



All Student Publications

2015-03-11

The Happy Warrior: Wordsworthian Reception and the Georgian Tradition of Siegfried Sassoon's War Memoirs and Poems

Shane Peterson
BYU, shrpeters19@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studentpub>

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Peterson, Shane, "The Happy Warrior: Wordsworthian Reception and the Georgian Tradition of Siegfried Sassoon's War Memoirs and Poems" (2015). *All Student Publications*. 134.
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studentpub/134>

This Peer-Reviewed Article is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Student Publications by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

The Happy Warrior: Wordsworthian Reception and the Georgian Tradition of Siegfried Sassoon's War Memoirs and Poems

Introduction

Paul Fussell emphasizes throughout *The Great War and Modern Memory* that the First World War was a very “literary” war, as though studying the literary tastes of the soldier poets could help historians and literary scholars not only gauge the poets’ attitudes toward the war but also how their writings experimented with poetic genres of the past (155). Because many of the soldier poets came from aristocratic backgrounds and received a literary education, they would have studied the British canon widely, particularly Romantic poets like William Wordsworth. In fact, scholarly and public interest in the life and works of Wordsworth increased because of the war. Even though he was already an essential part of the British literary canon and cultural milieu, Edwardian scholars reviewed his more nationalistic poems and political treatises to draw parallels between the Great War and the Napoleonic Wars as a way to defend the British Empire’s interests abroad. In response to this Edwardian imperialism, the Georgian movement adhered to the nature poet’s artistic philosophies by recreating aspects of his stylistic approach in their own poems and prose. Their intention was to either process the traumas they had experienced or critically respond to the jingoism of their contemporaries, whose patriotic fervor caused young officers like Siegfried Sassoon to enlist.

Like other inexperienced soldiers in the British army, Sassoon was largely unprepared for the realities of mechanized warfare. He witnessed firsthand how the noise

and confusion caused by artillery shells, clouds of poisonous gas, and machine gun fire reduced his fellow soldiers into a state of helpless, wounded infancy, effectively breaking down Edwardian values of patriotism, masculinity, and heroism. Despite his disillusionment with Victorian and Edwardian ideology, he would still study and mimic the Romantic poets to learn their techniques of expressing the inexpressible. His earliest poems followed a more pastoral tradition established by Rupert Brooke's poems, who influenced other Georgian writers serving in the army. Through writers like Wordsworth, they all learned how to describe the battle-torn landscape of the Western Front and their memories of England in order to articulate their nostalgic yearning for a simpler time.

However, after fighting in the trenches for so long, Sassoon eventually satirized and critiqued this same naiveté in his later works. Aside from his signature satirical wit, he helped create a shift away from Wordsworthian ideology by altering idyllic imagery to match the physical landscape or emotional atmosphere of the trenches and by restructuring poetic templates of the Romantics to include the sensory details of mechanized warfare. Furthermore, his contrasts between the trenches and recollections of the natural landscapes of England were both an immediate affective response to these sensations and a poetic technique he employed within his writings as a result of the sounds and other stimuli he experienced in combat. This examination of fragmented memories of the past, distortion of pastoral images, and increased focus on the human body's natural responses to combat helped war, trauma, and disaster become appropriate subjects for poetry, bridging the gap between the romantic mindset of the late Victorians and the fragmented consciousness of early Modernist literature.

Wordsworth and the Great War

As stated previously, William Wordsworth became a constant presence during World War I. The soldier poets and the British population experienced a renewed interest in Wordsworth, whom they considered to be one of the premier writers of the past. American scholars also promoted this revival. For example, George McLean Harper from Princeton published a new Wordsworth biography in 1916. As Robert Hemmings argues, “Wordsworth’s popularity increased during the war” both critically and culturally because of Harper’s biography and research (266). Even before the publication of Harper’s biography, many literary scholars of the Edwardian period reexamined Wordsworth’s poetry in light of the new war effort.

One wartime anthology, *The Patriotic Poetry of William Wordsworth*, focuses entirely on his nationalistic poems written during and after the Napoleonic Wars, including “To the Men of Kent” and “The Character of the Happy Warrior.” It even contains “Intellectual Pride of Germany, Its Futility,” which Wordsworth wrote after his failed attempt to move to Goslar, Germany in 1798. Compiled and edited by Sir Arthur H. D. Acland, a Member of Parliament and vice president of the Committee of Education, this slim collection contains only thirty-six of Wordsworth’s poems that openly discuss topics like warfare and patriotism. Acland dedicates the entire collection to Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary who famously stated that lights “are going out all over Europe” and won’t be “lit again in our life-time.” The first half of the book consists of a lengthy introduction by Acland, describing Wordsworth as the voice of the nation and the spokesperson for an entire culture. He believes that the poems’ value can be found in

“their expression of immortal verse of what was the attitude of many thousands of our fellow countrymen in our great national struggle against a Napoleon” (5).

Like many other politicians, generals, and scholars of his day, Acland compares the new world war to the Napoleonic Wars and turns Wordsworth's character into a symbol of national pride. It was easy for people in England to make the correlation between the First World War and the conflicts with Napoleon Bonaparte; they were both fought on the same terrain, were considered to be wars of a global scale, and were even called “the Great War” of their respective eras. Acland merely makes this comparison between the two time periods to remind his audience that “the emotions arising from the great national struggle with Napoleon influenced the whole of Wordsworth's poetry,” beginning with his 1802 sonnets (20). This is one of the first times that any critic or scholar began to seriously consider Wordsworth as a war poet. Acland also notes that “Wordsworth would not hear of peace with Napoleon and was a thorough-going advocate of the war,” particularly when there was a call for volunteers across the Lake District. This event influenced Wordsworth to observe that “Grasmere . . . has turned out almost to a man,” ready to defend its peace from anyone threatening to disturb it (qtd in Acland 49). He even emphasizes in his commentary on “To the Men of Kent” that Wordsworth became one of the volunteers himself, causing Dorothy Wordsworth to observe that “there never was a more determined hater of the French nor one more willing to do his utmost to destroy them if they really do come” (qtd. in Acland 80). Throughout his annotations, Acland implies that Wordsworth would have supported this new war in France because he opposed anyone who threatened his homeland.

Acland also argues that Wordsworth's poetry is worth reading, reconsidering, and remembering during a war for England's supremacy. He concludes his introduction by stating how "in this tremendous time of searching and trial . . . we should come for a brief space into the old company of one like Wordsworth," as though the writer embodies the entire national cause (53). As he sees it, Wordsworth viewed England as an island of liberty, a beautiful landscape worth defending. His "love of country was a passion" as strong as his love for nature, and his "highest hope was that our country should stand for a noble national ideal in the world" (53). Once again, Acland frames Wordsworth's sentiments toward art and nature as a primary reason for fighting in a war rather than as a means of escaping war. Although he is correct in saying that Wordsworth's later poems were more conservative and supportive of the British government's interests, he fails to consider how complicated Wordsworth's views of war could be. He also intentionally portrays Wordsworth as a war poet to support his own stance on current events, creating a caricature of the poet to achieve his own ends. Acland may have used Wordsworth's verses to sincerely honor those serving in the British army, but he blatantly appropriates Wordsworth's poems as war propaganda.

Although it's difficult to know how widely disseminated books like this collection were, the fact that it was published at Oxford (possibly to recruit university students) shows that interest in Wordsworth had been reinvigorated at some level. It can be inferred that those within more educated circles were easily influenced by the notions that Wordsworth could become another voice in support of a military effort dictated by romantic ideology. This same notion had already been extended to a more general audience through the distribution of pamphlets that promoted Wordsworth's continuous

relevance during a wartime period and defended his hypothetical contempt toward Germany. One of these pamphlets, “Wordsworth’s Patriotic Poems and their Significance To-day” by F. S. Boas, is more overt in claiming that Wordsworth represents everything Britain should stand for in a militarized struggle. Like Acland, Boas also begins his piece by equating the Great War with the battles against Napoleon, describing the current situation as “strikingly parallel” with the conflicts that influenced Wordsworth’s poetry (3). But Boas is also more deliberate in highlighting Wordsworth’s disdain for modern German culture (or *Kultur*), comparing his disillusionment with German philosophy to their disappointment with the outcome of the French Revolution (7). Boas is far more aggressive in his accusation against Germany, as though the enemy had forsaken everything the Romantics stood for in its “worship of naked Force” (17).

When analyzing Wordsworth’s more patriotic poems, Boas tries to find applicable morals for his audience living during the Great War. For this reason, he devotes most of this literary analysis to “The Character of the Happy Warrior,” which he claims symbolizes the spirit of the British army, which had already begun engaging German forces on the continent earlier that year. He then applies his analysis of the poem’s final lines to the letters that the soldiers at the front had sent home:

If we have been reading the letters of soldiers from the front, we can recognize shining through their rough colloquial phraseology the spirit of these lines! And as national armies, whether volunteer or conscript, more and more replace the professional soldiers of Wordsworth’s day, his picture of the ‘happy warrior,’ comforted even in the hour of storm and turbulence by the inward vision of serener hours, bids fair to have an even wider significance. (13)

Based on this assumption, Boas believes wholeheartedly that the British servicemen are “happy warriors,” not only because the whole cause is just, as Wordsworth would have wanted. They can also take comfort from the thought that they are preserving England’s natural beauty and national identity by defending the freedoms that the Romantics espoused. As Boas tries to demonstrate, Wordsworth’s poems exemplify these English values of love for one’s country.

He concludes the piece by arguing that Wordsworth would have supported not only the war in France but also England's imperial interests across the globe. He argues that Wordsworth “could not anticipate that growth of the British domains beyond the sea, which has carried our national ideals and forms of polity to all corners of the world,” meaning that “British liberty means more, and for a far vaster section of humanity, than in Wordsworth's day” (18). With this conclusion, Boas again amplifies the need to implement Wordsworth’s patriotism, or “unchangeable” spirit, to England’s efforts in the colonies and in the battlefields of France (18). With this final point, this pamphlet proves that British authors like Boas used selected portions of Wordsworth’s writings as Edwardian apologetics for England’s colonial policies and its declaration of war against the Central Powers. It can also be reasoned that Boas’ pamphlet also functioned as a recruitment tool, sometimes directly or indirectly, since he is certainly more open in encouraging his readers to do their utmost to uphold the national character of Wordsworth’s England anyway they can.

Furthermore, this increased focus on Wordsworth’s nationalism and patriotic sentiments could be seen more prominently in Grasmere. According to *The Westmorland Gazette*, tourism in Grasmere spiked during the Easter season of 1918, “the number of

visitors [having been] larger . . . for the past two or three years” (3). All the hotels were full, forcing some visitors to stay in the empty rooms of some of the more affluent residents. The April 25 issue of the newspaper confirms: “The place was very busy, more so than at any Whitsuntide since the war began” (2). Tourist traffic at Grasmere remained consistent while other areas of Cumbria felt empty. Whether staying for local festivals or coming to see the tourist landmarks, people from across England or elsewhere travelled to the Grasmere Vale because travel to the European continent was off-limits due to the fighting on the Western Front. Instead, many travelers would travel north to Scotland or the Lakes whenever they were on holiday. (A similar phenomenon occurred during the wars against Napoleon).

The local population of Grasmere village was hardly ignorant of current events, and they viewed their patron poet as a cultural icon worth emulating during the national struggle. Mary Augusta Ward, a contemporary novelist, even sent the poet’s grandson, Gordon Graham Wordsworth, an extract from “Wordsworth’s Valley in War-Time” during the first years of the war (which was later included in the *Book of the Homeless* by Edith Wharton in 1916). It was the first direct description of Grasmere’s involvement with the Great War in conjunction with the author’s reflections on Wordsworth’s life and works. As this final analysis will show, Ward’s love of the poet increases her devotion to the national cause.

She pledges collectively with Grasmere residents “to help the War and continue the War, till the purposes of England were attained” (1). Many of Grasmere’s citizens contributed to the war effort by knitting wool socks, gathering moss from the fells to help make wound dressings, or joining the British army (3). In that regard, the little town

certainly made its share of sacrifices—twenty-four of its young men never came home. Interestingly enough, Ward also references Wordsworth's quote about Grasmere "having turned out almost to a man" the same way Acland does. She quotes this statement for similar reasons of showing how the people of the Lake District answered a similar call to action from Wordsworth's day and have become "one—passionately one—with the heart of the Allies" (3). She even aligns the native people of the Lakes with those fighting in an almost sacred endeavor. Consequently, like the other authors aforementioned, she uses nationalistic rhetoric to equate the Germans to an unholy enemy, "eternally dishonored" and destined to fall "to the nations leagued against her" (3).

Like other writers of the time period, Ward follows the literary trend of adopting Wordsworth's narrative techniques to convey her deepest sensibilities and to pay homage to the poet, the English countryside, and English soldiers. As a narrator, she places herself on Loughrigg Terrace on the southern end of Grasmere Vale and compares the sights and sounds of nature to the sounds of warfare, the same way a soldier poet would. As the "evening wind rises," it swells "among the rocks and fern, as the crags catch it, and throw it back reverberated" so that they sound eerily similar to "the sound of marching feet," but she finds a sense of foreboding and an eventual comfort to the noise, like "the tread . . . of an avenging Humanity" (4). Although she has never fought in combat, she sympathizes with those killed in battle and feels that "the living and the dead are there, and in their hands they bear both Doom and Comforting" (4). She may only be experiencing the burdens of warfare vicariously and imaginatively through "the felt distance from crucial events," which certainly creates a "difficulty of finding sounds or forms to which feeling can attach itself" (Favret 11). But she still adorns a

Wordsworthian narrative voice to express these feelings of uncertainty and doubt.

Thereby Ward evokes a sublimity found in both war and nature. Her senses trigger this emotion of silent fear, causing her to turn to nature or the past to find an escape.

Although the original emotions of such an experience may have been deliberately distorted in the act of composing and editing the piece after the experience has passed, it can still be concluded that the affective response of remembering a peaceful scene from the past in the midst of a traumatic episode is both a natural instinct for the human subject and an intentional decision made by the writer.

In summary, the Great War created a reinvigorated interest in Wordsworth within academic circles and the general public because they viewed his poems about nature and childhood as the antithesis to warfare. Although his works and aesthetic values were arguably misread due to biased scholarship and the nationalism of turn-of-the-century England, his works still became a source of propaganda for other authors defending the military's mobilization against Germany. Even the reverence for nature he espoused became another justifiable reason for young men to enlist as soldiers or for civilians at home to devote themselves in supporting the troops. It's difficult to tell whether or not Wordsworth's poems directly influenced Sassoon or the other war poets to join the army based on current available sources. However, his pervasiveness during the Edwardian period should be taken into consideration for this analysis of the soldier poets since his poetic language, views on nature, and influence on future writers became a salient aspect of British wartime culture, causing his romantic ideology to endure far beyond his death only sixty-four years prior.

For many, Romanticism had not passed away entirely. Martin Stephen speculates that “if the Romantic movement in Britain was dead by 1914, no one appears to have told the poets who were writing then” (161). The poets of the First World War, either from the home front or in battle, constantly alluded to the Romantics of the past in their contemporary work, which produced what Mary Favret calls “a history of the present always permeable to other presents, other wartimes” (30). Romanticism’s themes on war, trauma, and uncertainty correlated with the contemporary conflict and became relevant again, continuing a “romantic history” of England’s struggles and triumphs. Furthermore, this new era of romantic history created the perception that the Great War was Wordsworth’s war just as much as the war against Napoleon.

For this reason, the British people reread and propagated his works to either bolster morale for the war effort, find relief from the constant anxiety that the war caused, or mimic his poetic style to attain the standard of writing he had achieved. Unfortunately, many modern academics overlook Wordsworth’s pervasiveness across Britain when analyzing the neo-romanticism of the soldier poets. They often fail to recognize that the outbreak of World War I was one of the major reasons why William Wordsworth became a major part of England’s literary identity. And, like the soldier poets he inspired, the advent of the war guaranteed his “literary value, martial heroism, and patriotic worth” among civilians, military officials, and wartime writers alike (Deer 27).

The Georgians as Late Romantics

Before explaining Wordsworth’s influence on the Georgians, it’s vital to understand the historical and cultural setting from which the movement arose. At the turn

of the century, England felt plagued with uncertainty concerning the future of its empire after the failures of the Anglo-Boer Wars and the war in Afghanistan. The rising economic and military power of Germany across the Channel added to this “frontier of fear” over a possible invasion, causing political commentators like Rudyard Kipling and government leaders like Joseph Chamberlain to call on the British people to rise up and meet the new challenges of a modern era (Elridge 108). These calls to action reinforced an Edwardian culture of masculinity within British schools, where schoolboys were “brought up in an atmosphere pervaded by imperial values and patriotic sentiments” (88). Many of these students became “unwilling” or even unable “to resist burgeoning technologies of mass manipulation . . . that had failed to prevent the Great War” (Mao 216). They had been conditioned to accept war propaganda and other recruiting strategies, making them more susceptible to “military affects such as glory or honor” (Anderson 168). Preserving the nation’s interests became the central message of Edwardian rhetoric that prepared the young men of England for the mobilization of total war, a concept not conceived until the Great War’s onset (169). Naturally, those same affects extended into “the traumatic experiential geographies of suffering or loss that can haunt the victims” fighting on the battlefield or long after the conflict had passed, forcing them to confront the trauma they had experienced through mediums like writing (170). In traumatic moments like the possibility of facing death or witnessing the death of a beloved comrade, morale for the individual breaks down along with any cultural ideals or literary tastes associated with it.

Whenever Wordsworth or the Romantics were taught in Edwardian schools, it was always within a curriculum that advocated unquestionable loyalty to the British

Empire. Young students who grew up to be the soldier poets had been “conditioned by the martial meters of patriotic verses in schoolbooks and the public press . . . to see themselves as part of a collective English culture, bound to defend” the language of acclaimed writers like Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth (Martin 147). In fact, the soldiers’ superior officers would have encouraged the reading of authors like Wordsworth. They even carried an anthology of poems called *The Oxford Book of English Verse* into battle with them. Romantic lyrics published in the anthology, which included Wordsworth’s “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” and “Tintern Abbey,” became cultural artifacts and literary treasures of the British Empire worth defending against the Germans.

Yet some literary aesthetes interpreted Wordsworth’s poems differently and tried to live by what they believed to be the true spirit of his works; the Georgian poets in particular sought to reclaim the heritage of the Romantics away from the Edwardians. It all began in Cambridge when Rupert Brooke, D. H. Lawrence, John Drinkwater, and Walter de la Mare started to call themselves “Georgians” after King George V. The group grew in popularity and influence when they started publishing their own anthologies. In the preface of the first edition of 1912, the editor Edward Marsh stated that the anthology contained “a ring with an echo in it of Gray and Wordsworth, Burns and Byron,” creating what he considered to be “a return to Nature” (Westerveld 222).

Eventually, a majority of the war poets became associated with the Georgian movement. Like Wordsworth, who was writing against the entrenched poetic tastes of an earlier era, they used plain, simple language to convey their “simple patriotism centered on images of rural England—the country cottage, the cricket match, the genial pub”

(Bergonzi 33). They wrote in this style “in reaction against the loud-mouthed but vague poetic imperialism associated with Kipling and other Edwardian poets” (34). When the war began, they were “ill equipped poetically to express [themselves], having no tradition to draw upon, nor worthwhile models to imitate,” which is why they would have “aped anthology pieces” like *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (Mallon 82). Their goal was to “salvage traditional experience and values by accommodating them to premises tenable to a later age,” which was the “prime concern of post-Romantic poets” (Abrams 69). They felt the need to reapply Wordsworth’s language and principles to a modern, industrial age.

Naturally young soldiers like Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg, Ivor Gurney, and Wilfred Owen gravitated toward this late romantic movement because of their more traditional upbringing or artistic interests. Many of these officers were classically trained in art, literature, music, and language at universities like Oxford or Cambridge. Having come from aristocratic backgrounds, they also had the means to enjoy their natural surroundings through hunting, swimming, or riding horses. Aside from writing poetry early in life, Rupert Brooke and his friends would often escape from their studies to swim naked in a nearby streams and sleep on the grass for an afternoon. Rosenberg, on the other hand, came from a middle-class Jewish family and grew up in the urban center of London. Although his relationship with the countryside of England was more distant, he still had formal training as an artist and a poet. For him, nature was a primary subject for art as much as any other topic. Similarly, Gurney originally studied to become a composer at the Royal College of Music, but even his music and poems focused on the natural countryside of England, particularly Gloucestershire. Finally, Owen began writing

poetry at the age of seventeen, emulating the examples of the major Romantic authors by grafting “his own early work on to the Romantic tradition” (*Wilfred* vii). In any case, all of these poets were men of letters who amused themselves with words in their spare time. It was inevitable that they would recreate the writing styles and poetic subjects of favorite authors like Wordsworth and the Romantics.

However, many of these poets could not avoid espousing the same nationalistic values of their contemporaries. Despite his resistance to the restrictions of Edwardianism, many of Brooke’s poems still succumbed to Edwardian patriotism and became products of war propaganda. As the premier figure of the early Georgians, Brooke had a tremendous influence on future Georgians and their contemporaries. For a while, the English army and English civilians viewed him as the voice of the entire war effort. They interpreted his verses in “The Soldier” on “some corner of a foreign field / That is for ever England” as a kind of pastoral colonialism following his death (2-3). As Patrick Deer argues, “His famously elegiac voice turns out to be carefully . . . saturated by a national culture” (26). Unknowingly, the dying soldier in the poem gives his life to convert the piece of conquered ground into part of England’s domain, similar to how Brooke asserts his devotion to advancing a national cause with little to no knowledge of what modern warfare entailed. Once his sonnets became a recruitment tool by army officials and politicians, his death actually helped the Georgian movement grow in popularity and strengthened the Edwardians’ mission to recruit more volunteers. But seasoned soldiers like Sassoon and others eventually detected this “exploitation of courage,” even if their earliest poetry reflected these same patriotic but misguided values (*Memoirs* 230). Although they admired Brooke dearly, they only retained the Georgian

model to create a “codifiable awareness” of the horrors of warfare, continuing a long tradition of war poetry that actually started with Wordsworth (Goldensohn 48). In a way, they borrowed from the early Romantic tradition and created a departure from it simultaneously.

There are numerous reasons why the Georgians continued to refer to the Romantics even after the beginning of the war. For one reason, Romantic writers accentuated the need for individual writers to create their own personal voices rather than imitating the rhetoric of an entire society. As mentioned previously, the Victorian period had not yet ended in the minds of many writers and scholars, and the Romantic period was not as distant in the past as other previous literary traditions. Because it was still within living memory, its literature still seemed relevant fresh and pertinent. Finally, and most importantly, British soldiers read Romantic poetry to retain their mental stability while fighting on the frontline.

The noise and chaos in the trenches (what Robert Graves called the “constant din”) was both disorienting and threatening, creating an awareness that they could be killed or mortally wounded at any given moment. The overwhelming sounds and perpetual fear were the most immediate and continuous sensations that the soldiers felt. Santanu Das describes “the trench experience” as “one of the most sustained and systematic shatterings of the human sensorium” because “it stripped man of the protective layers of civilization and thrust his naked, fragile body between the ravages of industrial modernity” (75). It was perfectly natural that any soldier needed a pastime of some sort to calm his nerves and focus his attention on something other than this disturbing stimuli, whether it was playing cards, smoking cigarettes, writing letters, or

composing poetry. Writing verses about life in the trenches was just another common therapeutic escape from the constant stress caused by the roaring of the guns.

For these men, poetry was more than just therapy—poetry was practice. But they had little time to write extensively. They had to write their verses either in between the fighting or afterward, once the poetic feeling faded into memory. They composed these lines in a very Wordsworthian manner through “emotion recollected in tranquility,” gathering the fragments from their memories (or “spots of time”) to rebuild the scene they were describing (Wordsworth 611). This was certainly more challenging after something as shattering as an artillery bombardment or a charge toward the enemy trench. Their heightened senses from fear or an adrenaline rush made it harder for them to remember, process, or describe the details of the event coherently. They also tried to capture their immediate or meditative emotions after a disaster like a gas attack, an artillery bombardment, or the death of a close friend in their poems. Otherwise, it would be more difficult to understand the events that had transpired and how they should be translated into a poetic format.

Many of the Georgians believed that the horrors they witnessed in battle were too inexpressible for proper words, forcing them to turn to memories of a pastoral past as a substitute. As Fussell claims, “Recourse to the pastoral is an English mode of both fully gauging the calamities of the Great War and imaginatively protecting oneself against them” (235). He also argues that the pastoral “is a way of invoking a code to hint by antithesis at the indescribable” (235), which became an identifiable pattern and trademark of the Georgian war poets. Their experiences in the trenches actually strengthened their adherence to poetic genres like the Romantic lyric. It gave them a method for

deconstructing the effects of wartime trauma on their physical bodies and psychological states of mind. But their “mind-nature dialectic” was “complicated further by man’s mechanized acts of war” that obliterated the landscape and entire troops of soldiers (Hemmings 271). The mass destruction of so many lives and so much of the landscape rendered the Romantic tradition insubstantial. Fussell also explains this trend by illustrating how Wordsworth’s conceptions of the landscape as beautiful or spiritual became “ravaged and torn” once “a persistent physical terror” replaced “the thrill of the old Sublime” (79). After so many battles and lost lives, “the time-honored nineteenth-century synthesis [was] no longer thinkable” (79). Essentially, Wordsworth’s influence and credibility as a poet suffered as the war dragged on.

Although the soldier poets continued to reference Wordsworth poems in their works, their concentration on the human body and natural landscapes destroyed by industrial warfare contributed to the inevitable shift away from romantic poetics. To be truthful about their poetic topics, they “abandoned the patriotic sonnet as a model” after they admitted to themselves and others that Brooke’s assumptions about death and honor were either questionable at best or entirely false (Clausson 107). However, they still “retained the Romantic lyric as their primary inspiration” when they began modifying this same model to voice their attitudes about the war effort (107). For this reason, Wordsworth remained as a central figure of the soldier poets’ literary consciousness.

Siegfried Sassoon as the Happy Warrior

Unlike some of his contemporaries, Sassoon was not affiliated with the Georgian poets at first. He happened to be close friends with some of the Imagists, adherents of a

poetic movement that also grew in popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century in response to the “nationalizing rhetoric on the eve of the Great War” (Mao 226). Oddly enough, the early Imagists also replicated Wordsworth’s poetic style through their “direct treatment of the subject” and “precision of language” to create patterns of common speech (*Imagists* iii). They also displayed Wordsworth’s preference towards “spots of time” through their treatment of a single moment or fragment of an experience, usually linking the intellectual component of the experience to a visual image and the emotional aspect to an auditory description. But this tradition could not sustain itself under the new conflict. Their focus on concrete but layered images did not accurately portray the consequences of a modern war (which is one reason why Ezra Pound abandoned Imagism in favor of Vorticism). Ultimately, Sassoon joined the Georgian movement and began adhering to its traditional poetic style and motifs.

His poem “Break of Day” displays his departure from the Imagists because of its complication of traditional pastoral images. Peaceful imagery of a rural landscape, with its “brambled fences” (25) and “glimmering fields” (26), reflects the narrator’s hopeful tone, but later lines illustrating a “red, sleepy sun” before battle suggest that pictures of a peaceful England only exist in the poet’s mind (47). Sassoon uses this last image of a dying sun to illustrate the emotional atmosphere of a countryside still in the throes of war, a countryside that cannot retain its original beauty or serenity while a violent conflict rages in the distance. The entire poem encapsulates not only Sassoon’s rejection of the Imagists but also his evolution as a Georgian.

In most of his poems and prose, Sassoon follows the Georgian method of comparing a bucolic scene with an image of the battlefield, either from a distance or in

close proximity. His juxtapositions are certainly “conventional” in that he contrasts memories of the “open, free, outdoor life of youth with an interior (and interiorized) maturity formed by the knowledge of death” (Cole 172). Unlike other Georgian poets, however, these same contrasts serve as part of his satire of his military leaders, the British government, or even British civilians residing safely away from the conflict. Part of his criticisms of their ignorance of the war’s realism involves openly rejecting the romantic nationalism of the Edwardians (and eventually the Georgians) that inspired him and other young men to support the war effort unquestioningly. But Sassoon did not renounce these same romantic tropes entirely, as many literary critics have failed to consider. They actually became the foundation of Sassoon’s biting satire. Although Clausson correctly indicates that Sassoon “abandoned the nineteenth-century nature lyric and turned instead to eighteenth-century epigram and satire as models” (112), he overlooks how often Sassoon adheres to the pastoral mindset in his memoirs and later poems or the lasting impression Wordsworthian ideology had on his identity as a poet. Robert Hemmings would agree that “Wordsworth’s legacy represents a vital source, conscious or unconscious, in . . . Sassoon's war writing that grapples with the traumatized poet’s relationship with the natural world” (266). Even Sassoon himself admits that “every verse-maker has a direct or indirect ancestry,” indicating that he is very self-aware of the influence previous poets had on his work (qtd. in Hemmings 269). For all of these reasons, Wordsworth’s influence on the Georgians and their alteration of his poetic style is the most apparent in Sassoon’s writing.

Wordsworth’s impact on Sassoon is especially evident in his earliest works because of his youthful romantic idealism and privileged background. He had the time

and resources to study past poets and explore the natural surroundings of Kent through activities like fox hunting. As Edmund Blunden states, “No poet of the twentieth-century England, to be sure, was originally more romantic and floral than young Siegfried Sassoon” (qtd. in Fussell 91). Out of all the war poets, he was among the first to join the army once England declared war on Germany. He had been “nourished” on Alfred Lord Tennyson’s Victorian concepts of bravery and honor found within “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (Silk 13). He had also been inspired by Brooke’s sonnets to answer the call to arms. In his diary, he wrote that Brooke was “miraculously right” in his recitation of “the true soldier-spirit” (qtd. in *Minds* 77). For a while, he saw Brooke as an example worth imitating as much as Wordsworth.

Sassoon’s early poems reflect the same pastoral simplicity as Brooke’s, as shown in “Absolution.” His assertion in the poem that he and the other recruits are “the happy legion” echoes Wordsworth’s title for “The Happy Warrior” (7). Similar to Boas’ assertion, Sassoon views military service for one’s country an enjoyable experience. He seems to delight in serving with close companions when morale is high and the ideals of the British war machine are still strong. Even the sublimity of the opening lines, in which “the anguish of the earth absolves” the eyes of the soldiers until “beauty shines in all” they see (1-2), assumes Wordsworth’s tendency to connect spiritual beauty with Earth’s natural landscapes.

In another early poem, “Alone,” Sassoon follows the same pattern outlined in the traditional Romantic lyric, in which a narrator addresses himself with first-person “I” and comes across a natural scene that becomes the basis for his contemplations. Within each stanza, repeated with the anaphoric phrases “I’ve listened,” “I’ve looked,” and “I’ve

thought” (1, 5, 9), he recounts his emotional responses to the impressions that nature imprints on him (namely its sounds and sights) and reflects on his “youth” that is now lost to him (3). Similar to his precursor Wordsworth, a personal interaction with nature gives him a “freshness of sensation” and relief from his anxieties, causing him to revert back to childlike sensibilities (Abrams 377). The only difference in this particular piece is that the coming war stays within the background, and the impending loss of innocence creates a lack of satisfaction with the scene he encounters and a greater need to reconnect with his past self. Unlike Wordsworth, Sassoon recognizes that these troubled emotions of war “felt at a distance” will become all the more real once he enters the war itself.

Sassoon and his contemporaries were fully aware of the unabashed romantic style that pervaded his earliest works. His friend and fellow poet, Robert Graves, noticed that most of Sassoon’s poems were “pastoral pieces of eighteen-ninetyish flavor” (174). According to Graves, when the two exchanged their work, Sassoon disliked the grittiness of Graves’ poems because he believed “that war should not be written about in such a realistic way”; however, Graves assured him he “would soon change his style” once he reached the frontline (175). This certainly became the case, but as will be shown later, Sassoon still relied on Wordsworthian poetics and ideology for the basis of even his most satiric and graphic poems. Hemmings also argues that fighting in the trenches “may have helped to eliminate the limpid floridity characteristic of Sassoon’s immature pre-war poetry, but it did not alter the ‘romantic’ approach that characterized much of his war writing and informs his memoirs” (296). He even studied, analyzed, and critiqued the literary works of the Romantics after starting his military career. He once made a note to himself in a diary entry to take “Keats and Wordsworth and Shakespeare’s Sonnets and

John Bunyan's *Holy War*" with him upon returning to the front (*Diaries* 210). He must have found it difficult to let go of the romantic mindset, which caused him to look back on this type of innocence with a sense of melancholic longing even after returning home.

In a way, Sassoon spent the rest of his life writing about the war in his memoirs by re-experiencing his tours of the Western Front the same way Wordsworth re-explored and revised his past in *The Prelude*. In his memoirs, he often looks back on the gardens of his youth from the Wordsworthian perspective of reminiscing about his childhood after an exposure to nature. His memories of his childhood feel like "reflections in glass" as he rediscovers "little details . . . otherwise dead and forgotten" about his past, such as how he would escape into his family garden to avoid the discomfort of conformity and the awkwardness of social interaction (*Complete* 11). Nature would act as his sanctuary again when he joined the army. He often escaped "soldiering for an hour" to sit "utterly content" in a peaceful spot next to a tree or a river, "where the rumour of war was a low rumble of guns, very far away" (622). Despite his excursions into the natural world, the war is always in the foreground, whether it was at the back of his mind, over the nearest horizon, or just above the fire step. It became another matter entirely when he wrote about the battles in the trenches.

What makes Sassoon unique in describing the contrast between his experiences in war and memories of nature or home is that the sounds of battle and how he describes them lie at the center of this binary opposition. Even in the midst of the fighting, the sounds and other corporeal sensations of a war zone made him remember his home in Kent almost instinctively. Consider the following passage from *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*:

Now and again there was the splitting crack of a rifle-shot from the other side, or a five-nine shell droned serenely across the upper air to burst with a hollow bang; voluminous vibrations rolled along the valley. The shallow blanching flare of a rocket gave me a glimpse of the mounds of bleached bags on the Redoubt. Its brief whiteness died downward, leaving a dark world; chilly gusts met me at corners, piping drearily through crannies of the parapet; very different was the voice of the wind that sang in the cedar tree in the garden at home (271)

It seems odd at first that Sassoon's first reaction to the aftermath of an artillery bombardment is to focus on the sounds of the wind blowing through the parapet, in which he makes the immediate connection between glimpses of nature that remain in the field after the bombardment and the image of the cedar tree from his garden. This could be the result of feeling helpless and afraid in the face of such an overwhelming force, causing him to recall a more pleasant experience in order to maintain his composure. He had always recognized that this reversion to a more romantic mindset offered "a sense of continuity to counter the fragmentation of his beleaguering war experience" (Hemmings 270). Also, his recurrence to an idyllic past during the fighting is actually a common pattern in many other World War I memoirs. They provide "a number of such moments sandwiched between bouts of violence and terror," in which "Sassoon's pattern of going in and out of the line is typical" (Fussell 236). This particular passage is only one of many; however, the source of these associations is less literary and more psychological than modern readers may realize. Sassoon's affective responses to stimuli like sound trigger subconscious or otherwise forgotten recollections of his past that reappear in his writings concerning an undesirable present.

Even Sassoon's sound imagery, which is also at the fulcrum of this balance between war and the landscape, assumes an unusually pastoral feature. In a previous passage from the same memoir, Sassoon remembers another "leisurely five-nine shell [that] passes overhead in the blue air" with the sound of larks singing in the background (277). The shell flying overhead sounds like "water trickling into a can," making "the curve of its trajectory [sound] peaceful until the culminating crash" (277). His combination of the image and its sound gives the shell—a manufactured piece of steel built to a certain measurement and designed to kill with the utmost efficiency—a more pastoral quality as if it were just another natural element to his surroundings. He also illustrates the sound of the shell in conjunction with the larks, which he includes in this overall depiction to suggest that the war is still taking place in a natural environment. (The larks are another common feature in Sassoon's memoirs and Great War literature in general). What's more, the sound itself brings to mind a visual image of water dripping into a can as well as an auditory description, which is a perfectly natural discernment for any human subject. Sassoon's purpose in using this kind of sound imagery is not to focus primarily on "material sound," but also "the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses" (Saussure 842). In terms of this psychological impression, Ming-Qian Ma also argues that "sound and vision are intimately intertwined . . . constituting on equal terms one and the same bodily experience" (253). In Sassoon's case, his natural reaction to a deadly artillery shell passing overhead brings to mind both the sound and the image of water dripping into a metal can. This is a direct result of his exposure to a more rustic lifestyle when he was younger. As Ma also believes, "things readily yield their shapes auditorily not so much because they are simple as because they

are routinely experienced in a collective and conventional environment and, therefore, are familiar, expected, recognizable, and determinable through habitual associations” (265). For Sassoon, his “habitual associations” consist of memories of the natural sounds, sights, or smells from the countryside of Kent, so the shells actually sound peaceful and serene to him because they remind him of home. With these associations in mind, Sassoon continues to relate his affective response toward the firing shell to a more tranquil aspect of an idyllic setting, as though comparing the noises of the artillery shells to the pastoral were the most accurate way of describing the soundscape of the battle to an audience unfamiliar with war. In essence, the comparison itself is merely a natural response to the overwhelming stimuli of warfare that he elucidates during the act of composition in his attempt to create a new kind of language for the trench lyric.

More significantly, Sassoon employs sound imagery in his poetry for the same reasons listed above. In a few poems, like “Suicide in the Trenches,” Sassoon is very literal in how he articulates the sound of each mortar explosion or rifle discharge. The term “crumps” that he uses as an onomatopoeia in one line describes an artillery shell when it hits the earth (6). During an artillery barrage soldiers would hear a loud clang when a shell landed, which they described with this word. These “sound effect words” certainly demonstrate a phenomenological progression of the soldier’s perception of this kind of stimulus, even if these words are “arbitrary” and consist of “raw, unprocessed language” (Nuckolls). How they describe the sound correlates with affect, or how their bodies respond to these unnatural phenomena.

However, in poems like “A Letter Home,” Sassoon does more than use onomatopoeias like “crack” or “flick” for the sounds of fired bullets (62). He writes in a

more refined and concrete language to equate these same observations with his recollections of a natural setting. In the final stanza, he tells his addressee (Robert Graves) how soldiers would “creep and blink through cannon thunder” (61). Aside from writing an anastrophe by using the noun “cannon” as an adjective for thunder to reverse the predictable phrase “the thunder of the cannon,” the image also contains visual, auditory, and palpable characteristics. Other than using the obvious metaphor of comparing the artillery to the natural phenomenon of thunder, the men in the poem “creep” or crawl through this thunder as if it were a tangible medium. This could be a reference to the cloud of dust or smoke that accumulates during an artillery barrage. The soldiers in the poem also “blink” through this haze, which could easily be seen as well as heard. In this one line, Sassoon evokes three different senses to describe a sound of the Western Front that was as commonplace as the weather, turning a once sublime element of nature to something altogether terrifying. A couple of lines later, he uses a simile to show how these bullets “[s]ing and hum like hornet-swarms” (63), giving this unearthly sound a musical but malevolent quality and displaying the early traces of his famous ironic tone. His choice for this image is deliberate in that soldiers sometimes compared bullets flying past to swarms of bees or hornets. Although it’s unclear if Sassoon instantly connected the sounds of gunfire to hornet swarms, it still creates the usual contrast between nature in the trenches and nature from the outside. It almost gives the landscape “its own perspective and voice” (Nuckolls); the swarms may sound serene, but they still have a deadly sting.

All of Sassoon’s sound imagery, which represents “spots of time” he tries to capture in his poetry and memoirs, helps him and the audience recognize hints of nature

that are still perceptible in between instances of the fighting and mayhem. Through these allusions to nature, he is able to write about the sounds and sights of battle in a way that can be seen and felt by the reader—an effect easily achieved by relating each description to the physical earth. And, like other Georgian poets, it seems as though Sassoon only knows how to describe the stimuli of a battlefield through his allusions to the English countryside because of his intense study of nature poets like Wordsworth. After everything they had been through, they were unable to use abstract language to demonstrate what life was truly like in the trenches. For Wordsworth, his poetry exhibits what J. Mark Smith calls “blankness of language,” in which the voice of a written poem attempts to express the unutterable, both in word and in feeling (516). Wordsworth often describes “intervenient” or “unrememberable sounds” of nature that “all have the same lack of content” in that they exude a sublimity that can only be represented visually (506). These intervenient sounds create a “relaxing of attention” that is “remembered as a mood rather than as any kind of definite sensation” (506). Like the sound of the river Derwent bringing to mind memories of his childhood self in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth’s sounds form the basis of analysis of his memories. Similarly, Sassoon and the Georgian’s war poetry contain detailed acuties of the physical sensations of combat and how they are remembered or felt in retrospect. Of course, these meditations are far from sublime or unrememberable. Rather, the late Georgians voice the terror of war through graphic images and noises of killing on a massive scale that would haunt the survivors for years to come, slowly replacing any memories of a peaceful, pastoral England they once had. Ultimately, the increasingly visceral tangibility of their war poems created a “shift from the visual to the tactile” and contributed to the transition away from post-romantic

language through their combinations of the peaceful and pastoral with the mechanic and lethal (Das 76).

As a part of this transition, Sassoon fulfilled Graves' earlier prediction that he would change his outlook once he fought in the trenches long enough to watch his men die, sometimes needlessly and helplessly. Their deaths inspired him to protest the war and the romantic tendencies of the generals and civilians back in England through satiric or graphic language intended to "disturb complacency" (qtd. in *World* 31). Even his memoirs maintain this tone of resentment. Fussell notices how the George Sherston memoirs "can be considered a long series of adversary footnotes" to Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior" (168). The poem itself discusses how a true warrior should be the embodiment of chivalric ideals, namely his love for "homefelt pleasures" and "gentle scenes" (60) that are always "at his heart" (62). This definition certainly sounds like an Edwardian hero, sent out to defend his country because of his "master-bias" toward memories of home (59). It also sounds like Sassoon's own character. He gained a reputation for his daring and bravery in battle, earning him the nickname "Mad Jack." Furthermore, Wordsworth's characterization of a true English soldier also correlates with the way Sassoon hearkens back to Aunt Evelyn's house in Kent with a Wordsworth-like fondness.

Naturally, Sassoon came to despise this model of an idyllic hero. After suffering a near-fatal wound and being sent to Craiglockhart for his public protestation against the war, he became "bitter" toward these romantic values on warfare (Mallon 88). Before this realization, he once wrote home to Aunt Evelyn "in what he calls "the 'happy warrior' style" but admitted later that he felt "ashamed of it afterwards" and proceeded to ridicule

it by rejecting “something more than Wordsworth’s poem” (Fussell 168). In other words, he had decided to dismiss “a whole Victorian moral and artistic style” (168). He distanced himself from the traditional model of a Victorian hero by writing in his journal that he would bid “good-bye to amiable efforts at nature-poems” and only write “tense and bitter and proud and pitiful” (qtd in Giddings 157).

He makes a similar manifestation in “The Poet as Hero” by explaining how his former “ecstasies” that praised the war effort have “changed to an ugly cry” (4) and an “infant wail” (7). By referencing the screaming of dying soldiers, he undermines Edwardian notions of chivalric warfare by reducing the brave men to helpless, wounded infants. After hearing and witnessing the degradation of these notions of heroism, Sassoon bids “good-bye to Galahad” (9) and denies his formerly imaginative identity as “a knight of dreams and show” (10). Sound once again functions as the basis of his expressions, suggesting that the resonances of the artillery shells and the cries of wounded men are enough to eradicate anyone’s dreams of victory. From this realization, Sassoon promises himself and his audience that his poetic mission will be to convert the shrieking of his men and the cacophony of the battlefield into an “immortal semblance of a song” (8). He also indicates that his love for the men and his hatred for the enemy will become his “absolution,” not the promise of national rejuvenation from a call to arms (14). Part of this absolution involves writing in a plain, unadorned style to honor the common soldier rather than the ideal that they should strive for.

Although he uses Wordsworth’s poetic techniques to his advantage in most of his poems and memoirs, Sassoon departs from the Wordsworthian tradition once he begins writing about the realities of the war and rejecting the ideology of his superiors, using

Romantic poetic templates merely as the basis of his satire and protestations against a misguided war effort. His purpose was to show that the old world he remembered was more than just passing away—it was largely responsible for its own destruction. His methods for describing the sights, sounds, and senses of touch within trench warfare and his affective responses to its large-scale destruction further complicate Georgian poetics and offers another “challenge to a certain kind of conventional literary authority” like Wordsworth (Cole 12). After Sassoon and other modernist poets’ departure from the “egotistical sublime of the Romantic lyric,” they tried to create “new forms of language to fill that void” (12). From this endeavor, they created a new genre of war poetry, which resulted in the inevitable clash between post-romantic language and the fragmentation of the Great War.

Conclusion

As the inheritors of a post-Romantic tradition, Sassoon and the other Georgian poets enlisted and fought in the war to forge a new frontier for the British Empire, but they had to abandon their nationalistic sentiments in order to survive. Even if they lived through the war largely unscathed, they still had trouble resettling into their former lives. Many of them had to look inward to a more aesthetic frontier through art and literature, speaking out against the Edwardian imperialism that ruined them completely. Although the poets of either tradition were eager to join the cause, their fantasies of romantic, chivalric warfare and a glorious victory had been shattered by the chaos, confusion, and injustices of a modern war.

But the physical sights, sounds, smells, and senses of touch within the trenches continuously brought to mind images of England they tried not to forget, as though it were an Edenic paradise worth fighting for and returning to after the war's conclusion. This was certainly the case for Sassoon, who retained these memories by writing post-Romantic poetry to cope with the traumas of the war and help him transcribe his thoughts and emotions into literary form. Other Georgian poets followed suit, allowing the late Romantic tradition to continue up until the end of the war.

In other words, what began with the pastoral imagery and sublimity of Wordsworth ended with the Georgians' juxtapositions between war and nature. When they started writing about war exclusively, they increased their focus on the human body and mind and how the physical self perceives or responds to the stimuli of combat, causing Wordsworthian language to fall out of favor in early Modernist poetry. Yet the Georgian poets still recovered the traditional templates of the Romantics from Edwardian culture and made it their own by remaining true to Wordsworth's original philosophy that poetry should favor the individual mind over the culture at large. Reading and writing any kind of poetry allowed them to recover psychologically and spiritually from the disillusionments and trauma caused by an imperial war, achieving a catharsis that is only possible through the creation of a new form of war literature.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M. H. *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971. Print.
- Andersen, Ben. "Modulating the Excess of Affect: Morale in a State of 'Total War.'" *The Affect Theory Reader*. Ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.
- Bergonzi, Bernard. *Heroes' Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the Great War*. Manchester: Carcanet, 1996. Print.
- Clausson, Nils. "'Perpetuating the Language': Romantic Tradition, the Genre Function, and the Origins of the Trench Lyric." *Journal of Modern Literature* 30.1 (2006): 104–128. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 March 2014.
- Cole, Sarah. *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Print.
- Das, Santanu. "War Poetry and the Realm of the Senses: Owen and Rosenberg." *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*. Ed. Tim Kendall. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print.
- Deer, Patrick. *Culture in Camouflage: War, Empire, and Modern Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.
- "Eastertide." *The Westmorland Gazette* [Kendall, U.K.] 6 April 1918: 3. Print.
- Eldridge, C. C. *The Imperial Experience: From Carlyle to Forster*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Print.
- Favret, Mary A. *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. Print.

- Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Oxford UP, 1975. Print.
- Giddings, Robert. *The War Poets: The Lives and Writings of Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Edmund Blunden, and the other Great Poets of the 1914–1918 War*. New York: Orion Books, 1988. Print.
- Goldensohn, Lorrie. *Dismantling Glory: Twentieth-Century Soldier Poetry*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. Print.
- Graves, Robert. *Good-by to All That*. 3rd ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1998. Print.
- Hemmings, Robert. "Landscape as Palimpsest: Wordsworthian Topography in the War Writings of Blunden and Sassoon." *Papers on Language and Literature* 43.3 (Summer 2007): 264–290. Web. *ProQuest Research Library*. 5 July 2014.
- Imagist Poetry: An Anthology*. Ed. Bob Blaisdell. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999. Print.
- "Local News: Grasmere." *The Westmorland Gazette* [Kendall, U.K.] 25 April 1918: 2. Print.
- Ma, Ming-Qian "The Sound Shape of the Visual: Toward a Phenomenology of an Interface." *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound*. Ed. Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Print.
- Mallon, Thomas. "The Great War and Sassoon's Memory." *Modernism Reconsidered: Harvard English Studies 11*. Ed. Robert Kiely and John Hildebidle. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983. Print.
- Mao, Douglas. "A Shaman in Common: Lewis, Auden, and the Queerness of Liberalism." *Bad Modernism*. Ed. Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. Print.

Minds at War: Poetry and Experience of the First World War. Ed. Roberts, David. 9th ed.
Great Britain: Saxon Books, 2014. Print.

Nuckolls, Janis B. “Why Do Sound Effect Words Matter?” *2014 James L. Barker Lecture
in Language and Linguistics*. Brigham Young University. Provo, Utah. 5
December 2013.

Sassoon, Siegfried. “Absolution.” *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*. London: Faber
and Faber, 1983. Print.

— — — . “Alone.” *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*. New York: Dutton, 1918. Print.

— — — . “Break of Day.” *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*. London: Faber and Faber,
1983. Print.

— — — . *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston*. London: Faber and Faber, 1972. Print.

— — — . “A Letter Home.” *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*. London: Faber and Faber,
1983. Print.

— — — . “The Poet as Hero.” *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*. London: Faber and
Faber, 1983. Print.

— — — . “Suicide in the Trenches.” *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*. London: Faber
And Faber, 1983. Print.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. “Nature of the Linguistic Sign.” *The Critical Tradition: Classic
Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3rd ed. Ed. David H. Richter. New York:
Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007. 842–844. Print.

Silk, Dennis. *Siegfried Sassoon*. Tibsury, England: Compton, 1975. Print.

Smith, J. Mark. “‘Unrememberable’ Sound in Wordsworth’s 1799 *Prelude*.” *Studies in
Romanticism* 42.4 (Winter 2003): 501–518. Web. JSTOR. 6 May 2014.

Westerveld, B. "Georgian Poetry." *Neophilologus*. 1.3 (January 1916): 222–224. Web.

ProQuest. 5 July 2014.

Wilfred Owen: Poems selected by Jon Stallworthy. Ed. Stallworthy, Jon. London: Faber and Faber, 2004. Print.

Wordsworth, William. "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*." *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*. Ed. Stephen Gill. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

— — — . "The Character of the Happy Warrior." *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*. Ed. Stephen Gill. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

World War One British Poets: Brooke, Owen, Sassoon, Rosenberg, and Others. Ed. Candace Ward. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1997. Print.