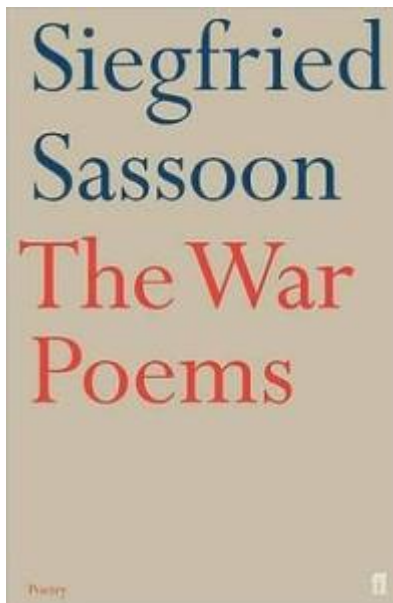


**Abstraction and Artistic Volition: Expressionist Reflection on  
Siegfried Sassoon's Select War Poems:  
*Attack, Glory of Women, Counter-Attack, Expression of War  
experiences, and Dreamers***

Rehana Kousar, M.Phil. English Literature  
Nida Sarfraz, M.Phil. English Literature  
Khamsa Qasim

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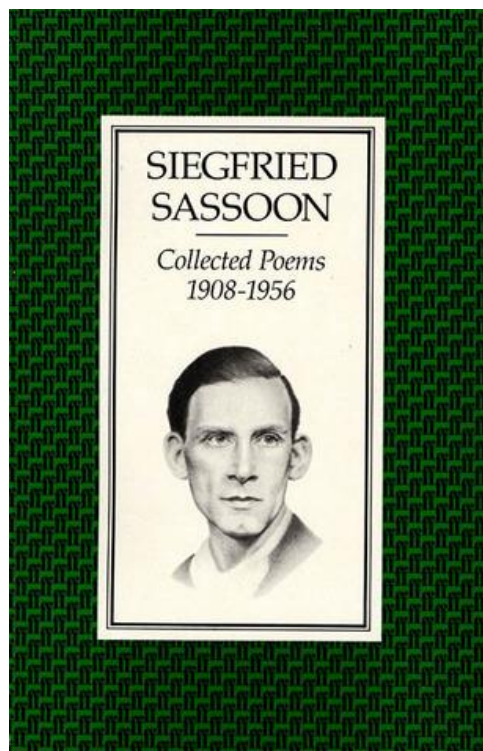


**Abstract**

This research explores representation of reality in Siegfried Sassoon's selected poems. It uses expressionist elements such as abstraction, artistic volition and interior monologue. It takes light from the expressionist artists such as Van Gogh, Edvard Munch and Strindberg. Expressionism is a style of artistic creation. It expresses feelings. It rejects imitation, mimesis and representation of the external world. It promotes spontaneity through the artistic volition, abstraction and interior monologue. It argues that reality is not objective. It is subjective, varying

from person to person as individuals have the capacity to redefine it. Sassoon reveals truth through irony, fear of death, psychological strain and physical exhaustion of the young soldiers. He narrates an ironic difference between the horrific experiences of soldiers and the calm conditions in which other civilians live. This work provides a new outlook to the readers to visualize Sassoon's poetry in a new perspective.

**Key Concepts:** Expressionism, Siegfried Sassoon, Abstraction, Artistic Volition, Interior Monologue, Young Soldiers



## Expressionism

In expressionism the distorted objective sensory world is manifested through dream-like elements and symbolism, thus illustrating alienation and contortion of inner feelings and polyvocal reality. Expressionism determines form and therefore imagery, punctuation, syntax and so on. Indeed, any of the formal rules and elements of writing can be bent or disjointed to suit the purpose. (Cuddon 1998, p. 297) Abrams explains expressionism, saying it expresses the inner experience of representing the world as it appears to the artist's state of mind, or to that of

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one of the literary characters' – an emotional, troubled, or abnormal state of mind. Often the work implies that this mental condition is representative of anxiety-ridden modern man in an industrial and technological society which is drifting towards chaos (Abrams 1985, p. 57) .

### **War Poetry**

This research explores expressionism in Siegfried Sassoon's war poems. War poetry consists of two schools of thought; jingoism and pacifism. Sassoon writes his poems in extreme Pacifistic terms. Pacifism is against the idea that violence or war is the final solution. It is in favor of the abolition of military institutions and war. Siegfried Sassoon rejects the idea of heroism. He condemns war for the bitter effects it leaves on the soldiers. He eliminates the traditional form of sonnet writing and brings variations into it. His use of Expressionist elements is very remote. In his diction he uses unconventional tone, imagery and ironic turns. As Johnston says Sassoon depicts his intense emotional feelings with graphic presentation and minute details. He causes us to witness and to feel what occurs during a retreat. (Cited in Bloom 2003, p. 69)

### **Artistic Volition**

Expressionism permits artistic volition to apply its stylistic devices and methods to gain the art of consciousness. It also describes the purpose of artistic production that leads to reality. Artistic volition is evident from the rubric of the poem, an Attack that is dull and unforgiving. It presents the signs of aggression. The poem does not follow any conventional structure. It has only one stanza of thirteen lines. He distorts traditional Sonnet. Traditional sonnet is consistent with fourteen lines. It has two portions; one consists of Octave and other of Sestet. He uses only thirteen lines in a single paragraph in this poem.

### **Over Intensification**

A critic says about expressionism in '*Expressionism and Fauvism*' that its underlying characteristics consist of over-intensification of experience. It rejects the classical canon. It is an exaggeration and distortion. It shatters traditional forms. It reorders the fragments and makes vehicles that change sensation and thinking. It is an emphatic, more critical and a new approach

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to the universe. (Rickett 1972, p. 5) By this lack of structure, Sassoon conveys an idea of crowdedness and chaos. Sassoon does not follow any rhyme – pattern.

### ***The Attack***

*The attack* is a free verse poem. Or else in using rhyme variation, he has used vivid imagery, bleak and colorless. ‘Wild purple of glowing sun’ conveys a sense of negativity, a dark and dreary atmosphere. The imagery in the line ‘smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke’ represents an unclear setting that engulfs the young soldiers.

‘Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear’ produces the image of bleak mood and tensed faces of the soldiers due to the menacing atmosphere of war. ‘Ridge emerges massed and dun’ signifies the starting of a battle, chaos and suffering of humanity. The picture of ‘scarred slope’ produces an expression of relentlessness and restlessness and pain. “The barrage roars and lifts” produces a clear image of loudness and chaos.

### **Concentrated Presentation of Emotions**

Expressionism is a concentrated presentation of emotions sought for within the artist’s consciousness. It is a representation of feelings rather than the visualization and the reproduction of the external world. (Schwabe 1918, p. 140) Expressionists seem to maintain, no such suspended judgment, but seem to be quite confident that emotions have enabled him to penetrate to the heart of reality, even when his emotions are hard to write. (Harris 1929, p. 211 – 212)

Concentrated presentation of emotions is evident in Sassoon’s use of a technique of personification in this poem. He has assigned human qualities to a ridge in the first line. ‘Ridge emerges massed and dun’ signifies the starting of a battle, chaos and suffering of humanity. ‘Glowing sun, wild purple’ is also a personification to make an image of heat and harshness. Personification in the line, ‘furtive eyes and grappling fists, flounders in mud’ create an atmosphere of hopelessness and the terrible anxiety of soldiers due to the crack of gunfire.

### **Use of Alliteration**

Sassoon has made a frequent use of alliteration and assonance in the line “Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud” represents the after effects of war. Alliteration in ‘scarred slope’ conveys the consequences of war in the poem, ‘Attack’. The repetition of ‘O – sound’ in the line ‘smoldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud’ provides a special sound effect to the poem.

### **Use of Adjectives**

The poet has used many adjectives such as ‘menacing’, ‘glowering’, ‘jostle’, ‘creep and topple’ and ‘bristling’ to create a tense mood. Sassoon has used the technique of hyperbole to exaggerate the situation in these lines: “Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire” and “while time ticks blank and busy on their wrists” to show the careless attitude of the people away from the front. They have no concern with the recruits at the front. Cohen says about Sassoon that he uses a direct approach while his technique is abrupt and simple. He emphasizes the contrast between the insecurity and misery of the trenches and the relative safety and comfort of the home front. He further says that Sassoon rejects complacency, ignorance, sin and hypocrisy. He advocates social reform for the poor and oppressed. (Cohen 1957, p. 170-171)

### **Use of Full Rhymes**

He has used full rhymes such as dun – sun – one, wire – fire, wrists – fists, tip – stop, gear – fear, shroud – bowed. The rhyme scheme in this poem is AABACBDCDEFFE. This rhyme scheme shows the chaos and disorder like the human mental state in war. This distortion of rhyme scheme also reveals the poem to be an expressionist poem. In its realistic diction, unconventional tone, savage imagery and ironic turns, this poem is an authentic account of Sassoon’s expressionist experience.

### **Rejection of Heroism**

In this poem, Sassoon totally rejects the idea of heroism. He has hardly written a poem about a young soldier who has full control of his emotional turmoil and who responds to his duty

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with devotion. He condemns war with the acid effects it leaves on the soldiers. His (Sassoon) colloquial style renders his poems more accessible and understandable to the public. Indeed the anger and satirical bitterness in his poetry are directed precisely at the public and this is far more immediate than his own 'pity'. (Broadway 1999, p. 4) Bergonzi states: "a potential rebel and deifier both of public thought and military dominance". (Bergonzi 1980, p. 92)

### **Sassoon's Writing Style**

Johnston compares Wilfred Owen's writing style to Sassoon's writing style. He is right on the point that Owen has expressed physical anguish and wounds of soldiers, while Sassoon has revealed 'modern scientific violence' of battle on the soldiers' mind. Sassoon writes about the numb soldiers, their concerns, and horrors of war. He also writes about the Soldiers' nervous breakdown under the emotional strain of trench fighting.

In Johnston's view, Sassoon depicts his intense emotional feelings with graphic display and minute details of things that he understands and feels during a retreat. (Bloom 2003, p. 69) He rather reveals truth through irony, fear of death, psychological strain and physical exhaustion of the young recruits. In this poem, 'Attack' the poet is concerned with the worried faces with grey lines, to show their paralyzing and physical weariness.

### ***Glory of Women***

Artistic Volition is present in *Glory of Women*. Sassoon has used colour imagery such as 'wild purple', 'dun', 'grey' and 'blank'. The poem starts with bright colours and at the end only blank colour remains. The poet has also used 'animal imagery' such as 'Flounders in the mud' to show weakness. He does not use any strict rhyme scheme to represent the unpredictability of war. The whole poem shows his anger towards war and fear of inhumanity.

*Glory of Women* is written in an ironic tone. It narrates incidents of ignorance, insensitivity and narrow-mindedness of women at home. This irony provides the poem with a sarcastic view of the life at the home front during a war. It expresses desperate conditions

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between home and the battle front. It narrates an ironic difference between the horrific experiences of soldiers and the calm conditions in which other civilians live back home. Sassoon's irony "underscores the poem's overall sarcastic tone concerning the disparity between the front and home – between the soldier's horrific experience and the polite society the woman live in. The old fashioned women just do not understand the modern conditions of war". (Meredith 2004, p. 121)

The mentionable place in the second line has double meaning. According to Meredith it may be a mentionable, uncensored and identifiable geographical place, or it may denote a mentionable wounded part of the body of a soldier that can be said to a lady, for example, an arm or a leg. According to C.M. Kingsbury, Sassoon totally negates the attitude generated by war propaganda. Soldier's mutilation is the result of a woman's pride, their artificial illusory talk of chivalry and heroism.

In this poem he uses Juxtaposition. He creates binaries between the civilian and soldiers. He distorts rhetoric and symbols of British nationalism and values into grotesque caricatures. He has parodied the complacency and cruelty of military officers in order to provoke hatred and outrage from all members of the society. He vilifies all the politicians, generals, civilians, profiteers, maligners and women at home in this poem. Johnston says about Sassoon's writing style that he is too sarcastic about war to depict an attack in positive terms. He cannot depict an attack in positive terms. He cannot portray individual heroism and a soldier's mastering of his own emotional turmoil. To write about such things he has to accept that war has some positive, historical or moral significance. He was in no state of mind to depict war in positive terms. (Johnston 1964, p.102)

In this poem the poet mocks at the thrill and delight with which women at home welcome the stories of 'dirt and danger'. They worship the decoration and physical manifestation of military failure, for example crowns, laurels and so on. The narrator in the 'Glory of women' is horrified and disgusted by fake symbols and heroism.

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The poet has used variations in the rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in the first four lines is ABAB. In the next four lines it is CDCD while in the last six lines it is EFGFEG. He does so to depict the bitter disillusionment, brute reality and physical violence.

He has used full – rhyme such as leave – believe, place – disgrace, delight – fight, thrilled – killed, retire – fire, run – son, blood – mud. The rhythm in these words shows a ruthless reality. If we make any sense of these words’ sequence, it shows disbelief in an old lie of honor, glory and valor. The words place – disgrace express that war has disgraced humanity and young recruits. The young soldiers have no importance in their officer’s eye whether they are alive or dead. The officers treat them like cattle. The politicians take delight in war, no matter how many innocents may lose their lives.

*Glory of Women* is written in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. It follows the rhythm of the Iambic Penta – meter. Each course of the sonnet contains ten syllables; stressed and unstressed. Different variation in Alliteration is found in this poem such as “heroes, home” in first line and ‘blind – blood’ in the eleventh line.

Sassoon has used strong images in this poem such as ‘hell’s last horror’, ‘trampling the terrible corpses’, ‘blind with blood’ and ‘dead soldier’s face is trodden deeper into the mud’. This imagery provides a clear mental picture. Images related to blood and corpses express the grim, strong and distressing effects created by the brutality of war. The tone of the poem is very bitter and angry.

The first word ‘You’ with a capital Y delivers an ironic effect and instils a feeling of accusation as one reads the poem. ‘You’ is contrasted with the word ‘Us’ to refer the soldiers at the front. The title of the poem, *Glory of Women* is ironic and shows sarcasm. The poet does not tell the reasons for the pride of the women. He describes their ignorant attitude towards the terrible realities of war, of which they are blind. This poem has variations in tone, voice communication and techniques from the first cable to the last one and from positive emotions

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and thoughts towards negative ones. Sassoon had one outstanding quality which is nevertheless extremely efficient; he realized the force of strong emotion. Whether it is held by the Swiftian art of satire or left to run wild in lyrics of sensation, this power seldom fails to convey itself to the teacher. (Pavitt 1970, p. 31)

Artistic Volition (Expressionist technique) inspires its public, whipped up the passions and mobilizes to action even more strongly than the realist artists. Siegfried Sassoon is a continual seeker of truth who could present all the sin, sufferings and degradation of the world on the stage. Through his poetry, he creates disgust against war. He unmasks all the world's criminals, liars and dissemblers. He says in his letter that war is being deliberately initiated by those who possess the mental ability to arrest it. At first this was a battle of liberation and defense. Only today it has become a battle of conquest and aggression. He criticizes political errors and insincerities by calling them evil and unfair. (Schilling 2006, p.44)

### ***Counter-Attack***

*Counter-Attack* cannot be avoided for its directness. He sees all the political motives as unnecessary prolongation of hostilities. The principle thing of Counter – Attack is its candor. It does not bear any signs of abstraction and allegory. It is written against the institutions of the establishment, the general staff, the army, the state and the church. About Sassoon's second Volume Counter – Attack, Blunden says that it is a very varied and organized book, in which observation, humor, and imagination marched under the dictation of the love ordinary humanity. (Blunden 1958, p. 29) And Virginia Woolf says about the most vivid scenes in his poems, that they had the power to move and not merely to shock. (Woolf 1918, p. 22)

The first two lines of the poem depict an ironic aubade (morning love song). The Dawn is personified as young soldiers who have succeeded in occupying a trench of the foe. The blinking eyes personified the awakening of troops and a new day. All the soldiers are pale, unshaved, thirsty and blind with smoke, because of the continuous awakening. In this poem a scene is

within another scene, to depict the horrible situation of decomposition and death in the occupied trench. It is an expressionist technique.

The title of the poem, *Counter-Attack* is deceptive in its simplicity and descriptiveness. But the poem, the circumstances and events it describes are not simple at all. In his poem, *Counter-Attack* he has used imagery to express the horrors of being dead on the front. He describes the conditions of dying soldiers in such words:

Trunks, face downward in the sucking mud, wallowed like trodden sand – bags loosely filled

About *Counter-Attack*, Johnston says that here Sassoon concentrates on the salacious details which degraded the human body and which were unknown to non-combatants. The passage could be cancelled without affecting either the form or content of the poem as a whole. Sassoon's disgust and horror well up with an urgency not to be weakened by a typically flippant coda (Johnston 1964, p. 96).

By the use of a simile of 'crushed sand-bags who are loosely filled' he presents a scrambled picture of dead soldiers. Dead soldiers are depicted by humiliated words such as 'green clumsy legs', 'sprawled', 'high-booted', 'grovelled', 'trunks', 'face downward in the sucking mud'. The poet rejects the idea of showing death in a clean clothed manner.

Sassoon's writing style deviates from the traditional modes, styles and genres of composition because of modern cultural devastation and destruction, the collapse of the personal and ethical feelings and shocking realities awakened by war. Stuart says about Sassoon's poem *Counter-Attack* that it begins with what seems a factual story of a battle, making use of military diction – 'objective', 'bombers', 'Lewis guns' – that is then radically undermined by the diction of squalor and suffering in the second paragraph, developing at far greater length and intensity the antithesis seen earlier in 'Glory of Women' and other short verse forms. (Stuart 2007, p. 61)

*Counter-Attack* is consistent on forty lines. It sets out in three stanzas. The tone in first stanza is positive. The poet says that 'things seemed alright at first, we had got their lines'. His tone changes sarcastically at the start of the second stanza.

The poet says: Sure as fate and never did.

This line shows the overpowering rule of fate coming down as a doom on soldiers. Any one of the soldiers could die since the battlefield is not a play-ground but a real battle field. Sassoon uses images for the description of terrible suffering, such as 'wire with gusts from hell' and 'spouting dark earth', to show the chaos and danger in war. The third stanza expresses the failure of the *Counter-Attack*. Sassoon has used sensual images to indicate the soldier's overwhelmed physical state by the thick, dirty and smoky air. The poet has used alliteration in thirty nine lines of the poem to give it a harsh and effective tone. The repetition of 'D – sound' reminds us of words like death, destruction and devastation in war. The poet says:

Down and down and down, he sank and drowned

### *Dulce et Decorum EST*

Sassoon has used startling images such as 'naked', 'saddled buttocks', 'swell bodies' and 'mats of hair' in this poem to depict death at the front as horrified phenomenon and to shock the public. He requires them to find out the actual sufferings, pain and truth as a reality of modernism. In the second part of the poem Sassoon has used the staccato speech that is direct, with each sound sharply detached from the other. In *Dulce et Decorum EST*, Wilfred Owen has also a similar situation of the front-line.

Many writers criticize Sassoon's poetry as mere description. It appeals only to sense not the imagination. It narrates 'uncontrolled emotions without artistic restraint'. But it is unique in its tone, technique and subject-matter. It has a universally appreciated theme. Riesman says about Sassoon's style that it is a manner of simple construction, concrete imagery and compact

brevity. It incorporates a universally appealing theme. It is a remarkable achievement though unrecognized (Reisman 2012, p. 184) .

### *Repression of War Experience*

Sassoon uses artistic volition also in his poem, *Repression of War Experience*. The stylistic devices that he has used in it are ‘interior monologue’, ‘onomatopoeia’, ‘personification’, ‘metaphor’, ‘symbolism’, and ‘imagery’.

He has used metaphor in the foremost line, ‘silly beggar’ to depict the ‘volunteer soldiers’ haunted by ‘glory’, ‘purpose’ and ‘duty’ and ‘desire of glory’. ‘Liquid flame’ results in searching their wings (death). He turns down the ridiculous idea of glory producing power, by calling the soldiers ‘silly beggars’.

What silly beggars they are to blunder in  
And scorch their wings with glory, liquid

The repetition of word ‘no’ in line “no, no, not, that ...it’s bad to think of war” shows a soldier’s effort to gag the idea of being mad. The line ‘and it’s been established that soldiers don’t get mad’ depicts the irony behind the ideology (which glorifies war). Interplay of past and present is also found in this poem. The soldier tries his best to get rid of war, but he goes forth.

Sassoon has also used metaphorical language in this poem. In line twenty five of the poem he has used a good metaphor when he says that there’s one big dizzy moth that bumps and flutters. It shows the soldiers’ mental condition very effectively. He also uses simile in this poem such as ‘you are as light as rain’. The artistic volition in this poem manifested by literary devices and purpose of the poem indicates that this is an expressionist poem. It describes a reality that is totally different from the narration in patriotic poems as Happy Warriors and ‘1914 I: the Peace’. Fussell has criticized Sassoon’s poetry as mere description. According to him, it appeals only to the senses with the imagery. It contains uncontrolled emotions without artistic restraint. Only it is

praised for its quality to cater a perfect break to war poetry of the past in tone, subject matter and technique (Fussell 1983, p. 124).

### *Dreamers*

Sassoon also uses artistic volition in his poem, *Dreamers*. Like his other poems Sassoon has used rhyme words such as stand – land, win – begin, morrow – sorrow, lives – wives, rain – regain, rats – bats – spats. Rhyme scheme in first paragraph is ABABCDCD. In the second paragraph it is EFEFEF. In this poem he has used the technique of Oxymoron such as ‘flaming fatal climax’ and ‘hopeless longing’ to create an illusion to soothe the pain of the soldiers.

He has used alliteration in this poem such as repetition of S- sound in words ‘soldiers are citizens of deaths’, repetition of D – sound in ‘drawing no divided... destiny’, repetition of the F – sound in ‘Flaming Fatal’ and repetition of ‘and’ in the start of the tenth, twelfth and fourteenth lines depict Sassoon’s variation in Artistic volition.

Sassoon has used a metaphor at the beginning of the poem, ‘death’s grey land’ to create a gloomy tone in the poem and to depict the ultimate fate of a soldier whom death consistently haunts. Sassoon has used images in this poem such as grey land, ruined trenches and foul – dugouts to show a terrifying portrait of battle; on the other hand he uses images of pictures shows, spats, train, wives to show the soothing side of life. This poem also draws a line between the luxuries a man enjoys at home to the bitter life a soldier faces at the front.

*Dreamers* depict the loss of the simple pleasures of the soldier’s life through the hardships of life at the front. The title of the poem is ironic, since its speaker does not dream about the superfluous things, but of ordinary things such as clean–beds, fire–lit homes and wives.

Wording of this poem also describes a soldier’s unwillingness to take part in war, as in the fifth line the poet states that soldiers are ‘sworn to action’. He has used many variations in imagery. Grey colour emphasizes the lethargy and hopelessness of the soldiers. It also strengthens the tone and imagery in the poem, emphasizing the thematic elements. The word

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‘flame’ presents the other perception of the soldiers’ active participation. It does not represent the soldiers’ feelings or their mindset.

Like Wilfred Owen, Sassoon also criticizes those who promote- false concepts of glory, honor and valour. Sassoon directs his wrath to the insensitive civilians, military institutions’ and their corrupt ways of treating soldiers and their parents after these soldiers’ death. He condemns their senseless attitude which he reads about after a soldier’s death. Another poem, *The Hero* manifests the untrue heroic stories told by the officers’ to the dead soldier’s parents. *Glory of Women* conveys the poet’s unbridled disgust against the masses who are not participating in warfare.

### **Abstraction**

There is no reality, there is only the human consciousness, which incessantly forms new worlds from its own creative resources, transforms them, assimilates them by hard work and spiritually stamps them. There is only the thought, the objective thought. This lives from abstraction and is the formula of art. (Weinstein 2010, p. 48)

Siegfried Sassoon applies the Expressionist technique, Abstraction in *Repression of War Experience* poem. He does so to express the psychological effects on the minds of the soldiers. He personifies roses with men, who stayed put in the mud with their heads down. The use of images in this personification highlight soldiers’ encounter with the enemy in the name of glory, honour and valour.

In the next lines he personifies books with soldiers who are standing with patience, in different colors such as ‘dim brown’, ‘black’, ‘white’ and ‘green’ standing on shelves. The images in this personification express that soldiers are so much haunted by the horrors of war, they could come to a psychological standstill in later life. Each and everything in life might make them remember the horrible trenches of war with their terror and suffering.

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In other words, we can say that the soldier wants to find peace. He desires to forget each moment that he has spent in warfare. Abstraction is an expressionist technique to find pleasure in non-living things. The narrator of the poem wants to be happy with the ideas of ‘moth’, ‘roses’, and ‘books’, but he fails to do so. He says:

No, no, not that – it’s bad to think of

He further says:

... Why, you can hear the guns

Hark! Thud, thud – quite soft...

By using Abstraction in *Repression of war Experiences* Sassoon questions the so-called ideals of faith, purpose and morals. It depicts a soldier’s mental state that is ‘a mind torn apart’, which is struggling to cope with society.

Sassoon has used the expressionist technique of abstraction in his poem *Dreamers*. The soldiers are terrified by the horrors of war. They find refuge in the world of imagination. They dream of living a normal life as they have lived in the past. Dreams of wives, clean beds, fire-lit homes, balls and bats, bank holidays take away these soldiers from the trench life and they feel relaxed. Sassoon says:

Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin,

They think of the fire-lit homes, clean beds and wives.

### **Interior Monologue**

Robert Humphrey defines interior monologue as the technique that is used in fiction for representation of the psychological content and inner restlessness of a character, entirely or partly united. This process exists at many levels of consciousness. It holds before they (psychological content and quality) are shaped for deliberate speech. (Humphrey 1954, p. 24) Interior monologue is found in his poem, *Counter-Attack*. The poet uses break up in sentences such “or he went up .....", “fire – step ... *Counter- Attack*, “... his rifle .... Rapid fire ...”, “started blazing wildly .... Then a bang”. This break up of sentences is also found in interior

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monologue. Sassoon has used interior monologue to show immense confusion in the battle. It also shows disorganization and incompetence of the officers. The line “And he remembered his rifle .... Rapid fire” expresses a soldiers’ frightened and shocked situation on the battlefield.

Sassoon has used interior monologue in this poem, *Repression of War Experiences*, also to explore the psychological content and inner restlessness of character. It is a technique of documenting the continuity of expressions, impulses and thoughts either persuaded by the conscious or the unconscious. Interior monologue is a character’s speech in a scene that introduces us to the interior life of that character. It is free from the author’s intervention, commentaries and explanations. (Humphrey 1954, p. 24) As in this poem, *Repression of war Experiences* Sassoon documents the continuity of war experiences and thoughts of the soldiers. He says nothing:

Draw a deep breath. Stop thinking; count fifteen,  
And you’re re as light as rain ... Why won’t it rain? ...

Interior monologue is also present in the following lines:

I wish there’d be a thunder-storm tonight,  
With bucketsful of water to sluice the dark,  
And make the roses hang their dripping heads.

Interior monologue starts with first pronoun ‘I’. It uses present tense and describes infinite things (such as wisdom) in finite terms. The following lines of this poem also present the same concepts:

I tell you all the wisdom of the world –  
Is waiting for you on those shelves

These lines compile an infinite concept in the book shelves. Interior monologue is also applied to depict the haunted emotions of the soldier. He desires to bring freedom to these feelings, but could not do so, as he says”

... I want to go out

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And search at them to stop – I am going crazy;  
I'm going stark, staring mad because of the guns.

In the poem *Dreamers* also Sassoon has used the technique of interior monologue; here he says:

I see them in the foul dug-out gnawed by rats,  
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,  
Dreaming of things they did with bats and balls.

### **Nightmarish Imagery**

Sassoon has used dreamlike elements and disillusion in order to face the bitter realities of life in his poem, *Dreamers*. The comparison between the bitter things such as ‘gnawing rats’, ‘ruined trenches’, ‘rain’ to ‘balls and bats’, ‘bank-holidays’, ‘picture shows’, ‘spats’, ‘train’, ‘clean beds’, ‘lighted houses’, and ‘wives’, signifies a person in a fantasy filled, unrealistic and impractical world. The tone of the poem is morbid and serious. The structure of the poem reinforces the idea that hoping for a better future is in vain.

### **To Conclude**

To conclude, we can say that Sassoon writes about the numb soldiers, their fears, and horrors of war. He also writes about the Soldiers’ nervous breakdown under the emotional strain of fighting. He is rather revealing truth through irony, fear of painful death, psychological strain and physical torture of the young recruits. He narrates an ironic difference between the horrific experiences of soldiers and the calm conditions in which other civilians live back home. It narrates ignorance, insensitivity and narrow-mindedness of women at home. The irony infuses into the poem, *Glory of Women*, a stinging sarcastic tone.

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Rehana Kousar, M.Phil. English Literature  
[Rehanali964@gmail.com](mailto:Rehanali964@gmail.com)  
G.C University Faisalabad Pakistan

Nida Sarfraz, M.Phil. English Literature  
G.C University Faisalabad Pakistan

Khamsa Qasim Lecturer, G.C University Faisalabad, Pakistan [khamsaqasim@yahoo.com](mailto:khamsaqasim@yahoo.com)

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