

WILFRED AND SIEGFRIED'S PROJECTION OF WAR-PHOBIA AND CONFLICT BETWEEN FRONTLINE'S BRUTAL REALITY AND RELIGION AND SPIRITUALISM

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ABSTRACT

In this article I would like to indicate that many poets have written about wars of which they have had no direct experience. However, the poet fighters Siegfried Loraine Sassoon (1886-1967) and Wilfred Edward Salter Owen (1893-1918) have the firsthand experience and actual knowledge of what war can do, both to the body and to the psyche. In the First World War people in the UK considered a part of a spiritual war or even as a holy war. Understandably Owen and Sassoon's opinions and their succeeding war poems were distinguished among other contemporary poets for being much more realistic, objective and truthful since their concerns were not ethnic, religious, sectarian, and sociopolitical, in fact it was universal and human. As thoughtful individuals and nationality bound citizens Sassoon and Owen were not happy with the religious and the motive of war. The experiences they earned in the frontlines made them realise that an individual's personal and social life should not be destroyed by the war and any such incident that gets ground of religious callings and promises made for the uncertain and unseen future. They felt that if there is an urge for religion in the world then it should be natural religion, and that must be based on superb metaphysics and respectable epistemology with logical antecedents and ingredients of the concepts related with the divine and sacred elements or form of religion and spiritualism.

KEYWORDS: Grand Ayatollahkhamenei, Owen, Poetry, Religion, Religious War, Sassoon, Spiritualism, War, War-Phobia

INTRODUCTION

God of England! God Almighty!

God of England's children free;

God of England's wondrous story;

England's God, we cry to thee". (Marrin 133)

"War" has been defined as "a state of armed conflict between countries or different groups within a country" (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/war>). These countries and groups can be formed on the basis of community, cult, religion, language, race, region, culture, politics, and economy or even on some virtual togetherness in modern era. For the most part, all battles fought in the name of religious conviction are considered as religious wars. A religious war can be defined as a war predominantly triggered or rationalized by arguments and dissimilarities between two or more convictions and to conventional forced similarities through impositions of prevailing and governing religious

principles and politics, beliefs, symbols, practices and as a final point by religious conversions in case any faith or religious convection transpires as a victor of such war. Quarrels and hard-talks in the modern world are normally on the degree to which commercial, sacred, national or ethnic sides of a struggle are in the majority. There are some instances such as the Darfur conflict as a part of the Sudanese Civil War and the wars in former Yugoslavia. In current conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War, the long and notorious Mideast or Palestinian-Israeli war, the bloodshed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the eruption of the Saudi Arabia and its ally's war against Yemen, religious and even in some cases ethnic or sectarian struggles are explicitly existing, but at the same time they frequently are labeled as ethnic, nationalistic, and religious "extremism", "radicalism", or "fundamentalism" subject to the onlooker's sympathies and affiliations. The dominant western media and agenda is keen to blame only one party of such kind of brutalities and hostilities. However, the truth is that such brutal conflicts are not associated with only one part of the world. In this context, Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of The Islamic Republic of Iran, in his message to the Youth in Europe and North America, perceptively observes that:

The histories of the United States and Europe are ashamed of slavery, embarrassed by the colonial period and chagrined at the oppression of people of color and non-Christians. Your researchers and historians are deeply ashamed of the bloodsheds wrought in the name of religion between the Catholics and Protestants or in the name of nationality and ethnicity during the First and Second World Wars. (<http://farsi.khamenei.ir/ndata/news/28731/index.html#en>)

In fact, the European hostilities against "Muslim expansion" in the middle-ages is known as a "religious war" ever since the commencement. The early modern warfare against the "Ottoman Empire" is considered as a whole protraction of the above mentioned war (Scott and Gordon 503). Obviously, religion can be one part of humanity's "cultural heritage" and it is eligible to function as cultural indicator or ethical, sociopolitical and philosophical rationalization for a war that has profounder national, ethnic and cultural dissimilarities, Northern Ireland conflict which is over and over again described as a sacred skirmish (Protestant against Catholic), despite the fact that, indeed, the real source of the struggle was ethnic or nationalistic instead of religious, can be mentioned as a good example (Gordon Martel 6). Simultaneously, followers of various sects and faiths have been and are vigorous supporters of the modern antiwar groups and organizations. The predominantly ISIS commanded current war in Syria and Iraq has been considered as a violently instigated battle by a certain mass of so-called Muslims (being a Muslim myself who reads the Holy Quran Al-Karim on daily basis, I absolutely disagree with what they do in the name of Islam, as Islam means and promotes 'Peace' not 'War') that can have a number of other secret and dormant plans then again it is principally covered with the fake facade of religious conviction. In this regard, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, astutely remarks that:

I would like to talk to you about Islam, particularly the image that is presented to you as Islam. Many attempts have been made over the past two decades, almost since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, to place this great religion in the seat of a horrifying enemy. The provocation of a feeling of horror and hatred and its utilization has unfortunately a long record in the political history of the West. Here, I don't want to deal with the different phobias with which the Western nations have thus far been indoctrinated. A cursory review of recent critical studies of history would bring home to you the fact that the Western governments' insincere and hypocritical treatment of other nations and cultures has been censured in new historiographies. (<http://farsi.khamenei.ir/ndata/news/28731/index.html#en>)

According to the British newspapers and media such as *The Times*, in the First World War people in the UK considered a part of a "spiritual war" (Bogacz 659). Even some other poets such as Robert Bridges, through a mail to the same newspaper, went further and wrote confidently that he wishes the British public to regard the war chiefly as "a holy war" (Bogacz 650). The justification for their claims was the idea that the British people were virtuously defending both truth and Belgium that is why they declared that God is in their side in the WWI (Bontrager 785). Once more, in his mail to *The Times*, Robert Bridges demanded the people to act, requesting the British public to defend the "holy cause of humanity and the law of love" (Roberts 51). He announced that people who supported enemies were serving "the devil and all his works" and this showed that the Germans have "bowed the knee to Satan" (51). In one more paper, stating that "what was going on in Europe between 1914 and 1918 was not just a story, it was among the darkest phases of the human history which cannot be forgotten" (Autogenesis 35), describing the situation, Hossein Omidunveils the truth. Urging individuals to register through relating enlistment and participation in the war to "Salvation" Cate Haste cunningly maintains that:

If the British Empire resolves to fight this battle clearly,...we shall one day realize that it has not been in vain,...the British Empire, as the chosen leaders of the world, shall travel along the road of human destiny and progress at the end of which we shall see the patient figure of the Prince of Peace, pointing to the Star of Bethlehem that leads us on to God. (62)

The blends and fusions of the elements of religious conviction and otherworldliness with warfare can be understood and examined with a public perspective that leads to this assumption that to defend the homeland and religious conviction is a divine obligation, though, this concept is unable to find its credibility for, forcibly, there are in a combat always no less than two sides, the aggressive and the defensive. However, it is obvious that psychologically, philosophically, and emotionally wars for religion, spirituality, conversions, cultural, ideological, or ethnic dominations, and to gain economic advances etc. become challengeable by most of the people who are involved directly or indirectly in wars as they cannot connect with them in any positive manner. As a matter of fact, the facts were showing something else for the WWI destroyed:

Our pride in the achievements of our civilization, our admiration for many philosophers and artists and our hopes of a final triumph over the differences between nations and races. It tarnished the lofty impartiality of our science, it revealed our instincts in all their nakedness and let loose the evil spirits within us which we thought had been tamed forever by centuries of continuous education by the noblest minds. (Freud 306)

The concept of religion in modern world has been based on the wisdom that the established religions are the supernatural realities. This belief can be linked with the basic premises of the Christianity that God exists, God is divine, God created the world, mankind is created by God in the image of God and his divinity is a reality that exists. Similarly, as explained in the holy book of Islam, The glorious Quran Al-Majid, the universe is made by Allah through His will and that He loves human beings and controls His creation through his supernatural and divine power. The Hindu religious belief explains that the almighty God creates, feeds and destroys the universe for recreation when needed, and He can be seen through certain spiritual attainments. Almost every religion and religious structure that ever existed in the world claims through its specific religious book(s) and literature that, from one hand, a celestial component which connects human being and the nature exists, and from the other hand, human being is the most beloved, the most capable divine creation of God. However, the logical mind with scientific temper of the modern world, particularly since the

enlightenment era considers these religious and spiritual beliefs as concepts created by the human consciousness that has gained knowledge about the universe and the world at a larger scale and a deeper way through modern education, scientific ways of getting knowledge and information technology. Certain thinkers and philosophers argue that any concept, whether of “the divine” or “the sacred” are the construct of the knowledge and experience based human consciousness that has awareness and some kind of imaginations about the universe and cosmos. These concepts are created and used to get closer to complete understanding of the human existence as well as the kingdom of God. The modern and so-called scientific approach towards human psychology and life has diverted personal attitude and social sphere of life from the original religious beliefs towards ad-hock religious affiliations and partial understanding of spiritual essence. One important reason behind the ignorance of spiritual elements of the human life in modern civilization perhaps has been the stagnant understanding of religious messages and codes, misinterpretations of religious literature and misunderstanding of the spiritual texts in most of the cases as far as any kind of wars fought in the name of religion are concerned. All the major religions of the world i.e. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and etc. have been exploring and explaining religious and supernatural aspects of their existence to serve the humanity and these causes in a better way than the other. Obstinate, such efforts have also been influenced by the cultural and political motivations and ambitions of certain religious leaders to direct conservative and religious communities, societies and countries towards cultural and political conflicts. However, in his article “The Uncanny Concept: Wilfred Owen the Traumatized and Siegfried Sassoon the Shell-Shocked” Omid writes that the influence of war on the “human psyche is unavoidable and this human psyche_ the outcome of the peculiarities of human existence_ manifests itself in human behavior” (195). The pages of the history of human civilisation reveals this fact that many of such conflicts got converted into wars between religious and political geographies in different parts of the globe at different times. There have been horrible antihuman bloodsheds on the earth due to wars fought in the name of religion, either to “protect” or to “expand” particular religions and their political territories. On the contrary, such wars, particularly the Great Wars, have also initiated the ideology and concerned process of secular and secularisation with the views that religions are not serving humanity anymore, rather they have become a tool of anti-human forces. The secular ideology has led millions of people towards segregation of their religious identities and belongingness in individual and social as well as private and public forms. By many thinkers and philosophers, religion is considered as a need-based creation of human civilisation. In his article “A Theory of Human Motivation”(1943), Abraham Maslow presented the concept “Hierarch of Needs” which emphasise that “only material prosperity can truly pave the way for the pursuit of higher needs” (Saint-Andre). It was another intellectual effort to establish Christian religious ethics in everyday life and for the religious inspirations as well as justification of the activities being or to be done for the prosperity of the concerned societies. As a matter of truth, “the understanding of man’s psyche must be based on the analysis of man’s needs stemming from the conditions of his existence and the most powerful psychic forces motivating man’s behaviour stem from the conditions of his existence, the human situation” (Fromm 34).

DISCUSSIONS

A very simple definition of poetry and its function is that poetry is the manifestation and expression of human thoughts, feelings and realizations of the poet about peculiar and particular situations and circumstances whether physical, psychological, sociopolitical, transcendental, or spiritual. War, religion and spirituality have been sources of a huge number of poems in addition to other literary works for many composers and writers in ancient as well as in modern world. The forms and expressions of such poetic and literary works have been changing with, regions, circumstances, and the

passage of time. One concept or circumstance may direct various people towards different feelings and different ways of expressing such feelings. The totally unprecedented circumstances of the First World War provided a good platform for many poets to write on war. Few of them opposed it overtly, through objecting ideas conveyed in their poetry. Without a doubt, both the "perceptively provincial" and purely fascinating "little chap" Wilfred, and the aristocratic Siegfried were involved directly in the battle zone in action, and in their poetry (Egremont 165). Understandably Owen and Sassoon's opinions and their succeeding war poems were distinguished among other contemporary poets for being much more realistic, objective and truthful since their concerns were not ethnic, religious, sectarian, and sociopolitical, in fact it was universal and human. As thoughtful individuals and nationality bound citizens Sassoon and Owen were not happy with the religious and the motive of war. The experiences they earned in the frontlines made them realise that an individual's personal and social life should not be destroyed by the war and any such incident that gets ground of religious callings and promises made for the uncertain and unseen future. They felt that if there is an urge for religion in the world then it should be natural religion, and that must be based on superb metaphysics and respectable epistemology with logical antecedents and ingredients of the concepts related with the "divine" and "sacred" elements or form of religion and spiritualism. In this regard, Omid in his article "World War One and Homoeroticism, Wilfred, Siegfried, and the Merger of Sadism and Masochism", writes that:

They wrote predominantly in response to painful personal experiences that affected both their imagination and poetic technique. Soldier poets' such as Sassoon and Owen put their appalling trench experiences into poetry. They served as representatives of what could happen to all soldiers on daily basis through adding a strong influential voice to the public discourse. (120)

Spirituality specifically and a religion in general should be able to answer the humanity concerned questions like "how can religion be defined in a realistic, pragmatic and even naturalistic way, and what a religion refers in reality?" The war-experiences of Sassoon and Owen are reflected in their poems written during their direct involvement, as active participants, in the war, with first hand experiences of unexpected and unimagined sufferings of young soldiers for no logical reason, or written while getting medical treatments in hospitals for physical injuries and psychological traumas and wounds. For a complete human grasp of the world depends on the "naturalized citizens" and role of religion in as far as human knowledge is concerned. This can be linked with or seen in the light of the "metaphysical sentiment" presented by Jose Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955). It explains the need of religion as "the essential, ultimate, and basic impression which we have of the universe that describes how metaphysical sentiment acts as a foundation and support for our other activities, whatever they may be. No one lives without it, although its degree of clarity varies from person to person. It encompasses our primary, decisive attitude toward all of reality, the pleasure which the world and life hold for us" (Ortega 86-7).

To tell the truth, as inspiration for hostilities and wars, spiritual values and religion's ideologies have been playing a major role all the way through old ages. The First World War was not an exception, as most of the churches, the majority of party leaders, the so-called patriotic men of literature and media men, and of course warlords and politicians were using spiritual and religion oriented publicity and propaganda to inspire enrolment in the Great War. Undeniably, after their happenstance in Craiglockhart War Hospital both Siegfried and Wilfred acknowledged the discrimination embodied in consuming religion and spirituality for the campaign of war. Successively, trying to expose the carnages and outrages in the trenches, Sassoon and Owen composed many war poems reprimanding faith, spiritual and governmental ladder, opposed the divinity manipulated in war propaganda machine. Consequently, the outcome was that the young Wilfred

accepted religion's influence on the common man, thus he deployed divinity, spirituality and whatever association to The Holy being as a mediator for creating compassion and sympathy as well as appreciation of those called to work for. However, Siegfried's war poems continued to be sarcastic and satirical as it was before even of the consumption of religious conviction. Sassoon and Owen were discussing many topics together in Craiglockhart War Hospital. Regarding the impact of spirituality and religion on war and poetry, in his book *The War Poems (1983)*, Sassoon writes that "Like Wilfred Owen, I was anti-clerical, and the Churches seemed to offer no solution to the demented doings on the Western Front" (47). Owen and Sassoon's positions, brilliantly coming through in their war poems, express a world-view that initiated its materialization in their backgrounds. The half-Jewish Sassoon was raised as a Roman Catholic. Respecting the High Church Priest Canon Loraine, Siegfried's mom gave him the middle name, Loraine (Egremont 9). Moreover, he was trained in a religious organization where he played organ in the sanctuary (26). The way he refers to George Shreston in Sassoon's trilogy shows his sacred background. George Shreston in his childhood was baptized as an Anglican, in his adulthood, because of his ghastly Great War experiences, he abandoned his faith. In his book, Wilkinson writes that after the expiry of Shreston's close comrade, he was not able to feel any "consolation in the thought that Christ was risen" (112). In general, as we find in Shreston, Sassoon himself discarded Christianity, but, we cannot deny its huge eternal influence on his style and subject of writing. The significance of language, which was employed by the mass media, administration, ministers and artists in most of the early phase of the Great War, was comprehended by them. Indeed, the acknowledgement of such an employment powered most of their poems, as a great deal of Sassoon and Owen's concentration was on the subject of faith. Wilkinson explains the reason why they protested loudly:

The language of apocalyptic was particularly dangerous for Christians to use during the war because of its sadistic undertones, because of the bestial imagery used to describe the opposing powers, because it encouraged a view of the war as a stranger conflict between good and evil, Christ and Anti-Christ, God and the powers of darkness, and because it offered an eschatological escape from wrestling with the moral ambiguities of contemporary human history. (12)

They realized the power of religion that is why Owen and Sassoon used their poems as an instrument to show the religious threats. For them war was not only battle of virtuous and sinful or good or bad. Their poetry helped to display the clashes between religious conviction and what was happening in the western front lines. Quoting from a newspaper, Ted Bogacz, in his essay "A Tyranny of Words": Language, Poetry, and Antimodernism in England in the First World War" (1986), supporting what soldier-poets were promoting, asserts that:

The generation of Englishmen ...will one day have to face the heavy charge that it suffered the eye of the soul to be dimmed. It was brave, but it dared not tell the truth; it could not see the truth the truth was buried under words". (643)

Wilfred raised by the pious Susan Owen in an earnest Catholic household, and later he trained to be a lay assistant in the parish of Dunsden (Egremont 166). Quoting some examples from *Journey from Obscurity (1965)* by Wilfred's brother Harold, Stallworthy in his *Wilfred Owen (1974)*, confirms the significance of Christianity to Owen in his childhood as he was visualizing himself a patriarch while supported and assisted by Susan who made altar cloths and a patriarch's mitre for him. As a youngster, Wilfred was presenting a sermon he had organized before the family on Sunday evens (39). His devotion to Christianity did not die with his childhood as he regarded the prospect of being a minister, before his

registration in the British army (Wilkinson 113). Being interested, simultaneously, in both literature and religion, it was difficult for him to choose his career, as a clergyman or a poet. He writhed to settle what he experienced in the war with what he had learned in the ecclesiastical. However, all these dissimilarities were voiced in Owen's war poems in the future. As a matter of fact, Owen and Sassoon, encouraged by their conservative and religious background as well as their direct experiences in The Great War, surprisingly, converted to loud speakers attacking severely the warlords, politicians and the church who were using religion as an instrument for conscription. The propaganda machine of the British political system and the national religious institutions associated spiritualism, devotion, and religious conviction, with the knighthood mythologies plus principles of gallantry, to serve the continuation of the conflict, with the purpose of convincing the public of the legitimacy and credibility of the warfare. Whereas heightening the supremacy and authority of the British religious institutions, they were using everything to prove that the Germans were vicious and ruthless. Siegfried and Wilfred's reaction to the Politicians and the Church was using poetry to condemn and disapprove the use of spirituality and religion to sponsor the war. In fact, the divinity and spirituality, promoted by the British religious institutions, which was supporting the continuation of the WWI was censured harshly by them. Therefore, for them to participate in the First World War was not "to service to God" as the "Fight for Right Movement" which was supporting the Church and the British Government was declaring (Younghusbandiv). The "call to serve" was extremely ubiquitous and individuals who refused it were reprimanded severely by the media, governments and the Christian institutions. To prove it, here is an excerpt from the well-known York Primate, which is quoted in Wilkinson's book, who asserts: "The country calls for the service of its sons. I envy the man who is able to meet the call; I pity the man who at such a time makes the great refusal". And even the churches were conscripting soldiers among people attending worship (33). From one hand, the religious foundations used the Great War to promote Christianity, for they realized the influence of politician's propaganda machine and the mass media to stimulate nationalism and boost patriotism, so they utilized it perfectly to have more influence on the British sociopolitical scene, and from the other hand, politicians and warlords used the church to enroll fighters. Thus, the need for "conversion and consecration" was the message to all citizens as we notice in Denis Crane's speech:

If he is to serve his nation as a citizen he will need conversion and consecration himself, and the appeal to individuals will be not less strong, but rather stronger, because it is through his national and social responsibility that the appeal will come. (Bontrager 787)

Furthermore, backing the British patriotism and nationalism in the WWI, the religious establishments in the UK, playing a bigger role in the domestic sociopolitical scene and using its own plans, got more powerful than before. Anti-modernism is considered as an important outcome of this spiritual advancement. As stated in *Bogacz's* precious article, they were using the Great War as a pretext to apply some spiritual standards and principles like ban of drinking, wagering, soccer as well as some other imprudence (660). Similar to all other religious establishments, the Church of England had serious disputes with other institutions. Indeed, as a deviation, the Great War helped them to defeat their domestic and foreign rivals. Even in the twenty first century this phenomenon is going on as the politicians and some western religious institutions "have consciously separated the route of politics from the path of righteousness and truth"(Khamenei). In this context, asking the American and European youth few major questions regarding the Western lead fake and artificial Islamophobia, Khamenei perceptively observes that:

You know well that humiliation and spreading hatred and illusionary fear of the "other" have been the common base of all those oppressive profiteers. Now, I would like you to ask yourself why the old policy of spreading

“phobia” and hatred has targeted Islam and Muslims with an unprecedented intensity. Why does the power structure in the world want Islamic thought to be marginalized and remain latent? What concepts and values in Islam disturb the programs of the super powers and what interests are safeguarded in the shadow of distorting the image of Islam? Hence, my first request is: Study and research the incentives behind this widespread tarnishing of the image of Islam. (<http://farsi.khamenei.ir/ndata/news/28731/index.html#en>)

Authors and lecturers raised their subject and worries further than, nationalism, patriotism, and chauvinism to a divine mission through linking to spiritual semantic and standards. Notwithstanding, this spiritual language and literature assisted satisfying houses of worship, but both Sassoon and Owen identified its blunders. Albeit none of them followed their religious and spiritual backgrounds, they realized the real power and impact of spirituality and religion on society and even themselves. Condemning and disapproving the manipulation of faith and spirituality in the propaganda machine and demanding clearness and comprehensibility, Siegfried and Wilfred used their war poems for a higher cause that is peace and humanity and universal spiritualism. In fact, the religious institutions were utilizing the spiritual standards for conscription but Sassoon and Owen found their hypocrisy of conscription propaganda, however, they were exposing it in their poetry. Talking over going back to the trenches, Sassoon writes that: “One gets sent out again like a cabbage going to Covent Garden market...cabbages were better off, because they didn’t claim to have unconquerable souls, and weren’t told that they were making a supreme sacrifice for the sake of unborn vegetables” (Siegfried’s Journey 69-70). According to Omid in the article “Sassoon and Owen’s Depressive and Melancholic Tone of Loss”:

Stressing on the pains, sufferings and frustration following all kinds of losses humanity can have in war, both Sassoon and Owen attempted to create an everlasting war-phobia as they utilised their powerful sense of exasperation to be able to make a sense of sympathy for the combatants in the trenches. They tried to portrait the battle zone, as much as possible naturalistically in the audience’s mind to highlight more distressingly the huge misery which starts what Wilfred called “the pity of war”. (34)

In quest of trustworthiness and faithfulness, they refused totally postwar perfectionism promised by the Church and Government. Sassoon and Owen showed the abuse of Jesus Christ spiritual philosophy. They recognized the supremacy of Jesus’ message to human-beings to strongly convey the events happening in the Great War. What M.H. Abrams remarks in this context is undoubtedly true that the WWI:

....started on a largely innocent world, a world still associated warfare with glorious cavalry and chivalric charges and noble pursuit of heroic ideals. People were not prepared for such a huge earthquake. They were entirely unprepared for the shocks and revulsions of modern trench warfare, and the Great War wiped out practically a whole generation of young soldiers and civilians in the fronts and in cities. The Great War was so great that it shattered and traumatized so many illusions and ideals. (1826)

CONCLUSIONS

According to Omid in his paper “World War One and Homoeroticism, Wilfred, Siegfried, and the Merger of Sadism and Masochism”: “being involved directly in the horrors and pains caused by The Great War and observed and absorbed the violence of the frontlines and the human cost of war, both Wilfred and Siegfried were able to report repetitively the fears and agonies of The First World War”(130). Both Sassoon and Owen were protesting against the Church and Government, especially in some of their allegoric verses, who were not caring for the pains and agonies of the

fighters in the battlefields and who were manipulating Christianity and Nationalism in the propaganda machine for their benefit. The combatants are portrayed as victims of the Church and Government in poems which are full of severely strong images including "They" by Sassoon and "Mental Cases" and "Disabled" by Owen. They transparently display the dreadful and disastrous emotive, psychological, and corporeal pains of the soldiers in the WWI. Actually, Siegfried and Wilfred criticize harshly the ignorance and the negative influence of the Church on the spiritual beliefs of combatants. Both of them see the clergymen more involved in the physicality of the individuals, as they need them to fight for the church. The message in their poetry was to tell the public that the churchmen are abusing Christianity through unjustly relating service to God (salvation) to service to England and by doing that the clergy men are deviating individuals from religion's sublime invitation of redemption as well as salvation. Bontrager describes the theological subject which was rejected by both of them that the Church of England claims Jesus was on their side (775). According to Oman the problem was that UK was fighting with the Germans who were connected by "ties of intercourse, friendship, knowledge, ties of race, religion, and temper" (Hoover 19). Cavill et al in the book *The Christian Tradition in English Literature: Poetry, Plays, and Shorter Prose* (2007) talk over another theological issues dealt with in their poems that is "the question of whether or not God is insensitive to human suffering (366). Douglas Kerr in his article "Brothers in Arms: Family Language in Wilfred Owen" (1992) thinks that it is obvious that Owen and Sassoon did not share the same perspective on war all together. The first considered WWI as a very complicated and substantial event but for the second it was only an interval. Sassoon thought that everything was fine ahead of the war and will be fine once again after the war. Thus, he predicted the future so worked to the means (329).

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