, exhausted soldiers and their homesickness. His lyrical philosophy expressed the worldview of a liberal intellectual who shared all the hardships of the trench life. The subject

⁵⁶ Fussel, 1972

of anti-war became primary in Wilfred Owen's poetry. He condemns the inhumanity of the war. He writes about the routines of war turning into a hopeless tragedy in such poems as "The Letter", and "The Sentry".⁵⁷

On the contrary, Russian war poetry not only consisted of the tragedy and horrors of war, but also the thoughts and the fears for the future. The revolution was expected to start after the end of the war. The war poets turned to a nationalistic spiritual experience. This changed the dominant genre of war poetry in Russia to a prayerful tradition. The prayers in Russian war poetry developed multilaterally as a theme, a genre, a plot and style elements. Their perception of the war evolved from optimistic Panslavic (Panslavist – the supporter of the Slavs union) illusions to further the intensification of anti-war sentiments, anti-militaristic and pacifist tendencies.⁵⁸

The nationwide character of the war influenced the spiritual side of the nation and provoked the outburst of the incredible creative activity on all levels of Russian society. This led to the emergence of massive amounts of war poetry being created. The principal genre and thematic complexes of the massive war poetry were the battle lyrics, the hospital lyrics, and the lyrics of captivity.

The literature was instrumental in keeping the spiritual memory of the war in the national conscience. The poetry of Akhmatova A., Bryusov B., Voloshin M., Gorodetsky S., Ivanov G., Klyuyev N. and Cherny S. reflected the national sentiments regarding the different stages of the war. These works allow the reader to understand the true, raw emotion of the time.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the works of the "trench poets" were a big step forward, according to Georgian and imagist poetry, and testified to the liveliness of the realistic tendencies in English poetry. "The trench poetry" contained the frightening truth of the war, the tragic reality, with humanity in the center of events. The absence of a revolutionary situation in Britain conditioned the

⁵⁷ Mikhalskaya and Anikin, 1998: chap. 6.

⁵⁸ Gerasimova, 2013

⁵⁹ Ivanov, 2005

limitation of their finding. The Russian and the British poetry did what the true literature ought to do during the war period, it comforted, offered prayers, brought compassion, hope, belief and in its despair, appealed to the conscience.

2.2. WAR LYRICS

Lyric poetry represents the kind of poetry where the author expresses emotions, thoughts and experience. It is not a narrative, but rather conveys the feelings of the poet to the reader. Styles of poetry, such as ode, elegy and sonnet belong to lyric poetry, where serious themes of death and grief tend to appear. This type of poetry is song-like and often can be sung, as in ancient Greece where poets sang their poetry while playing a lyre. The lyrics represent the insights of life.⁶⁰ Although this genre is characterized as the most private one, new lyric poetry also represents the outcome of inequity and cruelty in social dispositions. The aim of such poetry is to reveal the results of governmental decisions leading to catastrophes. According to Professor Huck Gutman, these types of lyrics are called “poems of witness,” which assert the real facts of war, political repression and torture.⁶¹

According to James Cambell, the critics of WWI poetry purposed to set up a canon of literary texts. The structure of the canon was explained as the lyric poetry. The members of that poetry were mostly British junior officers such as Siegfried Sassoon, Charles Sorley and Wilfred Owen. The lyric poetry was disposed to be autobiographical. Such poetry was characterized by its rapidity in reflecting the action in the trenches. Lyric poetry acquired the attention of the critics by its main representative feature: the voice of war. The lyric war poetry was distinguished for its experience in war and actual real-time characters. The critics assert that this feature of war lyrics is obvious, considering the number of poets killed during the war such as

⁶⁰ Perry, *A Study of Poetry*, Part II.

⁶¹ Gutman, “The Plight of the Modern Lyric Poet.”

Rupert Brooke, Julian Grenfell, Wilfred Owen, Charles Sorley, Edward Thomas and Isaac Rosenberg. This demonstrates that war lyrics identify the poetry written at war.⁶²

The first war lyrics were discussed in the “English Poetry of the First World War” by John H. Johnston. The critic included the poetry written by soldier poets. For example Isaac Rosenberg criticized nationalism during war in his war lyrics. His poetry represents the opposition to patriotism where he exposes such subjects as individuality and peace, like in “Break of Day in the Trenches.”⁶³ Like Rosenberg, Edward Thomas also related to war poets, writing the real scenes daily life in war. However, his lyrics were not against patriotism, but rather he tried to separate the ideas of patriotism from chauvinism in such poem, as “This is no Case of Petty Right or Wrong.” According to Edna Longley, Thomas was English lyric's defender by including folksong in his poems.⁶⁴ Another war poet Charles Sorley was similar in his lyrical themes with Thomas. He also contrasted the “war-inspired sentimentality” with chauvinism. The poet's political views and his straightforward feeling about the war are reflected in the sonnet poem “To Germany”. Therein he showed his attitude to war and Germany by addressing it and comparing to Britain:

You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
And each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and Hate. And the blind fight the blind.⁶⁵

Wilfred Owen's lyrics, in turn, were sharp and realistic, addressing the reader in the Christian tradition with the message of brotherhood and peace at the same time. This opposition of the futility of war and attempts to bring the Gospel to life represent his main objective in the war lyrics.⁶⁶ On the contrary to Owen, well-known for his poetry, there was another poet, Julian

⁶² Sherry, *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, 264.

⁶³ Will, comment on “Break of Day”, “Rosenberg and the Case Against Statism.”

⁶⁴ Longley, “Roads from France.”

⁶⁵ Rumens, “Poem of the Week: To Germany by Charles Hamilton Sorley.”

⁶⁶ Gates, “Wilfred Owen and Christianity.”

Grenfell who was usually ignored. Yet, according to Professor Tim Kendall, Grenfell wrote one of the finest lyrics of the war, "Into Battle," expressing his love of the battle:

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.⁶⁷

On the other hand, Russian war poetry and prose remained as a blank spot due to the ideologies for a long time in literary history. The war lyrics were defined as "hurray-tympanic," "militaristic," "state-patriotic," and "impregnated with nationalism and chauvinism" almost for a century. At the outset of war, different kinds of anthologies with the poems of little-known and popular poets were published. One of the first anthologies "The Modern War in Russian Poetry" by Boris Glinsky gave the opportunity to judge of the subjects of war lyrics. The anthology was published with a charitable purpose defined in the subtitle "To the Aid of Poland." The poems of eighty-seven poets such as Anna Akhmatova, Aleksandr Blok, Valery Bryusov, Zinaida Gippius, Sergey Gorodetsky, Georgy Ivanov, Don-Aminado, Mikhail Kuzmin, Sergey Makovsky, Nikolay Minsky, Fyodor Sologub, Igor Severyanin, Nadezhda Teffi and Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik were published under one cover. The chapters of the anthology named "Slavdom", "War", "Motherland", "Mother", "The Sister of Mercy", "Poland", "Belgium", "England", "France", "Cossacks" and "Heroes" received distinct attention. The main themes were the motherland, mother and mercy. The theme of compassion to the sons and brothers on the battlefields, to the injured and prisoners, to the sister countries that got into trouble or stayed under the threat of occupation and became cross-cutting.

The poems of that anthology, as the poems of the anthologies of this period, differ in their artistic qualities. However, there are a lot of common subjects that united the novice and the experienced poets. The mother's

⁶⁷ Kendall, "Julian Grenfell: 'Into Battle!'"

sorrow that is fated to outlive the child's death took first place in the poetical responses for the war. Obviously, the mother, as no one else feels the inhumanity of war. Many poets in their poetic realization of a mother's grief were influenced by Nikolay Nekrasov's lyrics, and especially his work "Listening to the Horrors of War...", written during the period of Crimean War. The mother's sorrow and pride, feelings that are hard to combine represent the feature of the first war lyrics of such poets as Izabella Grinevskaya ("The Last Mother's Farewell"), Natalia Grushko ("I Gave Birth in Torments to Four Sons"), Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik ("The Song Over the Shirt") and others. In the first war lyrics the mother's sorrow is seen not from the outside, as in Nekrasov's "Listening to the Horrors of War...", but from the inside. If Nekrasov was pointing out the mother's sorrow, then the first war lyrics tried to let the reader feel the sorrow. The grief of mothers, wives and old parents became the nationwide grief in such poems as "Farewell" by Vladimir Prussak, or "Send-off" by Vladimir Ryabov-Belsky.

The war poems are imbued with humanism to all those who suffered the fire of it such as prisoners, refugees and occupied European countries. The poems of the same name of Sergey Mikheev and Sergey Gorodetsky "Prisoners", Graal Arelsky "Refugees", Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik "Our Younger Sister" also reflect that theme.

During the first days of the war, subjects such as the destruction of European sacred places like Notre-Dame of Reims Cathedral in France took a place in the poems published in so-called Lubok newspapers. The poem "The Destruction of Notre-Dame of Reims Cathedral" by Aleksander Roslavlev, contains an inquiry to God, asking if he will stay indifferent to the destruction. At the same time, the persona in the poem of Aleksey Lipetsky, not waiting for God's help, addresses to the destroyer:⁶⁸

Do not touch the sacred stained-glass, the arrogant man,
Do not throw iron on the dome,
There are the angels as invisible guards,

⁶⁸ Ivanov, "Russian Literature of 1914-1918 Years About the First World War."

Their swords are under each arch.

One of the main values of the war lyrics was its complicity to tragic events. For instance, the common war scene of the send-off was reflected in the poems of Aleksander Blok "Petrograd's Sky was Growing Dim with Rain...", Sergey Yesenin "Over the Village by the Crooked Path", Marina Tsvetayeva "White Sun and Low, Low Clouds...".

The silent grief, the cry of despair, the flashy cheerfulness and bravado was seen and felt deeply in the war lyrics by Yesenin, Klychkov, Klyuyev, Nozdrin, Prussak and others. Also the unity of individual and civic duty were the themes of the poems about Poland. This problem took one of the first places in war lyrics. Poets such as Gippius, Bryusov, Vengrov, Gorodetsky and Ivanov responded to the Polish issue. The most weighty response on the events in Poland were Bryusov's lyrics. The poet was a war correspondent there. He is not reducing the knowledge of the past opposition between Russians and Polish. That is why the lines "Again we became brothers of our own nation" in his poem "To Poland" sounded not as a praise of the present, but as an accusation of the past. The poet's call for the rebirth of Polish statehood created a furore in Poland. The poem was published in the newspapers, printed on postcards and was republished twice. Bryusov's hopes for the postwar future of that country were especially close to Polish society.⁶⁹

The terror of war reflected in the lyric poetry is represented in the works of British and Russian poets such as Ivor Gurney, Wilfred Owen, William Butler Yeats and Siegfried Sassoon, as well as Anna Akhmatova, Aleksandr Blok, Valery Bryusov, Zinaida Gippius.⁷⁰ The war poets wrote not only about war, but were writing with the war. The pathetic lyrics conveyed the feelings, thoughts of an injured soldier and a sister of mercy.⁷¹ Thus, the war lyrics represent the emotions of people involved in the war through their verses.

⁶⁹ Ivanov, "Russian Literature of 1914-1918 Years About the First World War."

⁷⁰ Sherry, *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, 262.

⁷¹ Ivanov, "Russian Literature of 1914-1918 Years About the First World War."

3. NIKOLAY GUMILEV AS ONE OF THE MAIN FIGURES IN RUSSIAN WAR POETRY (BASED ON TRANSLATIONS)

“Uncorrectable romantic, the tramp-adventurer, ”conquistador”, the untiring seeker of danger – that is whom he was.” says E. Gollerbah, a Russian art and literary critic in his memoirs of Nikolay Gumilev. They were both studying in Tsarskoye Selo (Tsar’s Village) and this is where the critic met the poet for the first time.

In his early works, his passion for K. Balmont is evident. But later, when he was no longer under Balmont's influence, the writer even became for Gumilev the symbol of bad taste and banality. Initially, not all of Gumilev's literary works were successful, but he was not discouraged. He was an incredibly self-confident and forthright person and was attracted by powerful beauty and fascinating danger. Heroism seemed to him the apex of immaterialism; he played with death in the same way as he played with love. In fact, Gumilev tried to drown himself on one occasion, but did not succeed. On another occasion, he dissected his veins to drip with blood, but stayed alive. He also went to war as a volunteer in 1914 and although he looked into the death's face, he survived.⁷²

⁷²

Gollerbakh, 2012: 20-22.

Gumilev was frequently compared to his poet contemporary A. Blok. Although they were poets of the same era, they were absolutely opposite in their world view and literary preferences. "It is hard, perhaps, to imagine two people more different than they were", says Vladislav Khodasevich in his book of memoirs "Nekropolis".⁷³ He was a friend of both the repugnant poets. V. Khodasevich was himself an influential Russian poet, critic, memoirist and literature historian. In his book he represents Gumilev as a person with a playful and childish type of character. "He always seemed to me like a child. There was some puerility in his shingled hair, his bearing more as a gymnasium pupil than as a soldier. The same puerility was bursting in his mania for Africa, war, and finally in his assumed solemnity, which surprised me so much at our first meeting and which was suddenly drooping, petering out somewhere, before he remembered and drew it out afresh."

In Gumilev's earlier poems we can sense his connection with the works of the French romanticists and Russian symbolists of the older generation, such as the exotic K. Balmont and objective V. Bryusov. "Although, in the poems "The Pyre" and "Pillar of Fire" we can notice new "apical" Gumilev, whose sharp poetical skill as the leader of acmeist poetry enriched with the simplicity of high wisdom, pure colours and the masterly use of entangled prosy- domestic and fantastic details for multidimensional deeply symbolic artistic image creation."⁷⁴

It is surprising that in the poems of "Pillar of Fire", Gumilev is somehow close to denying his symbolism. The poet, as if immersing himself in the mystical element, was entwining fiction with reality. His poetic images became multidimensional and ambiguous. Poems such as "The Sixth Sense", "The Soul and the Body", "The Word" and "The Streetcar Gone Astray", truly inaugurate a new step forwards in Gumilev's poetry, in that he conveyed that "unspoken", that Blok had been referring to:

I was walking along an unfamiliar street, □
And suddenly heard a cawing of crows, □

⁷³ Khodasevich, 2012: 375-79.

⁷⁴ Yenisherlov, 1989: 7-8.

And resonant lutes, and distant rumbling, □
 -- Before me a streetcar flew.
 How I leapt to its platform □
 Was a riddle to me, □
 Even in the light of day □
 It left a fiery trail in the air.
 Where am I? So languid and anxious, □
 My heart hammers in answer: □
 "Do you see the station where one □
 Can buy a ticket to the India of the Spirit?"

This poem is an example of new romanticism, the lyric and philosophic content of which differs greatly from the romanticism of noted "Captains", acmeist "fine clarity" and specificity. Exactness, the denotation of the word, aim at its direct meaning, refusal of mysticism and adherence to the values of earthly being are the distinctive features of acmeism. Gumilev, Ahmatova, Mandelshtam were the pioneers of that movement. The role of achieving quotation, with an aim of capturing a dialogue with worldwide poetic tradition, brings their poetry together.⁷⁵

World War I had broken the accustomed rhythm of life and Gumilev went to the front as a volunteer. Both his courage and contempt for death were legendary. The best proofs of his deeds of arms are two, rare for the ensign, Crosses of St. George. A reflection of the theme of war can be found in the treasury "Kolchan" ("The Quiver").

The outbreak of World War I caused Gumilev to stop writing poetry. A smattering of patriotism moved the Russian community. The intelligentsia, with its revolutionary mood, took the actions ambiguously and some were even yearning for defeat. Though Gumilev's patriotism was categorical.⁷⁶ When discussing Gumilev's military poetry, his psychological personality features should not be forgotten. From the memoirs of Vladimir Yenisherlov, we realize that Gumilev was called a poet-warrior for valid reason. He did not

⁷⁵ Gorkin, 2006: 69-71.

⁷⁶ Glushkin, 2001: 6.

hesitate in becoming a volunteer and was brave in battle; at times valiant in desperation. He was direct and consistent in reaching his goals. The poet's contemporaries have commented that he accepted war with simplicity and forthright mettle. Perhaps he was one of those few people in Russia, whose soul was in the best alert for war.⁷⁷

Gumilev described his military adventures in "Zapiski Kavalerista" ("The Cavalryman Notes") that were published in the morning edition of "Birzhevye vedomosti" and later when reflecting upon his own military fate, he wrote in the poem "Memory":

He knew the pains of hunger and thirst,
Sleep disturbed, the endless road,
But St. George twice touched
His breast untouched by a bullet.

The poet saw and felt all the terror of war from within, and revealed it in his prose and poems. A certain romantic view of the value of good fights and deeds was an individual feature of Gumilev – a poet and a person with pronounced, rare, virile, chivalric inwardness in his poetry and life.

Throughout the war, Gumilev kept a diary that afterwards was called "The Cavalryman Notes." It started with a description of the poet's first battle. The notes embody the correspondence about odd combat episodes, in which Gumilev has taken part. Often publications were accompanied by the title: "From our special military correspondent". The poet had intended to make these notes a documentary tale, narrating about all the important events of Gumilev's first year in the war. In fact, "Cavalry Notes" fully depicted the whole period of the poet's military service in Life-Guards of the Ulan regiment. All the descriptions were very detailed and precise, though there were big time gaps between the dates of the events and the publication. According to this evidence, Stepanov assumes that Gumilev was keeping a diary from his first days in the Ulan regiment. Although the original diary was not found, almost all of it formed the "Cavalry Notes", having been published

⁷⁷ Yenisherlov, 1989: 10.

in the newspaper “Birzheviye Vedomosti” for the duration of one year. In total, seventeen publications of the notes had been published before Gumilev was made ensign and transferred to the fifth Hussar Alexandrine Her Majesty Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna regiment.⁷⁸

His prose is representational and vivid. Here we read about his first combat impressions:

This day will stay sacred forever in my memory. I was a point man and for the first time in the war I could feel how myself becoming more resolute and tough, like a petrified stone. I had to set out to the forest alone, where a hostile camp might be lying, gallop through ploughed land, unable to turn around, towards a moving column of men to learn if it had strafed you or not. And in the evening of that day for the first time I heard the crescendoing drone of “hurrah” over thin-sown woods, when V. was taken. Like a sheet of lightning, a flame bird of victory touched me slightly that day with its gigantic wing.⁷⁹ The poet had mixed and ambivalent feelings from the experience. He was frightened and excited to accomplish his mission but his feelings change to relief, which are reflected in his victorious spirit.

An exploration of a new theme about Russia had its origin in the treasury “Kolchan”. It took shape in poems such as “Old Country Estates”, but had already won a place in his works and unfolded in the treasury “Kostyor” (“The Pyre”), published after the revolution. Absolutely new motives are born in it, such as the creation and genius of Andrey Rublev, debacle on Neva and old Russia (Rus), reminiscent of a Russia belted with rivers of Blok and an echo of “Pepel” (“Ash”) of Andrey Bely. Gumilev gradually broadened and deepened his themes and sometimes even scares the reader with his clarity of vision as he is predicting his own future:

He stands before a blazing forge,
A humble, bent and small old man.
His blinking eyelids are burnt red,
His look seems quite obedient.

⁷⁸ Stepanov, 2014

⁷⁹ Gumilev, 2014

All his comrades are asleep
 Only he has not yet slept:
 He works a bullet into shape,
 The one that will cut my life short.
 (from "The Workman")

The psychological aspect of Gumilev's character as a man of courage, who can face danger and fearlessly defy his destiny, took shape distinctly in his lyrics. He told himself in his poem, "My Readers":

...but when bullets whistle,
 When waves crack in ships,
 I teach them not to be afraid,
 Not to be afraid, and to do what must be done.

In addition to "The Cavalryman Notes" during 1914-1918, Gumilev created a series of poems devoted to the war and his military service. These poems were: "To a Newborn", "The War", "The Attack", "The Death", "Sacred Nights Float and Fade Away", "The Sun of the Spirit", "Ode to D'Annunzio", "Iambic Pentameters", "To the Sister of Mercy", "The Answer of the Sister of Mercy", "The Second Year", "The Workman", "Childhood", "In the North Sea" and "To France".

As a poet and a personality, Gumilev did not resemble the authors who were creating works during the war that were intended to agitate. He wrote to his wife from the front: "You know, I am not a chauvinist." In his letter to M. Lozinsky he confessed that nothing revolts him more than the disdainful attitude towards Germans as found in Russian newspapers. He believed that the Germans were brave soldiers and honest foes, and that the Russians should unconsciously feel sympathy towards them. His early war poems show this attitude towards Germans.⁸⁰

But for that, oh God, bestow
 Power and a regal hour of victory,

⁸⁰ Zobnin, 2000: 551.

Who will tell to the prostrate: "Dear,
Please, accept my fraternal kiss!"
("The war")

However, we should not exaggerate Gumilev's political naivety. What he wrote in his letter to Lozinsky in January 1915, when considering his opinion of the political objectives of war, is both realistic and sharp: "I will talk openly, for now I have only three merits in life – my poems, my journeys and this war. From them the last one, which I value the least, exaggerates all the best that there is in Petersburg with annoying persistence. When one and a half year ago I came back from the country of Galla, nobody had the patience to listen to my impressions and adventures until the end. You see it was true, everything, that I invented alone and for myself. All that is much more important than those works of Europe sanitation, that nowadays everybody is engaged with, including me." Hence it is not right to talk about Gumilev's naive and enthusiastic mindset at the beginning of the war. Rather, the call to defend the motherland was perceived as an absolute duty of a Russian citizen, whose territory, nation and culture are under the threat of invasion.

The approach to Gumilev's war series was expressed in V. Yermilov's article "About the poetry of war". The aesthetic value of Gumilev's poems and their originality are conditioned by historicism for the critic. He claimed that Gumilev was one of those poets, who felt their epoch. Only after denying regular measures and understanding Gumilev's independent and individual idea of the history, can we properly evaluate his poems. In his article, Yermilov indicated the necessity to develop Gumilev's traditions.⁸¹

The main characteristic of first Gumilev's war poems lies in understanding the greatness of Russia in his mind and the spiritual struggle for the sacred. Taking part in battles influenced his life, defined his destiny, his creation and poetical style. The war poetry of Gumilev forms the important part of his high and courageous lyrics.⁸²

The interaction of the poet's personality and history is the main way

⁸¹ Zobnin, 2000: 551-54.

⁸² www.lib39.ru, 2014

that the war poems are united in the series. The complex figurative system of that series has two metaimages – the war and the soldier, which relate to every poem and the series as a whole. The most noteworthy images of war are those of the thunderstorm, call and sunrise. This figurative subsystem reflects three principle aspects of Gumilev's understanding the war.

Social aspects of the war appeared in such poems as "Iambic Pentameters," "The Worker" and "To France." However, his perspective of war in the poems was special from the very beginning. It is deeply lyrical, thus detached from ideological stereotypes. War censorship modified "Cavalryman Notes" and some of the poems from the war cycle for specific reasons. It is significant that the Russia in his poems is not a belligerent empire, but a motherland, responsible for the fate of her children. This gives his poems patriotic pathos, as in the poem "The Attack." The poem "For a Newborn" reflects the tragedy of war similar to the tragedy of the end and the beginning, birth and death.

The war appears as a phenomenon, related to an element that is impetuous, disastrous and destructive. A thunderstorm is one of the most suitable images for that definition of war. The assimilation of a battlefield as a thunderstorm repeatedly occurs in the war poems:

...There lightnings ripen in the woods,
There thunders sensitively hided.

("Ode to D'Annunzio")

For that I love the tricks
Of thunderous war games...

("Childhood")

The element is always closely related to the inhuman sphere for Gumilev. The element was the sphere that never submitted to the human's will and eventually, was always more powerful than him and always confronted the human. The element is the world that lies beyond the human life:

There is God, and the world, they live forever,
But life of people is instant and squalid...

("Fra Beato Angelico")

The element is irrational and illogical for a human and this inhuman logic, incomprehensible to people, is in the element:

Not with human language

Deserted winds zoom,

And not human fatigue

The evenings sound to us.

("Nature")

The sphere of the ideal and the mystical lies beyond the inhuman element in Gumilev's model of macrocosm. This sphere is unknowable and exists in nonmaterial forms versus the human world. Like the natural world, it includes the life of the human; this sphere including the entity, defining the world rhythm and subordinating everything to the super-principle of cosmic congruity. Gumilev described the hierarchic model of creation in his akmeist manifesto.⁸³ Consequently, the supreme call is hidden in the constant move of everything that is living or happening during natural disasters. Indeed, the more active the move, the more this call can be heard.

Thus, the persona of Gumilev's war series reveals the unknown call through the rasp of thunderstorm, the symbol of war, carrying him away into the element towards death. This call appears in his poems as the voice of war, or the song of fate, or the singing of angels, or the dazzling light:

This voice is lingeringly clear -

The voice of war is calling me...

("To a Newborn")

We gathered there, bowed in prayer,

Angels sang for us from the hight...

("To France")

The Christian symbolism in war poems is related to the sensation of that supreme call:

Bright and alar seraphims

⁸³ Gumilev, 1913: 43.

Appear behind the warriors backs.

("The War")

The forthcoming sunrise seems in the lightnings of the war; the intensified call foretelling the transformation of the world:

Only the sky in crimson glow

Reflected the shed blood...

("To France")

War in Gumilev's poems is the element akin to the natural elements, hostile but at the same time charming. The poet's perception of war as an element is revealed in all his war poems, and grew to be more intricate. In his early war poems, the war is represented as identical to the natural element, the thunderstorm. In later poems, the war is represented as a more human element, the sum of people's wills and efforts. According to Zobnin, we can juxtapose the definition of war in the first poem "To a Newborn" and the last poem "To France" in the war series:

When the earth trembled from

Fighting of giant people

In the thunder of drums,

And in trumpet growl – death...

("To a Newborn")

Came out who for what: one for

The three coloured flag freely run along the sea

Another for the house on the slope,

Where he was playing in childhood:

That – for the Legion of Honour to be brought

To his darling in memorial of their parting,

This – just from sheer boredom,

And amongst them he was the most brave!

("To France")

For the poet, the war in 1914 was a monolithic conflict stricken with the elemental impulse of human mass, that are represented as giant people. This elemental impulse appears to be composed of certain wills and interests

of distinct people in the year of 1918.⁸⁴

Here, the problem of individuality during war can be seen. The human is drawn into the action, eventually obeying the fatal need. It leads the human to danger or death as in war-thunderstorm. The need for a bright conclusion as in war-sunrise is concealed in the same fatal need of horror. This gives Gumilev's poems the feature of tragic absolute optimism, or catharsis. His war poems have tragic character, but presuppositions of it are different. The poem "To a Newborn" reflects the tragedy of end and the beginning. It is objective and refers to everything existing, which must die to give way to a new life. War, like natural disasters, uncovers this principle. The newborn's cry, merging with the noise of guns, reminds the soldiers about the eternal circulation of life. Christian preaching of sacrificing is also concerned with the dialectics of death and birth:

He will be God's favourite,
He will understand his triumph,
He must. We have struggled a lot
And we have suffered for him.

The horror of death as a sin-offering for the sake of future generations hides the chance of catharsis and happiness:

...But I am happy that the child already
Has gulped the air wave.

Another early poem, "Sacred Nights Float and Fade Away..." represents the opposition of life and death through claiming of life as a triumph. The human is connected to the world's eternal existence and even after physical death, stays immortal in the love he left behind in the world:

This way I cannot think of death,
And I am dreaming always of
Those women, who prove to me
My soul's immortality.

The war enhances the tragedy initially borne in the existence of the

⁸⁴ Zobnin, 1994

world and the human.

In the further development of the war theme, the poet's attention is taken by the individuality of the soldier and his moral problems that are caused by the conflict of the human and the element-history.

It is important to mention Gumilev's breakthrough of the adamism identity concept. Its primary thesis was the confirmation of a true primitive human origin, existing since Adam. A simple human soul origin was opposed to a complicated soul of a contemporary person. The objective of that concept was to release the true origin of a human, which was reached by the aesthetic means of the new school. Adamism was the alternative name of the movement called akmeism and that movement gave rise to the formation of a grand new human personality.⁸⁵

The war for Gumilev, was a peculiar purifying fire, instantly destructing the superficial crust of reflections and doubts and uncovering the genuine, primeval human soul, with which one could enter a new world. On the border between life and death, a human finds all the greatness and happiness of existence, feels the true value of the simple human emotions of love, hatred, friendship and sorrow, which appear in their primeval clearness. Herewith, the war-thunderstorm uncovering the tragedy of the world gives way to a sunrise:

It will be autumn, soon: I feel it.

The sun's work will be done□

and people will pick golden fruit□

from the tree of the spirit.

("The Sun of the Spirit")

And I am dreaming, that they'll say

About Russia, the land of plains:

Here is the country of beautiful women

And the most courageous man.

("To the Sister of Mercy")

⁸⁵ Gumilev, 1913: 38.

Gumilev's contemporaries were amazed by his description of images of the war and how they evoked a battlefield:

She is everywhere – in the glow of fire,
 And in the darkness, unexpected and close,
 Now on the Hungarian hussar's horse,
 Now with the Tyrolean rifleman's gun.
 (“Sacred Nights Float and Fade Away...”)

The scene of Gumilev's battlefield is depicted through a precise metaphorical field:

As a dog on a heavy chain
 Gun is yelping over the forest,
 And shrapnels are buzzing like bees,
 Collecting ruby coloured honey.
 And “hurray” beyond is like a singing
 Of harvesters that finished a hard day.
 (“The War”)

We can find the exact details that make Gumilev's war poetry tangible, visible and at the same time, lyrical:

Here the priest in a torn robe
 Sings affectionately a psalm,
 Here the stately march is played
 Over a barely noticeable hill.
 (“The Death”)

In this poem, the life cut short by bullets seems to the poet the most worthy one:

There are so many dignified lives,
 But there is only one respectable death,
 Only under the bullets in peaceful trenches
 You believe in God's sign, the heavens.⁸⁶

In some poems it is even possible to hear the thunder of the war. As

⁸⁶ www.lib39.ru, 2014

example of this is in “Iambic Pentameters”:

And the field full of mighty foes,
 Droning rampant bombs, and melodious bullets,
 And the sky in lightnings and crimson clouds.

It can be observed that Gumilev's attitude towards war changed over the years, as evidenced in his two confronting poems “The Sun of the Spirit” and “The Second Year”. There is not a large time gap between them, and both represent the war as the elements – thunderstorm and sunrise. But unlike bright sunrise in “The Sun of the Spirit”, the sunrise becomes ominous in “The Second Year”:

And you ominous sunrise, shine,
 Frightening and charming us;
 That time like prophetic Sibylla
 Will tell us everything in proper hour.

The human got into the hearth of war, a “winged genius” who “wildly mocks” human “wisdom” turns not into a new Adam, but into a “savage”:

Or future clear sunrises
 Will see the world like long ago:
 Huge rosy carnations,
 And a savage is sleeping there.

The hoped-for progress played out to regress and dehumanization happened instead of the expected transformation. This representation of war is supposed to be the synthesis of actual feelings.⁸⁷

The use of floral imagery in “The Sun of the Spirit”:

It will be autumn, soon: I feel it.
 The sun's work will be done□
 And people will pick golden fruit□
 From the tree of the spirit.

and is connected to the poem “The War”, where Gumilev uses the metaphorical description of warfare in the work of the farmers:

⁸⁷ Zobnin, 1994

Toilers, heavily walking
 Over the bloody fields,
 Sowing feat and reaping glory,
 Now, God, bless you.

The poem "The Workman" reflects already not a human but a tool of providence. He does not have his own will; his will is the inhuman will of the element. He is not dragged into the war storm, but he is a part of it. He is apathetic in his inhuman rightness as the war is.

Two origins join in this poem, and the human origin submits the elemental. The connection with the providential origin is declared in the end of the poem:

The Lord will rightly be the judge
 Of life's short span of bitterness.
 In his gray blouse, the man at the forge
 Is the one who made me thus.

However, the complete unity of elemental and human is unacceptable for the poet, because it means the death of humanity. Anyone who is free from moral responsibility and shuffles this burdens on the element's powers, will lose himself, and change into a soulless machine:

We will do what we are told to!
 Trumpet, you howl, gun, you shoot,
 Grenade, you dig the cleft in earth,
 Preparing a new elysium.

("The Second Year")

Here people and things are mixed, and things act independently from the people's will, and people are deprived of will, that are linked to things.

In the latter war poems we can analyze the process of value judgement, where the poet steps aside from adamism, and takes a different view related to the unconditional value of a human personality. He returns to absolute moral principles of good and evil, which are the origin of human morality.

Gumilev reflects upon the war in his last poem of the war series, "To

France". The war there becomes the thing of the past. He confronts Europe and Russia in their post-war fates, and comes to a decision that the bygone unity of Russia and her "sister" have separated:

You were her marvelous dream,
 The sun of so many perfect years,
 But to call you her sister,
 I see, I see, she should not do.

The supreme meaning of war – the opposition of good and evil is open to Russia. The country could not find the perfect human ideal, and therefore does not want to submit and accept "the God's path":

...We are lying in the dung-yard, and crying,
 We do not choose the God's path.
 Everyone's soul is cut up,
 Like with the titan's sword, in two.
 In everyone the devil half
 Is glad that it is strong.

Here appears the tragic conflict of Russia. Not willing to accept the path of God, it takes the path of theomachy. Gumilev perceives the mightiness and the tragedy of that choice:

Here you are calling: "Where is the sister Russia,
 Where is she, ever loved?"
 Look above: in the galaxy of Serpent
 A new star lighted up.

The cosmic splendor of Russia and at the same time, "the galaxy of Serpent" promises a tumultuous conflict. The Serpent here is the symbol of temptation, theomachy, and knowledge in Bible symbolics.⁸⁸

The aggressive and imperialistic matter of bourgeois ideology was vividly reflected in Gumilev's works. Christian religiousness in his poems plays an organizing, mobilizing force that leads new crusaders to the battle. Akmeism in Gumilev's poetry reveals itself as the works of Russian military

⁸⁸ Zobnin, 1994

and feudal imperialism. Feudal romance and the idealization of the old world of the nobility, are combined with the messages of racism, imperialism and the apologies of war. The akmeist writers took the leading role in war literature, with akmeism reflecting the most clearly stated imperialistic ideology and via their writings, conducting the ideologic preparation for the war. Naturally, Gumilev chose for himself the role of a bard of the magnificent war, symbolized Russian army, embowered with angel wings in the battles. Although, according to Stepanov and his research, there are only four poems directly dedicated to war. These are “The Attack”, “The War”, “The Sun of the Spirit” and the late edition of “Iambic Pentameters”. That list can be widened by some more poems of lyric and philosophic sense such as, “The Second Year”, “Memory”, “To France”, “To a Newborn”, “The Death”, “The Workman”. As the researcher tells in his article, it is easy to retrace all the war poems in the third edition of the “Complete Collection of Works” of the poet, where all the poems are represented in chronological order. The main answer of the question of why Gumilev was almost the only one from his sphere, who had passed through the war. In the end it was demobilized not of his own free will, for he never tried to evade the service, which is set in Stepanov's work. The researcher suggests that the main reason for his dismissal was in fact the demobilization of Russian troops. The poet's dismissal from military service was confirmed in a document set in Stepanov's work, dated 1907. At that time his elder brother Dmitry, had been in the service for two years. Their origin was from a family of medical officers and of the noble family. Stepanov supposed that the poet felt his own lameness. But later on July 30, 1914 another medical board verified, that Gumilev did not have any physical defects, prohibitive for military service.⁸⁹

The only poem that carries the first impression of war, as thrilling and enthusiastic is “The Attack”. Gumilev wrote the poem from what others had told about battles in 1914. It is a rendering of brother-soldiers testimonies of the first attack that they had survived in West Prussia. That is why it does not

⁸⁹ Stepanov, 2010: 171-72.

deliver his own perception. Gumilev took part in the war for only a few days, from the day of writing the poem to the real attack. And the war that had been unclear and terrifying, became trivial to the poet. Eugeny Stepanov claims this poem may be the first “war” publication of the poet. The poem represents Gumilev's first experience of life on the front, even though he is not yet taking part in the battles, but already holds a gun and is listening to others' stories. That is how this poem was written. Gumilev reported what others had said about the first attack on East Prussia. This is why this poem is non-characteristic of Gumilev pathos and general words and his lack of personal perception (using “we” instead of “I”).⁹⁰

The first lines of the poem are full of sincere pity: “That country, which could be the heaven, became a lair of fire”. The poet is shocked not only by the scope of the war but also by the fact that dozens of people die before his eyes. The feeling that he may be among them thrills him, filling his poem with bravado. “We are attacking the fourth day, we haven't eaten for four days” - the poet indicates with veiled pride, that spiritual food is more important for him than material comforts. The Poet's opinion is that the belief in God and in victory are the core principles. The poet talks about the feeling close to eucharistic (Communion):⁹¹

But we don't need viand of earth
At this terrific and bright hour,
Because the word of God
Nourishes us better than bread.

The image pictured in the second line “terrific and bright hour” brings to mind the definition of Eucharist. The first line alludes to the preparation of it – “we don't need viand? of earth”. The attack that is described in the poem, is that stern hour when perhaps a person stands in front of the face of God remembering close meeting with Him. The remembrance of death is the main condition in faith, says Smelova in her article about the orthodox tradition in

⁹⁰ Stepanov, 2014

⁹¹ Polushin, 2006: chap. XV.

Gumilev's lyrics.⁹²

The lyrical character believes in god-given predestination – “the word of God nourishes us better than bread.” Gumilev explained the role of a poet in the war time, when reappraisal of life values take place, and the world-view changes:⁹³

I am crying, and my voice is wild.
That is brass thrashing brass.
I am a bearer of the great thought,
And I can not, I can not die.

Poet's senses lose their limits and depart from the speaker in the climax of the battle: “I am crying, and my voice is wild. That is brass, thrashing brass.” We can feel the poet's emotions, his excitement through intensification of the thought and its repetition: “I can not, I can not die.”

The poet shows the reader the very detailed actions, so that we can perceive and see the whole picture of the battlefield. He doesn't feel frightened, instead he has this freedom we can sense from the stanza:

And the weeks afloat with blood
Are glaring and light.
The shots are ripping over me,
Blades are flushing faster than birds.

Thus, Gumilev has a significant argument against death, which he treats with affected disdain. “I am a bearer of the great thought, And I can not, I can not die” - claims the poet. Herewith he emphasizes that: “the golden heart of Russia beats with swing in my chest.” He regards himself as one of the most worthy speakers of Russian culture and tradition. This peculiar talisman truly protects him from a random bullet and shrapnel. During two years on the front the poet only suffered a heavy cold twice and did not incur any war injury. Instead he became a big patriot of his country, that felt “so sweet to dress up the Victory, like a girl dressing up with pearls.” However, his romantic impulse gave out quite soon.

⁹² Smelova, 2003: 90-92.

⁹³ Smelova, 2003: 89.

The next war poems that the poet cited in "The Cavalryman Notes," were "The War" and "The Sun of the Spirit". All three poems including "The Attack" were in their edited versions scattered in the war series "Kolchan" between the other poem not connected to war. The primary autograph of the poem "The War" included stanzas from "The Sun of the Spirit", which testifies the parallel writing of these two poems, and their address to the same period, the first days of the poet's participation in battles. The poem "The War" is dedicated to a troop commander lieutenant M. Chichagov.⁹⁴ The tone of this poem "The War" is elevated and solemn: the soldiers are going to accomplish the feat of arms in the name of "the noble work of war". The epithet "noble" transmits the event from the reality to the unreal, romantic and ideal world, where the work of war is "truly bright and sacred". Here Gumilev's thought that the deed for the sake of the motherland is a soldier's sacred duty is represented. That is why their "hurray" beyond is like a singing", a contented song of people, doing a hard but necessary work. The persona is a soldier in the heart of the action, doing the destined work. Despite the theme of war, there is no tragic attitude: "gun is yelping" like a dog, that no one is afraid of, "shrapnels are buzzing, like bees", the bees do not frighten. There are seraphims behind the soldiers protecting them. The soldiers themselves recall farmers "sowing" and "reaping" on "the bloody fields", therefore they are walking "heavily", as the war is a hard work. The poet asks God to bless their sacred deed, where they lay down for the motherland. The poem gives the idea of war as a great work, and the soldier's duty is to protect the motherland. Gumilev admired the scenes of battles. He poetized the beauty of war storm, awakening of the highest spirituality, heroism on the battlefield. Here there is aristocratic attitude to war as the main worldly occupation, and especially traditionalistic effort to show the spiritual sense of the soldiering.⁹⁵

The second poem "The Sun of the Spirit" written in the same time frame, is represented through the imagery. Even the name carries a special

⁹⁴ Stepanov, 2010: 178-79.

⁹⁵ www.studik.net, 2014

sacral meaning. Gumilev's spiritual inspiration helped him in the darkest times, as in the period of World War I, and in the later period of disbelief, to foresee the coming epoch of "the sun of the spirit". Gumilev's war poetry reveals the depths of the spirit, not touching on the outward. The war for him is an initiative action, awakening the spirit that is in the human:

How could we walk in peace, before, □
 Expecting no joy, no disaster, □
 Not dreaming of battles, of flaming retreats, □
 Or the roaring trumpet of victory? □

The poet is talking about the victory of light over darkness. The spirit of awakened people "flowers like a May rose" and dears "darkness apart like fire". The poet turns to nature, in confluence with which:

The soul knows no torment
 Nor the will any difficulty. □ □

That strengthens his belief that the new epoch will come and bring its "golden fruit" of the awakened spirit.⁹⁶

The poet thought that the soldier inspired by the battle, rises up over materiality, becoming an overman, a hero. The military honours for him are the virtue, paving the way to heaven, whilst death in the battle is the direct path to spiritual realization. Gumilev does not have so called "hurray-patriotic" poems. He was interested in the war as in the spiritual experience that became a part of his existence. However, he was not a war theorist. According to his colleagues, there was no dangerous patrol, in which he would not like to participate. Once, the poet and two of his comrades-in-arms were caught in open fire of German machine gun. His companions hurried to shelter from fire, but Gumilev stayed at the open space and started lighting a cigarette. Only after that he jumped into a trench. This act can be called inane, if not taking into consideration the fact that for the poet this kind of situations directly motivate him by the aesthetic experience of ambient

⁹⁶ Spirina, 1998

reality.⁹⁷

Two years after the poet wrote “The attack” full of hope and glory, he summarizes his two years of military service with the poem “The second year”. We can feel the poet's disappointment already from the first stanza:

And the second year is coming to an end
 But colours flutter all the same
 And the same war wildly
 Mocks on our wisdom.

Here Gumilev appears not only as a poet and a philosopher, able to embrace the tragedy of European nations, drawn into the bloody slaughter in brief form, but he also becomes an unconscious visionary of things to come. There are different opinions regarding this poem. Literature critics counted how many times, where and when it was published, and discovered, that by the number of stanzas it coincides with an earlier poem “The twelfth year”. But the main feature of the poem is the living soul and feelings of the poet.

The line: “Following her winged genius” is an allusion to the Roman mythology. Ancient Romans called genius a kind numen. It was considered that there were familiar, commune, town and nation geniuses. But in that particular line Gumilev implies the winged goddess of victory, a peculiar patroness of war.⁹⁸

The poet knows about the uselessness of war and pity of those lives that are gone “sunk” and “trampled”. The war did not bring glory to anybody, rather it played “to a draw”: “Troops will enter the capital. Whose?” Here Gumilev predicts the return to primeval times, where the earth is purified with rains “beating wildly”. The poet also reveals the Christian tradition of life after death, and the earth for him is “just a gloomy portress at the entrance to the God's Fields”. Throughout the poem he uses rhetorical questions, thus giving a reader the subject on which to reflect.

At the time Gumilev wrote this poem he was already serving in the fifth Hussar Alexandrine regiment. To his prime war poems we can add two

⁹⁷ www.studik.net, 2014

⁹⁸ www.litmir.net, 2014

important poems, where he looks back on the past years, namely the late edition of “Iambic Pentameters” and “Memory”. The last stage of Gumilev's life and poetry became the post-revolution years, the period between 1917 and 1921. The poet's attitude to himself changes fundamentally, like in the poem “Memory”:

I'm a builder, which is working smartly□
 O'er the temple, arising in a haze,□
 Seek for fame for my beloved country□
 As in Heavens, so on the earth.□

The spiritual search of this stage is reflected in the collection of poems, published post mortem in 1921 “Ognenny Stolp” (“Pillar of Fire”). The attitude of the persona to death differs by an unusual fusion of seriousness and simplicity. The poet's linking of the masonry and severe life in starving freezing Petrograd, with the emotions of war played their part in his new vision. The most noticeable feature is that the persona, has learnt to not be frightened of death, but feels the responsibility to help those who are not that strong in their spirits. His love towards the world and God, as the highest truth standing over the life and death, became balanced. His thinking of the chain of the soul's deaths was solved by the “memory”, the thing that does not let the souls die. Therefore this image of death is not worthy to be frightened of. The poet comes to simplicity, wisdom and tranquility.⁹⁹

The poem “Memory” opens the collection “Pillar of Fire”. Through this poem Gumilev answers the question why a human's soul is born and where it goes after death. It is written in the classical Russian symbolism tradition. Gumilev shows the reader, that a human is born and lives to contemplate and improve, to learn and to love. The comprehension of beauty and wisdom of this world is the main objective for people. He noted that through its long life the soul undergoes the complex evolution. At first, he is a naive child, who thinks that everywhere is magic:

The very first was plain and thin,

⁹⁹ Nabatova, 2003

And loved only forests in twilight,
 He was a fallen leaf, a magic child
 Who stopped the rain with a word.
 A tree and a red dog -
 These he took as friends.

According to the recollections of people, who knew well young Gumilev, he was not attractive, with flabby lineament, squinting eyes, colourless hair. Perhaps, these circumstances affected him for being attracted by everything romantic and exotic. His journey to Africa, interest to Chinese culture testifies his unsatisfactory with triviality, and opposition to public opinion. The second soul turned him into a poet, a ruler of "the world, a carpet beneath his feet":

And the second...He loved a wind from the south,
 Heard the ring of the lyre in every noise,
 Said that life was a friend to him,
 And the world a carpet beneath his feet.

I don't like him at all, it was he
 Who wanted to be God and king
 Then, he is a warrior, proud of his deeds:
 I like freedom's chosen one,
 The seafarer and rifleman.
 Ah, the waters clearly sang to him
 And the clouds were full of envy.

His tent was on high ground,
 The mules were strong and frisky
 He drank in like wine the sweet air
 Of a country unknown to the white man.

The next stage of Gumilev's life was participation in the war. Although he was a brave soldier, chauvinism was alien for him. And, finally, he is a monk and a sage, that knows the world:

I am the somber and stubborn builder
 Of a temple rising up in the gloom.
 I covet the glory of Savaoth,
 Both in heaven and on earth.

My heart will be scorched to the depths by flame
 Until the day when the walls of the New Jerusalem
 Will rise up clean
 From the fields of my native land.¹⁰⁰

Thus the poet tells about his soul's metamorphoses, or rather the succession of four souls in his body. This poem is a truthful narration about the overcoming of weaknesses, the opposition to the externals. The poet tells about the change of the inward, review of the life values. The poem starts and ends with the same lines:

Only snakes shed their skin
 We change souls, not bodies.

Gumilev believes in the soul's immortality, spiritual rebirth. There ends a circle of comparing the poet's four souls. The reader together with the poet goes by the path of becoming spiritually mature, over and over rising to life.

The Great October Socialist Revolution happened when Gumilev was abroad, where he was sent on a mission in May 1917. He was living between London and Paris, engaged with Oriental literature, translating and working on drama "The poisoned tunic". He came back to revolutionary Petrograd in May 1918. The highly strung literary atmosphere of that time ran away with him. N. Gumilev, A. Blok, M. Lozinsky and K. Chukovsky with other prominent writers started working at the press "Vsemirnaya literatura" created by A.M. Gorky, as the critic Vladimir Yenisherlov is telling in his biography and memoirs about Gumilev.¹⁰¹ Gumilev was publishing poems of A.K. Tolstoy with his own preambles there. The works of S. Coleridge, R. Southey, "Ballads of Robin Hood" were published under his editorship and

¹⁰⁰ Ivanov-Ostoslavsky, 2013

¹⁰¹ Yenisherlov, 1989: 6.

partly in his translations. He was giving lectures in literature studios, history of art institute and was engaging a lot with young poets. In 1918 the sixth treasury "Kostyor" ("The Pyre") and the treasury of translations of oriental poetry "Porcelain pavilion" appeared. His last poem treasuries were published during his life in 1921 - "The Tent" (African poems) and "Pillar of fire".

The war series, as an organic part of Gumilev's works, is closely connected to all the series that we can place emphasis on. "African poems", "Italian poems", love lyrics can be united as series of poems that were created during long periods, or even during the whole life, like the "African" series. Some of the poems were included in the poet's books, and some were printed in other publications. Thus, five poems from the war series: "The War", "The Attack", "The Death", "Iambic pentameters", "Ode to D'Annunzio" were included in "Kolchan", three of them: "Childhood", "The workman", "In the North sea" were included in "Bonfire", and five: "To a newborn", "Sacred nights float and fade away...", "To the sister of mercy", "The answer of the sister of mercy", "To France" were published in the periodical press. The unity of these poems is conditioned by the common for everybody, global world outlook problem. Likewise the connection between separate poems, organizing the unity of the poet's works, there is a close link between the series. As the interpretation of the element and war meta-image and their aesthetic personation are close in the "African" and war series.¹⁰²

The war years were the critical times of seeking new ideals that came out in the war series. It can be referred to philosophic lyrics as its content is ambivalent and complex, and does not have a completed vision. The series of war poems has an open ending, and the problems set in it are resolved in later poet's works during the years 1918-1921.

¹⁰² Zobnin, 1994

4. WILFRED EDWARD SALTER OWEN AS ONE OF THE MAIN FIGURES IN ENGLISH WAR POETRY

Wilfred Owen is acclaimed as the greatest writer of war poetry of his time in English literature. He revealed his deep personal experiences as a soldier and found the power to describe his physical, moral and psychological trauma which he confronted in World War I. All of his great war poems were written in fifteen months and it is to these particular poems he owes his reputation. After experiencing the horror of battle, Owen wrote in a letter to his mother dated May, 1917,

I am more and more a Christian. . . Suffering dishonor and disgrace, but never resort to arms. Be bullied, be outraged, be killed: but do not kill." Being a soldier was not for Wilfred Owen. His character, religion and philosophy were in opposition to his role as a soldier. "He was shy, inoffensive, bookish, introverted, unworldly, sensitive, caring and deeply Christian." For most of the time he was in the army, he lived and fought as an outsider.¹⁰³

Wilfred Owen must remain, in one respect at least, an enigma – wrote C. Day Lewis in his introduction to "The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen".¹⁰⁴ His life long compassion and sympathy for people started with his years spent in the church as a vicar's helper, planning to devote his life to Chaplain service. However, confronted with poverty, illnesses, despair, visiting village slums, he started doubting the sincerity and compassion of the Anglican Church. Coming back from the poor hovels of plough men to the vicar's house, he was becoming more and more certain that the prosperity of a priest extremely differed from the beggarly existence of the flock. In his disappointment, Owen volunteered for the London training regiment in the

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www.warpoetry.co.uk, 2014

¹⁰⁴ Lewis and Blunden, 1965: introduction.

end of 1916, became a lieutenant and went to the French front. He wrote all his experiences and emotions to his mother which were comprised of five hundred fifty-five letters. The spiritual bond between them was very strong. This poet, who was attached to his mother and by nature was a pliable and religious person, did not fit the mindset of the war and its heroes. His hesitancy in joining the army explains his postponement. But in the letters to his mother, Owen never showed his adverse thoughts: "Do you know what would hold me together on a battlefield? The sense that I was perpetuating the language in which Keats and the rest of them wrote!"¹⁰⁵ He was not prepared for wet, cold, muddy earth, full of blown up bodies and rats. He was aghast and the illusions of former patriotism were destroyed by the terrifying scenes during the worst winter of the war.

Before experiencing war firsthand, we can see Owen's enthusiasm in his letter to his mother: "There is a fine heroic feeling about being in France, and I am in perfect spirits. A tinge of excitement is about me, but excitement is always necessary to my happiness."¹⁰⁶ These feelings of heroism ceased by the first battles and fights.

The poet claimed that even in the new conditions he could not change his inner core, but he could change his appearance and behavior so that others think of him as a good soldier. The severe war experience did not leave his conscious unchanged. At first, before going to the front, Owen treated the recruits of his troop with curiosity. He saw them as gloomy, reticent and awkward. But after spending time with them, at the war, he had a quite different view that was reflected in his poem "Apologia Pro Poemate Meo":

And witnessed exultation –
 Faces that used to curse me, scowl for scowl,
 Shine and lift up with passion of oblation,
 Seraphic for an hour; though they were foul.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Owen, Bell, 1967: 300.

¹⁰⁶ Lewis and Blunden, 1965: 155

¹⁰⁷ Lewis and Blunden, 1965: War poems.

The “passion of oblation” elevated these gloomy soldiers in Owen's eyes. From that moment he saw the common war routine in the light of the Revelation.

After spending some months in war and experiencing heavy artillery bombardment, three days being trapped in a shell-hole, Owen was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital as he was suffering from 'shell-shock'. It was during this period of his war experience that he met Siegfried Sassoon. Their relationship inspired Owen's poetry with new, true, clear, anti-war rhetoric. His ideals had changed as well as his verses and style. His writing became hardened, reflecting the hardships of life on the front line of battle. Owen represented a poet who spoke his mind with no poetic purpose. He used his poems as a way to transmit the truth of war, its inhumanity and destructive character to people who were not quite aware of it, especially for British civilians were far away from combat. His poems were a personal protest against the cruelty, futility and uselessness of war. “The paradox is that protest against the war depends upon participation in it.” as the author Adrian Caesar is describing Owen's contradictory condition on war.¹⁰⁸

There are two poems that do not refer to war, written in Craiglockhart hospital, but which are a good introduction of the concerns of war poems. In both poems “How do I love Thee” and “The Poet in Pain” one can see Owen's world view and the pain and suffering, that the poet has.

Owen's realistic ideal contained an ironic piquancy. His writings were meaningful and in a more permanent manner conveying the emptiness of fighting and the unexplainably dreadful conditions in which the soldiers lived, in a caring, but strong and disturbing way. Whereas most of his colleagues were expressing the unjust ways of war in poems written with mockery and enmity.¹⁰⁹

Being extremely affected by the wearisome results of the war, Owen wrote the most intense poems about the ruthless dissipation of war. This came from the knowledge he gained while living the heavily traumatic

¹⁰⁸ Caesar, 1993: 145

¹⁰⁹ Mahmud, 2008: 28.

physical and moral experiences as a soldier in the first world war. His best poems of the war were written from August 1917 through September 1918. Owen wrote objectively, without letting his emotions interfere. He wrote with conscious truthful observations telling how merciless warfare was. He wrote in such a way as to show the overall grief and regret people should feel about war. He told about the inhumanness of war and its effects on mankind. The war, which brings out the potential of evil in mankind ending in destruction, was vividly demonstrated in his poems.

The poem "Apologia Pro Poemate Meo" gives the reader an opportunity to be able to understand the problems at the core of Owen's war poems. In a letter Robert Graves urged Owen to write optimistically putting forth that a poet must have a spirit which is above the war. This affected Owen, and in response he wrote the poem in the spirit that he expresses, which is not above the wars, but is inseparably involved. The feeling of enthusiastic celebration of war is declared in the beginning of the poem:

I, too saw God through mud,-
 The mud that cracked on cheeks when wretches smiled.
 War brought more glory to their eyes than blood,
 And gave their laughs more glee than shakes a child.
 Merry it was to laugh there -
 Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.
 For power was on us as we slashed bones bare
 Not to feel sickness or remorse of murder.¹¹⁰

Owen gained an unimaginable experience from the war. He was always in the action, where guns were firing each minute. He waded with his troop through the deep water and was attacked by poisonous gas. He spent a month sleeping in deep snow. He perceived the significance of the war. The reflection of these is found in his poems "The Sentry", "Exposure". According to his words: The people of England needn't hope. They must

¹¹⁰ Caesar, 1993: 150.

agitate.¹¹¹

Although Owen's character did not suit the war, he took the role of lieutenant and played an enormous part in the lives of the soldiers in his troop. All of them experienced the same trauma and shock as any other soldier on the front. That is what gave the poet the grounds to express the soldiers' destruction of ethics:

Merry it was to laugh there -
Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.
For power was on us as we slashed bones bare
Not to feel sickness or remorse of murder.¹¹²

("Apologia Pro Poemate Meo")

The same theme is declared in the poem "Insensibility", written approximately in the same period:

Their senses in some scorching cautery of battle
Now long since ironed,
Can laugh among the dying, unconcerned.¹¹³

"Insensibility" shows the paradoxes of his poems of protest openly. The poem is carrying the contrast of the insensibility of the troops and the home front. The poet reflects the insensibility of soldiers and civilians through his sensibility as a lieutenant and a poet:

Happy are men who yet before they are killed
Can let their veins run cold.
Whom no compassion fleers
Or makes their feet
Sore on the alleys cobbled with their brothers.
The front line withers.
But they are troops who fade, not flowers,
For poets' tearful fooling:
Men, gaps for filling:

¹¹¹ www.warpoetry.co.uk, 2014

¹¹² Lewis and Blunden, 1965: War poems.

¹¹³ Lewis and Blunden, 1965: War poems.

Losses, who might have fought
 Longer; but no one bothers.¹¹⁴

There are rhetorical gestures used in the poem, whose objective is to promiscuously heighten the soldiers experiences at the expense of non-combatants. Owen felt that fighting and killing would give the soldiers the right to be senseless and it gave them the privilege of “pity”, “mourning” and the “eternal reciprocity of tears”. The moral righteousness of the poem cannot sustain its arguments.¹¹⁵

Owen's realistic ideal contained an ironic piquancy. His writings were meaningful and in a more permanent manner conveying the emptiness of fighting. He uncovered the unexplainably dreadful conditions the soldiers lived through, in a most caring but strong and disturbing way. Whereas most of his contemporaries were expressing the unjust ways of the war with mockery and enmity in their poems.¹¹⁶

The decisive meeting for the poet happened at the hospital, where he was sent, being diagnosed with shell shock. There Owen became an editor of the hospital's magazine, “Hydra,” and as a result met with another patient, the poet Siegfried Sassoon. By the time of their meeting in the summer 1917, Sassoon was already a well-known litterateur. He was writing satirical poems with anti-war character, using “trench lexicon” and march rhythms. Sassoon was keen on the pacifism idea. After writing a letter to the newspaper, “Times,” accusing the English government of unleashing the war, the poet had to be punished for such harsh criticisms. But because of his honoured position and courage at the front, he was instead sent to the Craiglockhart hospital for a while. It was here he found an appreciative listener and a like-minded fellow. It was Sassoon who first noticed the amazing talent of Wilfred Owen, and inspired him to new creative heights. Siegfried Sassoon introduced a new poet to the poetry world and the litterateurs like Robert Graves, Herbert Wells, Arnold Benett. Sassoon was the main person who

¹¹⁴ Caesar, 1993: 158.

¹¹⁵ Caesar, 1993: 160.

¹¹⁶ Mahmud, 2008: 28.

saved the poet's works and published them later.¹¹⁷ The development of Owen as a poet was affected by Sassoon's technique. Although Owen had experience of the Western Front, he had not lost the Romantic image of himself as a poet. On the New Year's Eve of 1917 Owen wrote to his mother: I go out of this year a Poet, my dear mother, as which I did not enter it. I am held peer by the Georgians; I am a poet's poet. I am started, the tugs have left me; I feel the great swelling of the open sea taking my galleon. His relationship with Sassoon strengthened his position among the Georgian poets.¹¹⁸

Both poets revealed the true depiction of agonies and sorrows of the soldiers, who had to take part in an "endless" war. Their works uncover the destructive effect of the war, the emptiness of fighting, the indifference of the government to young soldiers, who lose their lives in the battles. The poems play a part of the historical records, showing the life of soldiers, denouncing and mocking them by describing the apathetic attitudes of the politicians, whose concern is for personal glory, not for the nation and the soldiers.¹¹⁹

Resembling his hero, Owen was convinced to go out to France again. And after the shell shock and convalescence at the Craiglockhart hospital, Lieutenant Owen returned to his obligations. He wrote to his mother: I am much happier to be going out again than afraid. I shall be able to cry my outcry, playing my part.¹²⁰ He also ended his poem "The Calls" like that:

For leaning out last midnight on my sill,
I heard the sighs of men, that have no skill
To speak of their distress, no, nor the will!
A voice I know, And this time I must go.¹²¹

He knew what he was writing about, as the poet himself passed the test of hell. He wrote in the letter to his mother: I can see no excuse for deceiving you about these last four days. I have suffered seventh hell. – I

¹¹⁷ Loukin, 2012: introduction.

¹¹⁸ Caesar, 1993: 160-61.

¹¹⁹ Sagher, 2012: 219.

¹²⁰ Stallworthy, 1974: Scarborough and Ripon.

¹²¹ Lewis and Blunden, 1965: War poems.

have not been at the front. – I have been in front of it.¹²²

His poems of 1917 and early 1918 contain the clashes which were caused by the severe shell shock. Owen contrasts feelings of love and hate, dealing with the war and these feelings of confusion consume every aspect of his response. On one side, he wants to expose the horrors of trench warfare to the home-front. On the other side, he is describing the home-front unable to comprehend. It is quite interesting, that the terror of trench warfare fascinated him.¹²³ The poet is captivated by the action happening in the trenches, and that helps him to picture the futility and horror of war in their most picturesque way.

The war had its effect not only on people who were born before it and took part in it, but also on post-war generations. The war caused the social upheaval and self-examination, that made Owen lively describe the shock and dismay of war. Therefore he gained popularity and became one of the most read poets. The demand for his poetry was very high, what caused Edmund Blunden's edition to be reprinted nine times between 1931-1963. That was the purpose that Sassoon and Blunden, had successfully achieved.¹²⁴

One of the most famous of Owen's poems is "Strange Meeting", written during the spring or early summer of 1918. The theme of the poem is cast over the poem "The Revolt of Islam" by Percy Bysshe Shelley. The subject of fratricide in the poem was also reflected by the influence of Thomas Hardy, who raised it in the poem "The Man He Killed". "Strange Meeting" is considered to be inspired by Sassoon's "The Rear Guard", and is also based on Owen's draft "Earth's Wheels". Regarding this poem, Sassoon said that it was Owen's passport to immortality.¹²⁵ The poem shows the empty uselessness and torment that war caused. The theme of the the poem is giving insight to a nightmare, and the position of the verses having an inexact match is giving the mystery of the situation and making the poem

¹²² www.warpoetry.co.uk, 2014

¹²³ Caesar, 1993: 160.

¹²⁴ Cloutier, 2009: 46.

¹²⁵ www.wilfredowen.org.uk, 2014

enigmatic. The poem depicts an emotional meeting of two dead soldiers that fought against each other. They are finally able to see “the truth untold” that is, what Owen aimed to show through his poems, “The pity of war, the pity war distilled”. Owen's motive for this poem, as he listed himself, was “Foolishness of War”.¹²⁶ The title of the poem gives a hint for the content of the poem, and informs a reader that there is a kind of an encounter that is unusual. The poet's tone is serious, depicting the meaning of soldier's life. The structure is not usual, and the poem is not originally divided into separate stanzas, but I can part it into several ideas. The first three lines display the death of the narrator. Then, the next seven lines tell about the narrators arrival to hell. The biggest part of the poem shows the narrator's and dead foe's meeting, their talk, more exactly, the talk of an enemy soldier and his thoughts of life and war. The final part concludes the speech giving the idea of how the narrator killed this soldier. The poem is supposed to be unfinished, but the idea is quite clear where both soldiers' souls rest in the end. The expression of darkness with the words “dull”, “sullen”, “dark” gives an air of unsupported ground. That makes the reader feel the secretiveness of the poem, and shows the uneasiness of the war. The feeling of not being able to have a solid hold on life is given by the rhyme. That makes the concept of the poem, that coherence is gone in life. The war overwhelms all the harmony and the rhymes are in a similar situation. The poet uses the near end rhymes built on alliteration to describe the enigmatic atmosphere of a nightmare. Owen displays the depression, despair and destruction through the darkening of the vowels in rhymes like in escaped – scooped, groined – groaned, grained – ground, moan – morn, years – yours, wild – world, friend – frowned, killed – cold.¹²⁷ Owen uses the allusion to Christianity in lines:

I would have poured my spirit without stint
 But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
 Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.

Here, the reference to Christ's torment is used to show the sacrifice of

¹²⁶ Kerr, 1994: 174.

¹²⁷ Mahmud, 2008: 28.

the soldiers and their resemblance with Christ.

Owen's values were created by Christianity, Capitalism and Romanticism. Caesar claims that the poet resisted the dominant principles of that time. However his work falls back upon them in the end, and elevates the place of suffering into a place of love.¹²⁸

The effect of Christianity on Owen is observed in many of his writings. For instance, he wrote in reply to Osbert Sitwell's epigram "Ill Winds", creating a detailed image of training new soldiers in England and making them and Christ approaching Crucifixion equal: For 14 hours yesterday I was at work – teaching Christ to lift his cross by numbers, and how to adjust his crown: and not to imagine he thirst till after the last halt; I attended his Supper to see that there were no complaints; and inspected his feet to see that they should be worthy of the nails. I see to it that he is dumb and stands to attention before his accusers. With a piece of silver I buy him every day, and with maps I make him familiar with the topography of Golgotha.¹²⁹ This theme of soldier-as-Christ is represented in many of Owen's poems. According to Milz, this idea also contains a contradiction of the soldier sacrificing his life like Christ, and at the same time rebelling the main Commandment – "do not kill". This way, the soldiers have two sides, they are Christ and the crucifier.¹³⁰

There are many themes combined together in one poem "Greater Love", that does not have a clear date or place of when did Owen write it. The subjects like sacrifice of soldiers, the exalting of their friendship to a position above the common friendship, like heterosexual love, the horrifying description of the war's blight on the human body and pity of war. There are several spheres that are suggested by the critics to have the influence on Owen and his poems, such as evangelical rearing, homosexuality and misogyny. Recently, the critics have discussed Owen's homosexual and misogynist tendencies, and at the same time a lot has been written about the

¹²⁸ Caesar, 1993: 168.

¹²⁹ Fussel, 1972: 119.

¹³⁰ Milz, 2011

religious or anti-religious nature of this poem. But the introduction of an image that has very deep religious meaning, the cross, is not spoken of very much. Owen's biblical intimations of the poem are not visible for an ignorant reader. It seems that the poet addresses a woman. The first draft of this poem is addressed "To any beautiful woman", the following drafts are dedicated "To any woman" with Siegfried Sassoon's impulse. In line five, the arrogance of "O Love," can be considered as praise to an intended reader, who appears to be a woman that can be understood from the feminine description of the body. As can be seen with the comments such as "red lips", "eyes", "slender attitude", "dear voice", "heart" and "pale hand", the descriptions of the physical beauty do not have that gloss when it is compared to the beauty of fellows who would sacrifice their lives for each other. According to Milz, the unselfish love of soldiers is "greater" than the weak love of women ("the kindness of wooed and wooer"). Owen generally isolates the theme of home front and female sentimentality for being not related to the war in his poems. However, "Greater Love" shows that a female's or heterosexual love is "shame" in a comparison with the "love pure" represented by soldiers. The theme of women's beauty and Owen's thoughts of it confront the main image of the poem, the cross. Milz claims that this cross reflects the uncountable quantity of emotions to Christianity and love in general.¹³¹ The time neighboring with death changed Owen, made him re-comprehend and re-evaluate his views. Through that experience he conceived that there is a deep connection between the living and the dead. In the poem "Greater Love" he praised the touching feelings towards the dead, whose "piteous mouths that coughed" were stopped by earth. He condemned the pretensions of the living on the loftiness of love, that is, in fact, ordinary carnality:

Heart, you were never hot
 Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with shot;
 And though your hand be pale,

¹³¹ Milz, 2011

Paler are all which trail
 Your cross through flame and hail:
 Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not.¹³²

Here Owen constructively reinterpreted the evangelic verse: There men often hear His voice: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life – for a friend.¹³³ The poet gave this saying a reverse perspective in a way that, the man who has shown greater love is deserving it. Moreover, Owen declared that, the dead are more honest than the living because to stay alive, and win death in the inhuman war conditions meant to become more violent than the death itself.

From the poet's view, God saves the souls of those who fell in the battle and punishes by imperishable guilt those who could get out alive, "with superhuman inhumanities":

Of them who running on that last high place
 Leapt to swift unseen bullets, or went up
 On the hot blast and fury of hell's upsurge,
 Or plunged and fell away past this world's verge,
 Some say God caught them even before they fell.
 But what say such as from existence' brink
 Ventured but brave too swift to sink,
 And there out-fiending all its fiends and flames
 With superhuman inhumanities,
 Long-famous glories, immemorial shames –
 And crawling slowly back, have by degrees
 Regained cool peaceful air in wonder –
 Why speak not they of comrades that went under?¹³⁴
 ("Spring Offensive")

Owen usually uses nature in an aggressive way to show the bitterness of war, as in the poem "Exposure" with its deathly winds and in "Asleep" with

¹³² Lewis and Blunden, 1965: War poems.

¹³³ Stallworthy, 1974: The Somme.

¹³⁴ Lewis and Blunden, 1965: War poems.

the “winds’ scimitars”. Another poem “Spring Offensive” reveals the act of how nature is preventing the soldiers from attacking, and then brings forth an attack against them when they disregard the appeal, but becomes calm instantly after the assault. In this poem the beauty of spring is opposed to the atrocity of war.¹³⁵

“Spring Offensive” was the last poem that Owen wrote before he died. The reader understands from the poem, that the poet was far from resolving his inner conflicts regarding the war. This poem depicts an attack with the soldiers before, during and after the action. The poet romanticizes all the three stages:

Till like a cold gust thrills the little word
At which each body and its soul begird
And tighten them for battle. No alarms
Of bugles, no high flags, no clamorous haste –
Only a lift and flare of eyes that faced
The sun, like a friend with whom their love is done.

According to Adrian Caesar's analysis of that poem, “lift and flare of eyes” is as much an image of Romantic heroism as the missing “alarms”, “bugles” and “flags”. The following massacre is depicted so:

...And instantly the whole sky burned¹³⁶

The name of this poem “Spring Offensive” is an oxymoron by itself, as spring is a time when nature wakes up and brings life to everything and offensive is an aggressive attack that means destruction and death. The poem consists of six parts that depict the attack from all view points. Owen does not involve himself in the narration, and the reader sees the scene from the outside, what makes the poem more objective. The broken rhythm, irregular rhymes and mixed meter gives the poem an impression of everything becoming ruined that expresses the character of the battle. The feelings are changing throughout the poem, starting with smooth and calm, using long vowels and words that underline the situation like “marvelling”,

¹³⁵ Mahmud, 2008: 36, 39.

¹³⁶ Caesar, 1993: 165.

“breeze”, “murmurous”, “oozed”, coming to tensed with more clear rhythm, and then again coming back to peacefulness. The poem is based on a historical moment, when Owen's battalion was ordered to leave Savy Woods and attack a German trench on the west side of St. Quentin in the early morning of April 14, 1917. In the afternoon they started their final attack, but found the German trench empty. That day Owen was with the part of his battalion that went back to Savy Wood for a rest. The evidence to this is Owen's letter home, where he wrote: Immediately after I sent my last letter.....we were rushed up into the line. Twice in one day we went over the top, gaining both our objectives. Our "A" Company led the attack and of course lost a certain number of men. I had some extraordinary escapes from shells and bullets.¹³⁷

Owen experienced both feelings pride and guilt for being a soldier, because to be a soldier means to be manlike and at the same time has the risk of loosing masculineness. This problem is thoroughly reflected in the poem “Disabled”. Through his poems he rationalized the pride in his suffering and used it in educative purposes. The poems serve as a diminishing factor for the guilt he had because of the violence he had applied.¹³⁸ Owen also criticized the indifferent attitude of the civilians to the sufferings of the soldiers: “Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.” According Prof. Sagher the poet feels sympathy for a young soldier, who lost his legs in war, and as a result, is avoided with repugnance by people. “Disabled” condemns the acceptance by the higher ranks of the very young inexperienced men to take part in the warfare, that causes these underaged men to be disabled and neglected. The poem represents a disabled soldier, who has no idea of why he has joined the army, only that he wanted to be loved and appreciated by girls. But finally, the war brings him to the state of unattractive man avoided by women. The reader can understand his pain from these lines:

Now he will never feel again how slim

¹³⁷ www.wilfredowen.org.uk, 2014

¹³⁸ Caesar, 1993: 160.

Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands.
All of them touch him like some queer disease.¹³⁹

According to a Post-Structuralist analysis of Rubina Shaheen, Owen has implied several meanings in the poem "Disabled". One of them is the thoughts of the disabled soldiers searching for the reason of joining the army, and another is the study of the emotional affects in the disabled conditions of the soldiers. The poet juxtaposes the youth and strength of a man with motionless and lack of energy of this man after the war. The past is represented in the lines:

About this time Town used to swing so gay
When glow-lamps budded in the light blue trees,

while the present is sad "in his ghastly suit of grey".¹⁴⁰ It is claimed, that Owen has included some autobiographic features in this poem. The town in the poem that "used to swing gay" recalls London when the poet enlisted. He depicts with anger the civilians, who are isolated from the war like "an artist silly for his face" or

Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
Thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.

That sounds hypocritical, rude and bold in reference to the soldier.¹⁴¹

The idea of guilt is one of the major themes in Owen's poetry. It is regarded as Owen's strong religious belief and his reference to "seared conscience", that is the allusion to his pacifistic character and Christianity. For instance, this feeling of universal guilt is represented in the poem "The Dead Beat". The scene of the poem is common for the everyday life at the war. The poet is writing with irony about a soldier who wounded himself to escape from the war, but is dying because of a drunk doctor unable to help:

He dropped more sullenly than wearily
Lay stupid like a cod, heavy like meat.¹⁴²

The criticism of indifference to the life of young soldiers and

¹³⁹ Sagher, 2012: 225.

¹⁴⁰ Shaheen, 2010: 59-60.

¹⁴¹ www.wilfredowen.org.uk, 2014

¹⁴² Echevarria, 1995: 22.

chauvinistic statements of civilians gave a birth to another poem “Dulce Et Decorum Est”. The name of it derives from the Horace's maxim “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori”, that has a meaning “It is sweet and seemly to die for one's country.” The poem was written in October 1917 and mainly concentrated on shocking civilians, that knew the war as something righteous. The poet is trying to convey the picture of how war is at the front. As the poem unfolds, Owen changes direction and begins to show more of his own horrified dreams depicting the death of gassed soldiers. The poem starts with the soldiers in the trenches and continues with the gas attack in such a vivid explanation that you can feel the experience as if it is real life. Here his use of direct speech shows the influence of Sasson on his work.

The onomatopoeia in the rhyme, that Owen uses in the first stanza “sludge – trudge” gives a sound of soldiers walking on mud. The poet uses similes comparing soldiers with “old beggars” and “hags”. Thus, the image of soldiers crushed physically and mentally opens the poem.¹⁴³ The direct speech “Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!” in the third stanza creates an instant panic image in the poem. The poet uses alliteration like in “And watch the white eyes writhing” and cacophony “guttering, choking, drowning” constituting a dreamy, romanticism which is surreal and in sync with tragic death scene that is being shown. There are various types of rhymes that Owen used in this poem. He can be considered as using straightforward rhyme like “sacks – backs”, which gives his work a smooth musical sound. Thus, the poet gives the poem an ironic situation. The irony is built on comparison of romantic lexicon with unsentimental motive, and reflects the irony of the courageous but futile soldiers' deaths. The military considered the dead British men useless, and Owen felt that his war poetry was serving as a threnody for them. While the soldiers were thinking that they could be useful and respected later on, they were treated as something used once and then discarded. This theme finds reflection in Owen's poems, where he uses dramatic irony in order to create the feeling of compassion in the reader. The

¹⁴³ www.wilfredowen.org.uk, 2014

last stanza occurs to be the most shocking with the images of the dying soldier's eyes "writhing in his face" and the sound of blood "gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs". That way Owen uses onomatopoeic "writhing" and "gargling" making the scene even more negative and tragic. He creates the ironic view with the help of the romantic lexicon used to describe unromantic scenes. The poet also ironically uses "my friend" addressing to Jessie Pope and all other propagandists of war, that tell children the "old lie" about the glories of war. Thus, he brings people the harsh and bizarre picture of the war actualities.¹⁴⁴

The war poetry of Wilfred Owen represents the hell, that is filled with the moaning of its tenants in continues torment. Therefore a rhyme has given a sullen harmony. The lives of the soldiers are in an up and down affect of helplessness and sadness, as if hope is going along with ebb and tide of the war. Owen was purposely using the fall from a high pitched vowel to a low pitched one. Through that he tried to show the overwhelming situation of the young soldiers. This affect is reflected in the destroyed rhyme of his poems, that was a technique created by Owen.¹⁴⁵

His poems resembling Sassoon such as "Dulce et Deorum Est" and "Spring Offensive" portrayd dread and position against war. Rage and irony are used against its continuance. This insinuates that the civilian does not understand the real horror of war. He displays his feelings of compassion as much as his rage. And yet, his rage does not interfere with his compassion for the ones who suffered, which is the compelling force of this poem.

In his poem "Futility" he is again pointing out the uselessness of war by showing the misery of the war in a tranquil and query way. The death of the soldier is only a start in his querying of the emptiness of war and humanity.¹⁴⁶ This poem speaks of the dying youth wasted on the war. The idea represented here is the uselessness of war and even life, because men who died can not be brought back to life even by the sun. The poet questions

¹⁴⁴ Cash, 2010

¹⁴⁵ Mahmud, 2008: 29.

¹⁴⁶ Mahmud, 2008: 33.

the problem of life and death through the depiction of the sun giving life to seeds, but not able to revive the body of the dead soldier:

Are limbs, so dear achieved, are sides
Full-nerved, still warm, too hard to stir?¹⁴⁷

“Futility” was one of those five poems that were published during the lifetime of the poet. The poem represents the death of a soldier that Owen appeared to know. The scene happens in the winter morning on the front. This poem is considered to be “one of the great poems to come out of the War, out of any war”.¹⁴⁸ Nature, specifically the sun, is used here as a metaphorical structure for the poet's thoughts. The poem is divided into two seven-line stanzas, and represents the circle of the activities of the sun that are waking everything up, holding the knowledge, giving life to the earth, and finally not having power over human life. The poem is soft and gentle. These senses are reached by the lexicon, that Owen uses such as “move”, that is contrasting “Dulce Et Decorum Est” where the body “flung” into the wagon. The soft tone is also supported by the words “gently”, “touch”, “whispering”. The “fields unsown” depict the two meanings that Owen had implied, the denotative one stating that the dead soldier will never work on these fields, and the connotative, that submits a deeper meaning of the tragedy of life left incomplete. The image of “this snow” represents death that may be frightening for the reader.¹⁴⁹ According to Peter Cash, Owen implies the idea of humanity moulded out of the earthly clay, where “clay” is a metonym for “man”:

Think how it wakes the seeds –
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Thus, the poet states the global question of the purpose of human life:
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
--O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

¹⁴⁷ Sagher, 2012: 227.

¹⁴⁸ Cash, 2010

¹⁴⁹ www.wilfredowen.org.uk, 2014

Here, Owen also questions the Christian morale of the life after death. The rhetorical questions create the sense that points to the uselessness of the existence and that ends in filth of no value.¹⁵⁰ The poet mixes meters of the poem, trochee with iamb, and uses pararhyme in order to distract the natural rhythm. He represents the serious problem of reuniting the mystery of creation with the sin of the wasted creation. Owen implies the futility of the life conflict, and at the same time the futility of the attempts to find a solution for this problem.¹⁵¹

When Owen went to war, he swore to find the truth. He was searching for it in the dug-out, "kept slush waist-high" ("The Sentry"), under "the air that shudders black with snow" ("Exposure"), in "the white eyes" of those who choked from gas ("Dulce Et Decorum Est"). He finally found the truth in submission at any cost. That was one of the main Commandments. Owen wrote in his letter to Colin, his youngest brother: Christ is literally in no man's land. Is it spoken in English only and French? I do not believe so. Thus you see how pure Christianity will not fit in with pure patriotism...¹⁵²

The poet knew from the very beginning that he was fated to die. During the first days on the front he wrote his visionary poem "The End", where he expressed the meaning of belief – the possibility of resurrection. Though he conveyed it with the doubt, we know that only the doubting may truly believe.

Owen's ability to foresee, as well as his talent to write poems, did not appear out of nowhere. He was keen on poetry from his childhood. This helped him to perceive the mysteries of a word. His relatives called him a philosopher for his quiet, thoughtful contemplation. He grounded his will to enlist in the military, as a true poet, by the sense to perpetuate "the language in which Keats and the rest of them wrote".¹⁵³ Wilfred Owen called him his teacher. According to the researchers, the bond with the John Keats' tradition appeared in the sensual perception of life and death, in the connection of the

¹⁵⁰ Cash, 2010

¹⁵¹ www.wilfredowen.org.uk, 2014

¹⁵² Stallworthy, 1974: The Somme.

¹⁵³ Stallworthy, 1974: France 1913-15.

philosophical subject with the depiction flexibility, in combination of lexicon simplicity and metaphors.¹⁵⁴

Owen's poems also have allusions on the works of many well-known poets. A big range of English poets, such as Percy Shelley, Thomas Hardy, Alfred Housman, and Algernon Swinburne, are reflected in his poems. While being a student, Owen was concerned with self-education as he was not able to pay for he university. Indeed, he became an intellectual, and came to know the particulars of poetry writing. However, no one from his front-line comrades knew him as a poet. He wrote in the letter to Sassoon in 1918 after coming back to the front in France: And now I am among the herds again, a Herdsman; and a Shepherd of sheep that do not know my voice.¹⁵⁵

To depict the fearful reality of war, Owen uses confrontation of two opposing terms in his poems such as in "Dulce Et Decorum Est" dream/reality, bitter/sweet, lie/truth, in "Mental Cases" normal/abnormal, guilt-innocence, dawn/dusk, and in "Futility" warm/cold, dead/alive, kind/unkind. According to the Post-Structuralists, with the help of these oppositions the poet arouses the feeling of misfortune. The oppositions are hierarchal, where one word represents an exceptional idea for the culture, and the other stands for a pessimistic idea.¹⁵⁶

The poetry of Wilfred Owen has a special characteristic – the language of admiration of the soldiers. The poems such as "Anthem for Doomed Youth", "Greater Love" and "Futility" reach a corresponding feeling of honour and tranquility. Thus, the poet conveys grief and sympathy for the terrifying life of the soldiers and their loss. Such linguistic techniques as reduced rhythms, steady diction, dark syntax, and overall balance combined with the feeling of atrocity and rage let the reader comprehend the agony of the soldiers. According to T. J. Walsh the poems such as "Apologia Pro Poemate Meo", "Insensibility", "Mental Cases", "Dulce et Decorum est", "Disabled" sustain the warning and educational purposes of the poet. Owen's

¹⁵⁴ Loukin, 2012: introduction.

¹⁵⁵ Fussel, 1972: 277.

¹⁵⁶ Shaheen, 2010: 60-61.

perception of the men he served with and commanded develops progressively with his realizing of their qualities, such as cheerfulness, grim humor, and devotion. These descriptions are echoed in the poems such as “Miners”, “The Send-Off”, “Arms and the Boy”, “Parable of the Old Men and the Young”.¹⁵⁷

The philosophy of Owen's poetry lies in his re-creating of individual qualities and identifiers in the time of war. The author suggests we look at Owen as a “poet at war”, not just a “war poet”. He explains that by the reason of “war poet's” qualities, according to the customs of war period, such as patriotism, manliness, and novice, that makes it salable. Therefore, that image is destructive and deceptive.¹⁵⁸

Owen tends to have compacted language, where adjectives and nouns go after each other in a fast manner, that imparts the instantaneous situations and indicates the sequence of moments. That kind of language is claimed to have been used in Romanticism for depicting the people in peaceful times. Here it changes to the language full of feelings and emotions with an energetic character that helps the poet to describe the horrors of war. Post-Structuralists identify Owen's syntax in poems as indistinct. They assert that the poet does not follow the grammar rules, instead he links the words under his state of mind. His language reaches obscurity by the use of compound words. Thus he shows the sufferings and troubles of war by the means of intense and concise language. The unclearness and multitude of meanings is conveyed by capitalized words in the poems. Owen converts the ordinary words into very significant ones using capitalization like in poems “The Show” where he writes “my soul looked down from a vague height with Death” or in “Dulce Et Decorum Est” talking about “the old Lie”, or in “Mental Cases” writing “these are men whose minds the Dead have ravished”. Another feature that brings vagueness to Owen's poems is his rhetorical questions. This way he engages the reader to think of and guess the endings like in poems “Disabled” “why don't they come”, “Mental Cases” “who are

¹⁵⁷ Walsh, 2011: 2-3.

¹⁵⁸ Freeman, 2007: 333.

these? Why sit they here in twilight?, “Asleep” “who knows? who hopes? who troubles?”. Owen often also uses punctuation to transmit the ambiguity of the poems and give them several intentions, such as the use of dashes in “Futility” and “Dulce Et Decorum Est”. Though the meanings that these dashes carry in these two poems are different. The line “gas! Gas! Quick boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling” in “Dulce Et Decorum Est” depicts the chaos and tense of the soldiers struggling for their lives in the gas attack. On the contrary, the dashes in “Futility” help to switch the mood of the poem from pity to rage, from belief to disappointment:

–O what made fatuous sunbeams toil

To break earth's sleep at all?

The everlasting suffering and pain of the soldiers is explained to the reader through Owen's use of continuation marks like in “Dulce Et Decorum Est”:

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling

And floundering like a man in fire or lime...

The researcher claims that Owen also implied the gruesome character of the narration that is better to stay untold by the use of continuation mark. This way the readers are left a space for thinking and solving the questions of the poems.¹⁵⁹

The poetic voice of Wilfred Owen has an unusual and growing character. His works portray the things in both attractive and appalling, and even criticizing manners. They also take the part in frightful cautioning the young men in their desire for glory, that there is a big chance they might lose their life or their manliness instead. In the Preface, left as a draft, and that later became the most famous manifesto of the 20th Century, Owen wrote: “This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them. Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except war. Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is the pity. Yet

¹⁵⁹ Shaheen, 2010: 63-64.

these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolatory. They may be to the next. All a poet can do today is warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful.”¹⁶⁰ His poems are admired and loved, and depict only the actions without studying the reasons of war and searching for salvation. Owen shows through them the reality of actions, with the educative and warning message.¹⁶¹

Through his poems Owen assails the war and reveals the vanity of it. He wrote to his cousin Leslie Gunston: “I think every poem, and every figure of speech should be a matter of experience.”¹⁶² Indeed he justified his own words. The poet endured all the cruelty of the trenches and yet had great compassion for the soldiers he served with, suffering with them the futility of war, that did not do any good for them. He uncovered the main evils of fighting, where people's lives lose the value in the struggle for the purposes of the carefree leaders.

Owen was able to deliver the events happening in France to British civilians who could not comprehend the realities of war. The affect the war had on Owen and his generation also had a big influence on the next generation. The poet depicted the devastating scenes of war with such accuracy that it caused him to become one of the most read poets during World War I.

Though Owen might owe the development of his reputation to the editors whose efforts made his poems rise from the bloody ashes of war, we cannot deny his unique impact on war literature and poetry. Standing side by side with Sassoon, they were advocates to resisting the war and revealing its consequences. He is one of those true poets, true to his position, ideals, and works. In this sense, his poems have no parallel. It is evident in Owen's poems that he wants the reader to feel understanding, sorrow and regret for war and he is successful in portraying these truths. It is through these empathic poems we can understand the suffering of others. In his struggle

¹⁶⁰ Stallworthy, 1974: Scarborough and Ripon.

¹⁶¹ Armitage, 2005: 12-13.

¹⁶² Stallworthy, 1974: Scarborough and Ripon.

against the horrors, futility and regrets of war, Owen sacrificed his life, just as the war was ending.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ www.warpoetry.co.uk, 2014

CONCLUSION

The effects of WWI on nations, lives, social and cultural activities are undeniable. This particular work has reviewed the poetry of this specific period in British and Russian histories. The modern literary movements of the war period have been examined. The literary effects of war on the British and Russian poets and their works have been analyzed.

The main feature of the war period was the rise of artistic movements. 'War literature' reflected the shock and terror that people had experienced during the WWI. The writers and poets expressed their patriotic feelings together with pain and horror in their works that influenced the national consciousness of both countries. The war united the authors of various literary movements in their inclination to transmit their emotions to people. The poetry underwent some changes regarding content throughout the war. The poets tended to convey the scenes of war and battlefields through the poetic symbols. They escaped from the traditional forms and images and sought to shock the reader in order to bring the reader's senses to life.

The concepts of war poetry have been viewed in part II of the thesis. The main themes of the poems and their effect on people have been analyzed. The main distinction of war poems is laid out in two different perspectives: the home front and the battlefield. However, there was also poetry that was agitational and considered as war propaganda. Both the British and the Russian government needed to motivate the nations and therefore tended to get the support from literature. The researchers differentiated the war poetry along the gender lines such as female and male poetry. Women awaiting for their loved ones tended to write with an encouraging manner. However, the men who were at the front expressed the reality of it, the hardships of the trenches and their love for their motherland. Nevertheless, not only men took part in the warfare, women also had a big influence on the war, participating in various actions starting with working at

hospitals and ending with building the blockades. Certainly, female or male all poets that were at the heart of the events could portray the action more vividly and realistically. However, some poets showed their tendency towards romantic themes and enthusiasm at the outbreak of the war. They expressed their nationalistic feelings through romanticism. The nationalistic feelings in the poems influenced the civilians to enlist in the army. The feeling of the endless fighting and struggling for life hardened them and brought them to another level of comprehension. The description of true scenes and the hardships of war acquired recognition. The display of the poets-soldiers' unique experience was the intent of this thesis. The uniqueness lied in the contradiction of two spheres, the act of fighting at war and the process of writing poetry. The feelings of the poet were depicted directly from the connection to the horrors of war by the side of their manifestation of national agonies. Hence, the analysis of two war perspectives was held in this work using two soldier-poets, who were British and Russian, along with their works.

The features of both cultures studied in this thesis have been represented through the works of Wilfred Owen and Nikolay Gumilev. They experienced the war, fought through it, wrote their emotions and depicted the reality of those times. Their works reflected their inner world, feelings, passions and civilian positions. The comparison of these two poets that stand among the most important figures of war poetry poses an intricate question with regards to poetry criticism. In order to show the contrasts and parallelisms of both poets, it is suitable to use the term, juxtaposition. It is sensible to mention the fact that Wilfred Owen and Nikolay Gumilev were both volunteers in the war and lived through its horrors, earned Military Crosses and influenced the minds of other people. The first contrast is the fact that Owen had only five of his poems published during his life, while Gumilev's poems were in print within his duty and life. Both poets fought bravely and accepted the hardships of the front. I also regard them as two men who struggled for the expression of their ideas. Owen criticized the war and Gumilev regarded it in a more positive light because he thought that it

would kill Bolsheviks. He was a big monarchist. For poets, the war period was a time of finding new ideals and breaking with old value systems. The two men, whose search for an ideal was brought to light during the creation of their war poems, are also comparable to philosophical lyric poetry. They could have brought much more of their works to the world but their fate was to end in tragedy.

Although, they were on the same side in the World War I as the main supporters of Entente, had Christian backgrounds, and were brave fighters, their views were quite opposite. Gumilev was the founder of Akmeism poetry which, in turn, represented the feelings of a primitive human through metaphorical imagery. Owen was regarded as a Georgian poet, although it was not considered as a literary school, as far as it had no agreed upon principles. The poets of that period got their inspiration from the natural world and were inclined to depict their reaction against modernity.

Owen was recognized and highly appreciated for his war poetry and made a huge contribution to British war literature. At the same time, Gumilev was one of the most active in the war among his contemporary poets and, undoubtedly affected the people with his love towards the motherland and while striving for old Christian values. On the other hand, Owen did his best in his fight against the futility of war, and had a great influence on the young men's minds. Both poets became the teachers of poetry for the next generations. Owen and Gumilev truly experienced all the hardships of war, earned the rewards for bravery and suffered shell-shock as did many other soldiers at the front. But the feature that distinguished them from others was the devotion not only to war, but to the comrades, to people, to their countries and poetry. Owen used his poems to convey the cruel truth of war and its destructive character to people far away from warfare. His works represented his protest against the uselessness of war. On the other hand, Gumilev depicted the war actions not only through his poems, but also in the narrations of "Cavalryman Notes". He meant to keep those notes in order to create a documentary tale about the important events of the first year at war. In his poetry he tended to portray the motherland he missed, as well as

Christian themes. His war poetry was filled with courage, lyricism and patriotic pathos, where the war took a role of cathartic fire.

Their works have some very remarkable similarities. For example, in the poem "Disabled" Wilfred Owen describes a man in a wheelchair that is observing the people outside of the hospital and automatically recollecting the past days of his life being a sportsman. The poem carries a heavy feeling of sorrow, defectiveness and even irony concerning the man. The poet is written in the third person narrative. In turn, Gumilev's "Memory" is written in the first person narrative and the author is remembering and analyzing his life that was full of changes but came to an end. We feel his sadness for the country and people losing their spirituality. He summarizes the poem with the question "I will cry out...but who can prevent my soul from dying?," not finding the answer for it because of his own lack of faith. While Owen also talks about pain and death and he concludes his poem about the suffering person with the question "Why don't they come and put him into bed?," ironically pleading and depending on women to put him to bed contrasting himself to when he was younger and could get women's attention.

The theme of death and its pity goes through Owen's and Gumilev's poems as well. For example in the poem "The Second Year" Gumilev represents his view of uselessness of war that "wildly/ Mocks on our wisdom." Owen's opinion on the war is clear from the title of his poem "Futility." Owen uses rhetorical questions such as in the last lines: "--O what made fatuous sunbeams toil/ To break earth's sleep at all?" to show the uselessness of the existence. The poet also brings up the Christian idea of the life after death. In turn, Gumilev addresses the reader using the rhetorical question: "Does not it (the things that happen after the war) matter?" He claims that he understood the Earth and its mission and points at the same question of the life after death in the end of his poem: "You (Earth) are just a gloomy portress/ At the entrance to the God's Fields," which represent the heaven.

Other similarities are observed in Gumilev's poem "The Attack" and Owen's "Spring Offensive". Both poets use the image of fire to show the real

horror of war burning the life everywhere like in the beginning of the poem "The Attack": "That country, which could be the heaven,/Became a lair of fire." While, Owen expresses the battle in the line: "...And instantly the whole sky burned." The Christian factor makes them also the poets believing in God's help as a main source of salvation. Owen reflects his idea of soldiers saved by God before dying: "Some say God caught them even before they fell." At the same time Gumilev portrays the sacred scene of Communion in the lines: "Because the word of God/ Nourishes us better than bread." Thus, the poets resemble each other in their strong Christian belief.

Both poets went through the unspeakable shock of war where no one stays the same, and everyone is obliged to serve and suffer for the sake of their country. Both of them, despite the severe and inhuman conditions, were able to convey the main purpose of a poet – the truth. Thus the war poetry was not only speaking for each of its writers, but it was the voice of the armies, the address to the civilians, the bright record of the development and growth of the nations.

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APPENDIX

The poems of the Russian poet Nikolay Gumilev

Only Serpents Let Their...

Only serpents let their skin be fallen
 And a soul — all grown up and old.
 We, alas, change an eternal soul,
 Leaving body in eternal hold.

Oh, remembrance, power, she-giant,
 You direct a horse-life with a bridle,
 You will tell me all these men about,
 Who had had my body before I'd.

The first one was ugly, thin and tragic,
 Loving darkness of the garden lane,
 Falling Leaf, the child of gloomy magic,
 Whose one word could fully stop the rain.

Second one — he liked the wind from South,
 Every noise for him was strings' accord,
 He believed that life is just his spouse,
 And the rag under his feet — the world.

I don't like him: in his mind, he's roused,
 To the crowns of the King and God,
 He had hanged on entrance to my house
 The signboard with a script "The Bard."

I do like the favorite of freedom,
Him, who used to sail in sea and shoot:
What a song he heard in water's kingdom,
What a cloud followed his routes!

I'm a builder, which is working smartly
O'er the temple, arising in a haze,
Seek for fame for my beloved country
As in Heavens, so on the earth.

Heart is scorched by non-extinguished fire,
Till the day, in which, as made of light,
Walls of New Jerusalem will spire
On the fields of my beloved land.

Then the queer wind will start to blow,
And the awful light will pour on us,
It's the Milky Way — begins to grow
As a garden of the dazzling stars.

And the tiered stranger will appear,
Hiding face, but I will catch his dream,
Looking at a lion, going near,
And an eagle, flying straight to him.

I will scream, but who will hear my groan,
Who will save my soul from a crash?
Only snakes could let their skin be fallen,
People lose the soul — not the flesh.

Translated by Yevgeny Bonver, edited by Bmitry Karshtedt.

Memory (another version of translation)

Only snakes shed their skin,
So their souls can age and grow.
We, alas, do not resemble snakes,
We change souls, not bodies.

Memory, with the hand of a giantess
You lead life like a horse by the reins,
You will tell me about those who lived
In this body before it was mine.

The very first was plain and thin,
And loved only forests in twilight,
He was a fallen leaf, a magic child
Who stopped the rain with a word.

A tree and a red dog -
These he took as friends.
Memory, memory, you will not find proof,
You will not convince the world he was me.

And the second...He loved a wind from the south,
Heard the ring of the lyre in every noise,
Said that life was a friend to him,
And the world a carpet beneath his feet.

I don't like him at all, it was he
Who wanted to be God and king,
He hung the sign of a poet
Over the doors of my silent house.

I like freedom's chosen one,

The seafarer and rifleman.
Ah, the waters clearly sang to him
And the clouds were full of envy.

His tent was on high ground,
The mules were strong and frisky
He drank in like wine the sweet air
Of a country unknown to the white man.

Memory, you weaken year to year,
Was it that one or another one
Who traded happy freedom
For a sacred, long-awaited battle.

He knew the pains of hunger and thirst,
Sleep disturbed, the endless road,
But St. George twice touched
His breast untouched by a bullet.

I am the somber and stubborn builder
Of a temple rising up in the gloom.
I covet the glory of Savaoth,
Both in heaven and on earth.

My heart will be scorched to the depths by flame
Until the day when the walls of the New Jerusalem
Will rise up clean
From the fields of my native land.

And then a peculiar wind will blow
And a terrible light will pour from the sky -
The Milky Way will unexpectedly bloom

Like a garden of blinding planets.

An unknown traveler will appear before me,
 Hiding his face; but I'll understand all
 When I see the lion following his tracks,
 And the eagle flying toward him.

I will cry out...but who can prevent
 My soul from dying?
 Only snakes shed their skin
 We change souls, not bodies.¹⁶⁴

The Attack

That country, which could be the heaven,
 Became a lair of fire.
 We are attacking the fourth day,
 We haven't eaten for four days.

But we don't need viand of earth
 At this terrific and bright hour,
 Because the word of God
 Nourishes us better than bread.

And the weeks afloat with blood
 Are glaring and light.
 The shots are ripping over me,
 Blades are flushing faster than birds.

I am crying, and my voice is wild.
 That is brass thrashing brass.

¹⁶⁴ "The Project From the Ends to the Beginnings."

I am a bearer of the great thought,
And I can not, I can not die.

Like thunderous hammers,
Or waves of wroth seas,
The golden heart of Russia
Beats with swing in my chest.

So sweet to dress up the Victory,
Like a girl dressing up with pearls,
Passing over smoky traces
Of retreating enemy.

Translated by Farida Isaeva

The workman
He stands before a blazing forge,
A humble, bent and small old man.
His blinking eyelids are burnt red,
His look seems quite obedient.

All his comrades are asleep
Only he has not yet slept:
He works a bullet into shape,
The one that will cut my life short.

Finishing, his eyes light up.
He heads home. The moon shines.
His wife awaits, warm and asleep
In their big bed, for his return.

The bullet cast so well will whine
Above the icy Dvina's foam,

The bullet cast so well will find
My breast, indeed for me it comes.

And as I fall my life goes by
For me to see in truth my past,
My blood will flow onto the dry
And dusty, trodden field of grass.

The Lord will rightly be the judge
Of life's short span of bitterness.
In his gray blouse, the man at the forge
Is the one who made me thus.

Translated by Burton Raffel and Alla Burago.¹⁶⁵

The Sun of the Spirit
How could we walk in peace, before,
expecting no joy, no disaster,
not dreaming of battles, of flaming retreats,
or the roaring trumpet of victory ?

How could we—but it's not too late,
the sun of the spirit bends down to us—
soothing, threatening, it pours
across our skies.

And our spirit flowers like a May rose,
tearing darkness apart like fire;
knowing nothing, blind, the body
obeys.

¹⁶⁵ Raffel and Burago, trans. *Selected Works of Nikolay S. Gumilev*, 62.

Out on the wild, beautiful plains,
 in the quiet holiness of the deep forest,
 the soul knows no torment
 nor the will any difficulty.

It will be autumn, soon: I feel it.
 The sun's work will be done
 and people will pick golden fruit
 from the tree of the spirit.

Translated by Burton Raffel and Alla Burago.¹⁶⁶

The Sun of the Spirit
 How could we walk in peace, before,
 Expecting no joy and no disaster,
 Not dreaming of the battles on the war
 Or trumpets of the victory thereafter?

How could we – but it's not too late,
 The sun of spirit bends to us –
 The sun of spirit threatening and great,
 It pours on the skies across

And spirit rises like a rose of May
 Tearing the darkness all apart like fire
 The body blindly obeys
 Without knowing as if it's mired.

Out on the wild, beauty plains,
 In the quiet holiness of forests,
 Will has no difficulty frames

¹⁶⁶ Raffel and Burago, trans. *Selected Works of Nikolay S. Gumilev*, 62.

Nor soul knows any torments

Autumn is coming and I feel it.
 The work of sun is going to end
 And people from the tree of spirit
 Will pick the golden fruits.
 Edited by Farida Isaeva

The War
 As a dog on a heavy chain,
 Gun is yelping over the forest
 And shrapnels are buzzing, like bees
 Collecting ruby coloured honey
 And "hurray" beyond is like a singing
 Of harvesters that finished a hard day
 You will say it is a peaceful village
 In the loveliest evening of all.

Truly bright and sacred is
 The noble work of war
 Bright and alar seraphims
 Appear behind the warriors backs.

Toilers, heavily walking
 Over the bloody fields,
 Sowing feat and reaping glory,
 Now, God, bless you.

As those who are bending with a plough
 As those who pray and mourn,
 Their hearts burn in front of You,
 Burn like wax candles.

But for that, oh God, bestow
Power and a regal hour of victory,
Who will tell to the prostrate: "Dear,
Please, accept my fraternal kiss!"
Edited by Farida Isaeva

The Second Year
And the second year is coming to an end,
But colours flutter all the same,
And the same war wildly
Mocks on our wisdom.

Following her winged genius,
Always playing to a draw,
With paeon and singing
Troops will enter the capital. Whose?

And will they count all the sunk
During the difficult crossings,
Forgotten in the fields trampled down,
And high-flown glories in the chronicle.

Or future clear dawns
Will see the world as of old,
Huge red carnations,
And a savage sleeping on them;

The lyrical roars of monsters can be heard,
Suddenly rains are beating wildly,
And light green fatty horsetails
Are drawing tight everything.

Does not it matter? Let time roll,
We understood you, Earth!
You are just a gloomy portress
At the entrance to the God's Fields.

Translated by Farida Kocak

To France
France, to your enlightened face
I will turn once again,
And as in a bottomless maelstrom
I will plunge into my wild, dear Rus.

You were her marvelous dream,
The sun of so many perfect years,
But to call you her sister,
I see, I see, she should not do.

Only the sky in crimson glow
Reflected the shed blood,
As in all you republicans
Knighthood awakened again.

Came out who for what: one for
The three coloured flag freely run along the sea
Another, for the house on the slope,
Where he was playing in childhood:

That – for the Legion of Honour to be brought
To his darling in memorial of their parting,
This – just from sheer boredom,

And amongst them he was the most brave!

We gathered there, bowed in prayer,
 Angels sang for us from the hight,
 But when fled – offended women,
 Squandered guns and crosses on drink.
 Forgive us, stinking and blind,
 Fully prostrated, forgive!
 We are lying in the dung-yard, and crying,
 We do not choose the God's path.

Everyone's soul is cut up,
 Like with the titan's sword, in two.
 In everyone the devil half
 Is glad that it is strong.

Here you are calling: "Where is the sister Russia,
 Where is she, ever loved?"
 Look above: in the galaxy of Serpent
 A new star lighted up.
 Translated by Farida Isaeva

The poems of the British poet Wilfred Owen¹⁶⁷

Strange Meeting
 It seemed that out of battle I escaped
 Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
 Through granites which titanic wars had groined.
 Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
 Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.

¹⁶⁷ Lewis and Blunden, eds. *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*, war poems.

Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,—
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.
With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
"Strange friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn."
"None," said that other, "save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled.
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress.
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Courage was mine, and I had mystery;
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels,
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint

But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
 Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.
 "I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
 I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
 Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
 I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
 Let us sleep now. . . ."

Disabled

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
 And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
 Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
 Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
 Voices of play and pleasure after day,
 Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay
 When glow-lamps budded in the light blue trees,
 And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim,-
 In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
 Now he will never feel again how slim
 Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands.
 All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
 For it was younger than his youth, last year.
 Now, he is old; his back will never brace;
 He's lost his colour very far from here,
 Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
 And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race
 And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.

One time he liked a blood-smear down his leg,
 After the matches, carried shoulder-high.
 It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
 He thought he'd better join. - He wonders why.
 Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts,
 That's why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg,
 Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts
 He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;
 Smiling they wrote his lie: aged nineteen years.

Germans he scarcely thought of; all their guilt,
 And Austria's, did not move him. And no fears
 Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
 For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
 And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
 Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
 And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.
 Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
 Thanked him; and then enquired about his soul.

Now, he will spend a few sick years in institutes,
 And do what things the rules consider wise,
 And take whatever pity they may dole.
 Tonight he noticed how the women's eyes
 Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
 How cold and late it is! Why don't they come
 And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

Greater Love

Red lips are not so red
 As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.
 Kindness of wooed and wooer
 Seems shame to their love pure.
 O Love, your eyes lose lure
 When I behold eyes blinded in my stead!

Your slender attitude
 Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed,
 Rolling and rolling there
 Where God seems not to care:
 Till the fierce love they bear
 Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude.

Your voice sings not so soft,—
 Though even as wind murmuring through raftered loft,—
 Your dear voice is not dear,
 Gentle, and evening clear,
 As theirs whom none now hear,
 Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths that coughed.

Heart, you were never hot
 Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with shot;
 And though your hand be pale,
 Paler are all which trail
 Your cross through flame and hail:
 Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not.

Futility
 Move him into the sun -
 Gently its touch awoke him once,
 At home, whispering of fields unsown.

Always it woke him, even in France,
 Until this morning and this snow.
 If anything might rouse him now
 The kind old sun will know.
 Think how it wakes the seeds, -
 Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
 Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides,
 Full-nerved - still warm - too hard to stir?
 Was it for this the clay grew tall?
 --O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
 To break earth's sleep at all?

Spring Offensive

Halted against the shade of a last hill,
 They fed, and, lying easy, were at ease
 And, finding comfortable chests and knees
 Carelessly slept. But many there stood still
 To face the stark, blank sky beyond the ridge,
 Knowing their feet had come to the end of the world.

Marvelling they stood, and watched the long grass swirled
 By the May breeze, murmurous with wasp and midge,
 For though the summer oozed into their veins
 Like the injected drug for their bones' pains,
 Sharp on their souls hung the imminent line of grass,
 Fearfully flashed the sky's mysterious glass.

Hour after hour they ponder the warm field--
 And the far valley behind, where the buttercups
 Had blessed with gold their slow boots coming up,
 Where even the little brambles would not yield,
 But clutched and clung to them like sorrowing hands;

They breathe like trees unstirred.

Till like a cold gust thrilled the little word
 At which each body and its soul begird
 And tighten them for battle. No alarms
 Of bugles, no high flags, no clamorous haste--
 Only a lift and flare of eyes that faced
 The sun, like a friend with whom their love is done.
 O larger shone that smile against the sun,--
 Mightier than his whose bounty these have spurned.

So, soon they topped the hill, and raced together
 Over an open stretch of herb and heather
 Exposed. And instantly the whole sky burned
 With fury against them; and soft sudden cups
 Opened in thousands for their blood; and the green slopes
 Chasmed and steepened sheer to infinite space.

Of them who running on that last high place
 Leapt to swift unseen bullets, or went up
 On the hot blast and fury of hell's upsurge,
 Or plunged and fell away past this world's verge,
 Some say God caught them even before they fell.

But what say such as from existence' brink
 Ventured but drave too swift to sink.
 The few who rushed in the body to enter hell,
 And there out-fiending all its fiends and flames
 With superhuman inhumanities,
 Long-famous glories, immemorial shames--
 And crawling slowly back, have by degrees
 Regained cool peaceful air in wonder--

Why speak they not of comrades that went under?

Dulce Et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
 Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
 Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—
 Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

ABSTRACT

Farida Isaeva. The World War I Poetry Introduced by the British and the Russian Poets Wilfred Owen and Nikolay Gumilev. Istanbul Aydin University, Institute of Social Sciences, English Language and Literature. Istanbul. 2014.

The WWI poetry is a theme discussed by many researchers. Its influence on people from different generations is irrefutable. The war poetry

had various tendencies such as the woman poetry, the trench poetry, the war propaganda poetry. One of the main differences of the poetry of this period is its war lyrics that combined the emotions of the poet with the cruelty of the reality. Thus, war lyrics represent a wide part of the war poetry. The features of war poetry depend on the poet's tendency from being patriotic to protesting against the war.

The war poetry united a lot of poets under its title. Many of them wrote their poems at the home front, some of them were the eye-witnesses of the war combat. This work particularly discussed the poems of the Russian and the British poets. Nikolay Gumilev and Wilfred Owen both took part in the WWI. They were influenced and moved by it, which affected their readers. Both poets' works reflected the horrors and uselessness of war. Gumilev tended to believe in the purifying purpose of the war, where all the sinful would burn and the new world would grow after. In turn, Owen was protesting against the war, its futility, brutality towards the young soldiers losing lives for no reason. Both poets used Christian symbols and allusions in their works.

Key words: World War I, Wilfred Owen, Nikolay Gumilev, Akmeism, war poetry.

ÖZET

Farida Isaeva. İngiliz ve Rus şairler Wilfred Owen ve Nikolay Gumilev tarafından sunulan Birinci Dünya Savaşı şiirleri. İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı. İstanbul. 2014.

Birinci Dünya Savaşının teması bir çok araştırmacılar tarafından konuşulmuştur. Değişik generasyonlar üzerindeki onun etkisi tartışılmaz. Savaş şiirlerinin değişken eğilimleri vardı, mesela; kadın şairleri, siper şiirleri, savaş propaganda şiirleri. Bu dönemin ana farklılıkları arasında şairin

duygularını ve gerçeklerin acımasızlıklarını kombine eden savaş lirikleri vardır. Böylece, savaş lirikleri savaş şiirlerinin büyük bir bölümünü temsil ediyor. Savaş şiirlerinin belirli özellikleri, şairin vatan severliğinden tutun savaşa karşı çıkma eğilimine kadar uzanır.

Savaş şiirleri temasında bir sürü şair bir araya gelmiştir. Bir çoğu ön cepede şiirlerini yazmıştır, bazıları çatışmalara görgü şahidi olmuştur. Bu çalışma, özellikle Rus ve İngiliz şairlerin eserlerini incelemiştir. Nikolay Gumilev ve Wilfred Owen ikiside Birinci Dünya Savaşına katılmıştır. Onları bu durum sarstığı için okuyucularını da aynı şekilde etkilemişlerdir. Her iki şairin eserleri savaşın korkunçluğunu ve faydasızlığını yansıtmıştır. Gumilev savaşın arındırıcı nedenine inanma eğilimindeydi. Tüm günahkarların yanacağına ve sonrasında yeni dünyanın gelişeceğine inanıyordu. Fakat, Owen savaşın yararsızlığına, genç askerlerin hayatlarını nedensiz kaybetme vahşetine karşı çıkmıştır. Her iki şair de Hristiyan sembolleri ve imaları şiirlerinde kullanmışlardır.

Anahtar kelimeleri: Birinci Dünya Savaşı, Wilfred Owen, Nikolay Gumilev, Akmeism, savaş şiirleri.

