

The Innovative Use of Hegemonic Masculinity Concept in WWI Poetry

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This article explores the innovative use of hegemonic masculinity (HM) in WWI poetry as one of its strategic promotion in general, along its aesthetic employment to express feelings towards violence; besides observing the changes in the persona's masculinity in anti-war poems in particular. Based on 14 purposively selected war poems, an analysis was carried out using thematic analysis guided by HM theory perspectives. The selected poems address the research questions, and define both the scope and the purpose of the study. The poems chosen contain a wide range of stunning poetic ambivalences; such as the glorious versus the gruesome, the heroic versus the hellish, and the romantic versus the realistic. The poems do not only provide insights into the gender through HM but also discuss the effects of violence through the conceptual use. The findings show that the soldier poets who experienced WWI, used the concept HM as an act of defiance. This article observes a change in the use of HM concept which began as a propaganda to attract male youth towards favouring military life but later, changed to be used to rebel against violence with the advance of war.

KEYWORDS: *British, hegemonic masculinity; HM; WWI; war poetry; soldier poets.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Hegemonic Masculinity (HM) is central in literary works during World War 1 (WWI) where the idea of masculinity was used as propaganda to attract enlistees. Nevertheless, soldiers were then thrust into trenches and killing fields, learning the hard way that the idea of being heroes and warriors were illusions as they realised that they had to fight to stay alive. The concept of HM has been highlighted in several studies (e.g. Andrew, 2018; Fletcher, 2014; Loughran, 2013), thus suggesting that the concept was used prominently in both pro and anti-war poems. Most studies on war poetry were devoted to explore the concept and its role as a propaganda in recruiting as many youths as possible in WWI (Ul-Haq & Rashid, 2018; De Angelis, 2016; Araujo, 2014; Hinojosa, 2010; Nye, 2007). The concept, however, has not yet received

sufficient attention from scholars in anti-war poetry. As such, this study partakes an analysis of selected poems to explore the innovative use of HM in both pro and anti-war poems.

Despite the prominent use of HM in various studies on WW1 poetry, there is a dearth of information on how the concept is used to express rebellious ideas against the war. Hence, to understand how anti-war poets used poems to show their protest, this paper analyses popular war poems to identify three aspects: (1) the ways HM was depicted in pro and anti-war poems; (2) the use of hegemonic personae to express feelings towards the war; and (3) the changes in persona's masculinity manifested in anti-war poems. This study seeks to answer three questions:

- i) How is HM depicted in war poems?
- ii) How is hegemonic personae used to express feelings towards the war?
- iii) What are the changes observed in the persona's masculinity in anti-war poems?

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1.1 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND BRITISH SOCIETY

According to Kent (1999), war poetry was used in Britain to manipulate people's opinion on the idea of being masculine, to a point that war was a manifestation of masculinity where men must be physically strong, innately adventurous and protectors of women. This is the championing of the eighteenth-century English concept of masculinity, as proposed by Burke (1992) which highlights men as sublime, as opposed to beauty for women. In other words, the eighteenth-century English society placed men on the top of the order which inevitably created the belief that men were the stronger with such entitlement for resources within the society, to an extent that such a concept was manipulated by some English men to their convenience (Ismail, 2016; Ismail, Yahya, & Barani, 2017). In general, those revered as being dominantly masculine were respected and honoured unlike their female counterparts and others who were considered as non-hegemonic individuals (i.e. gays, epicene) (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Unlike the rigid perceptions towards masculinity in the eighteenth century and even in the beginning of the nineteenth century, masculinity in contemporary Britain is no longer a crisis. In fact, it is evolving in relation to the changing culture. Along this, Anderson (2014) argues that "the gendered changes in the social lives of British men are positive and to be welcomed" (p.125). He adds that although misconstructions of masculinity still arise in academia, heterosexual masculinity is becoming wider and smoother in its entirety and diversity.

1.1.2 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE

This article does not intend to discuss violence during the war. Instead, it aims to show how the ideals of HM changed as a result of hostilities, away from the range of accept or reject responses in English society. In general, soldiers had paradoxical impulses towards aggression in WWI. Their strategies when facing conflicts were limited since there is evidence in many cases where most were more likely to resort to violence. Some soldiers explored innovative coping strategies when engaged in aggression, such as resorting to writing. As such, several poets, males and females alike, used poetry to instigate aggression. Their poetry was a type of deception to others through which violence was depicted as a way to gain power, or at least, to exercise control and to preserve masculine identity in the societies. Among those poets, Brooke and the poetess Pope who devoted their poetry to celebrate glories of war as a purpose to encourage boys to join the front (Kendall, 2007).

Chick and Loy (2001) declare that although violence was widely met by blame ideologically, it may contribute positively to forming men's identities, rather than posing any type of threat to them. In the same context, Copenhaver, Lash, and Eisler (2000) assert that the traditional expectations of gender roles may form a pressure on men who feel that they may not be able to assimilate in a given situation. For instance, expressions of rejection may form a premonition on men causing them to be deeply concerned with the impact from such disclosure on the infringement of gender norms. As such, some critics suppose that experiencing gender roles pressure may push men to respond with outrage (Copenhaver & Eisler, 1996) and probably use questionable interpersonal tactics characterised with violence as an adaptive tendency to respond to threats (Eisler & Balock, 1991). In return, men may resort to some soft approaches to solve problems interpersonally by retaining their identity at all costs.

1.1.3 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN PRO-WAR POETRY

HM was employed differently in poems written during the war. It was used as a substantial part of a propaganda led by the British during WWI. The beginning of the war witnessed profusely published poems in newspapers, which was set to work as a propaganda to encourage youths' enrolment in the army (Bogacz, 1986). Masculinity was highlighted as the only way to salvage England during the war (Kendall 2007). Poetry was influential to encourage youth enlistment in the war through the celebration of war glory. As a technique, several poems employed words that suggest glory such as 'nobleness', and 'honour' as merits in order to highlight the notions of English heroism and patriotism. In doing such, solidarity was associated with privileges within British culture where being a soldier and a man were counted as the ultimate forms of masculinity (Kendall, 2007).

HM was used as a recruiting device in WWI. It was obvious in many poetic writings such as those employed in Pope's poems which "describe the battlefield as a 'shrine'" (Araujo, 2014, p.333). Nye (2007) states that "before, masculine ideals had been influenced by both religion and nationalism, now it was the image of the soldier, repeated innumerable times in the ear and the eye, that became standard" (p.422). To summarize, pro-war poetry embodies the idea of

masculinity as a propaganda through which the image of the soldier is incarnated as the ultimate and real man.

1.1.4 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN ANTI-WAR POETRY

As the war progressed, the perceptions towards masculinity started to change. Through realistic portrayals of the war, which highlights the calamitous conditions that soldiers lived in, the poetry suggests a protest against war (Kendall, 2007). As such, the image of the soldier as the ultimate man is then narrated in a different tone to the public. This realistic approach of expressing the harsh and horrifying sceneries of war contributed in deconstructing the traditional image of HM as the ultimate image of male especially when a number of wounded soldiers returned home from the frontline with psychological disorders that were diagnosed later as shell shock disease. Shell shock is “the body language of masculine complaint, a disguised male protest, not only against the war but against the concept of ‘manliness’ itself” (Showalter, 1989, p.172).

Through a panoramic portrayal using vivid images at the front, anti-war poets were able to deconstruct the merits of war at that time. Anti-war poetry has the main role in developing a more “disciplined attitude toward the details of suffering and death; and, finally, it attained, ... a new insight into the tragedy of modern war” (Caesar, 1993, p.58). Realistic approach employed in anti-war poetry detected the scandals in pro-war writings and portrayed them as mere decisive pieces through which men were encouraged to go to war and die at the front (Kendall, 2007).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of HM was stigmatised by various attributes including hierarchal masculinities, mastery of men over women, and “the interplay between men’s identity, men’s ideals, their interactions, power, and patriarchy” (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012, p.40). It was introduced as a social construct that assimilates the English as a whole (Shehan, 2018, Donaldson, 1993). Connell (1995) introduces it as a validation of male dominance based on societal ideals. Wharton (2005) points out that the concept was constructed upon biological accounts. Ferrante (2010) and Halberstam (2004) see that the concept is wider than introducing it in a mere biological frame, particularly when both male and female can reflect masculine behaviours in some given stances. Meanwhile, Kimmel and Aronson (2004) view that the concept was formulated based on historical and cultural criteria. Later, the concept has been viewed as an array of principles set up to mould society in a morphologic form (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). However, Barret (2001) believes that HM refers to an ideal male figure, heterosexual, reasonable, independent, assertive, and courageous. On one hand, this article is analysed based on the masculine ideals as defined by Connell (1995) in terms of analysing the pro-war poetry. On the other hand, Barret’s (2001) definition of HM is employed to explain the concept used in anti-war poetry.

The combination of Connell's (1995) and Barret's (2001) definitions provide insights into the concept of HM and how it was innovatively used in WWI poetry, whose definitions contribute to the interpretation of the chosen poems in this article. Connell's (1995) and Barret's (2001) definitions facilitate the process of analysis in this study as they helped connect the emerging themes to the social reality during the war, which ultimately contributed to understanding how HM was depicted in the selected war poems. For instance, Connell's definition points to the understanding of masculinity in pro-war poetry, while Barret's definition helps interpret the concept in anti-war poems. Indeed, the combination of Connell and Barret's definitions serve a great advantage to this study due to their roles in revealing the significance of HM existing in WWI poetry. De facto, the concept HM provides a magnificent priority to this article due to its function in demonstrating the significance of soldier poets' portrayals of masculinity in WWI and its complexities presented within their poetic representations.

3. METHOD

This research involved 14 war poems that were purposively selected. These poems were listed into two categories (as seen in Table 1): 6 pro-war poems include Brooke's "The Soldier" (1915), Pope's "Who's for The Game" (1915), "The Call" (1915) and "The Lads of Maple Leaf" (1915), McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" (1915), and Seaman's "Pro Patria" (1913). Meanwhile, 8 anti-war poems include Sassoon's "The Poet as Hero" (unknown), "Dead Musicians" (1918) and "Suicide in the Trenches" (1918), Owen's "Dulce Et Decorum Est" (1917), "Mental Cases" (1920) and "S.I.W" (Self-Inflicted Wound) (1918) and Rosenberg's "Break of Day in the Trenches" (1916) and "Dead Man's dump" (1917). The chosen poems provided insights into the gender, the application of HM and the effects of WWI on the concept of HM. All in all, the sample in this study was deliberately selected based on predefined criteria and themes, such as gender and HM in WWI; and effects of WWI on HM. At the same time, heterogeneous sampling was employed in order to obtain as many variations within the data and in accordance with the main relevant criterion of the study, which is HM. Therefore, the chosen poems contain a wide range of stunning poetic ambivalences; such as the glorious versus the gruesome, the heroic versus the hellish, and the romantic versus the realistic. As pointed out by Patton (2002), the logic and power of purposive sampling depend on selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Selecting purposive sampling helped understand the problem and enabled answering the research questions (Creswell, 2003).

3.1 DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analysed thematically: first, we familiarise ourselves with the data. The data were read deeply, and then notes were written in order to facilitate the process of coding. In the second step, the initial codes were generated from the data by analysing clusters of data. In the third phase, the codes were categorised in order to produce themes. After generating initial themes, these themes were reviewed and the categorised codes were re-examined to ensure that the initial themes would make patterns. Before producing the report, the initial themes were

produced. The themes were analysed and interpreted based on Connell (1995) and Barret's (2001) conceptualisations of HM which serve as the theoretical underpinnings of this study. The analysis focused on the idea of masculinity in the coded data. On one hand, Connell's definition enabled the identifying of masculinity as constructed upon societal ideals which highlighted the male dominance over others. This definition helps in concluding the main themes in pro-war poetry. On the other hand, Barret's definition of masculinity is in line with the interpretation of masculinity in anti-war poetry. The main themes constructed are shown in Table 3 along with the interpretation of the themes supported by symbols based on Connell and Barret's definitions of HM. It is to be noted that the initial themes shown in Table 3 above were examined and seen relevant to be used as sub-themes in this study. Besides that, the categories were used as both, symbols to link with the main themes, and devices to explicate the themes as shown below (Table 4).

Table 4. Final themes and the explanation based on Connell's and Barret's definitions

| No | Theme | Portrayal | Interpretation |
|----|--|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Rise of the HM ideals during WW1 | Symbol of Patriotism | Based on Connell's definition of HM, the concept is used to instil the spirit of patriotism among male youths. |
| | | Symbol of an ideal man | Employing Connell's definition of HM, the concept is used to create an image of an ideal man who is strong, a leader, not afraid to be challenged or to challenge others. |
| 2 | Rebellious Masculine Persona in Anti-war poems | Symbol of a war victim | Employing Barret's definition of HM, the concept HM is used to describe how the soldiers became reasonable, independent and assertive. They began realizing that what they had expected was different than the realities of war. They became bitter and began to focus only on staying alive, instead of fighting for the initial cause. |
| | | Symbol of an anti-hero | Employing Barret's definition of HM, the concept HM is used to depict the soldiers as damaged products of the war whose personalities and behaviour were altered by the war and the people they lost. |
| 3 | Changes in the Persona's HM After Experiencing War | Symbol of violence and anger | The idea of being dominant turned the soldiers into violent individuals who believed in using force to ensure compliance. Employing Barret's definition of HM, the soldiers were independent, courageous, reasonable, and assertive. |

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Based on the three research questions, the analysis revealed that pro-war poems feature sentiments of masculinity, which strongly attract men to join the military in order to “become a man”. They are fed with images of heroic deeds, adventures and victory only to realise that the pictures planted in their minds are different from the realities of war. However, HM is depicted differently in the anti-war poems written by notable war poets like Owen, Sassoon, and Rosenberg. According to Altunsoy (2017), the poets changed their stance from encouraging war to spiteful, loathing and condemning war and its atrocity.

4.1 RISE OF THE HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IDEALS DURING WWI

Although the concept HM was present in English society before the outbreak of WWI, it was strongly refined and highlighted at the emergence of the war, deriving its ideals from the Victorian and Edwardian period. In addition, the military society actively bestowed the concept of masculinity with great interest, using it as a device for propaganda.

4.1.1 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AS A PROPAGANDA

The severity of the global conflict led to the birth of writers, prose writers and poets who devoted their efforts to write about the great war and glorify patriotism that was believed to be part of the battle (Araujo, 2014). Initially, literary works were used to entice young and able men to enlist in the war and fight for a common cause (De Angelis, 2016). Pro-war poets have coined the idea of patriotic hegemonic masculine first to make male youths believe that they are masculine, loyal, and brave, in order to be enlisted, and fight for their country (Hinojosa, 2010). During the war, HM was basically used to militarise the citizens, especially the young males. The government resorted mainly to the strategy of winning youth's minds and hearts in a purpose to have them engaged in the war. In attempts to reshape youth's new militarised society as they considered the centre of gravity, the stereotyped image of masculinity, that of, the combatant soldier as a normative image of manliness and real man, was supported by several symbols like patriotism and heroism as boundaries of militarisation propaganda.

4.1.1.1 SYMBOL OF PATRIOTISM

HM is used to instil the spirit of patriotism among male youths where many poets devoted their poems to encourage enlisting in the army. Brooke, for instance, who steered patriotism in his zealous writings, was known as one of those poets who encouraged youth to enlist in the army. His poem "The Soldier" is an explicit example of a war masterpiece that embodies HM as a propaganda. The poem demonstrates the strong bond between the fighters and their place of origin (England). Brooke's depiction is a mere patriotic and nationalistic intent as he shows his willingness to sacrifice his life for the sake of his country. He says, “If I should die, think only this of me:/ That there’s some corner of a foreign field,/That is for ever England. There shall be” (Lines 1-3). In lines 4-8, Brooke romanticises the idea of dying for England as a noble act. As a fallen hero, the persona does not mind being laid down in an unfamiliar soil since he has given his best to ensure the sovereignty of England is protected. By using soft, warm images

of the sun and flowers, the poet states that dying for the Motherland is a grand way to die and the sacrifice for England would always be remembered. Although Brooke portrays the enlists as naïve, his approach on the war propaganda remains within the nationalistic and patriotic perspectives.

Another poet who employs HM as a medium of propaganda is the poetess Pope who asserts the symbol of patriotism in her poem “Who’s for The Game”, and falls directly into the propaganda campaign to the war. Instead of talking about the war experience, the poetess engages more in calling-to-arms, a targeted heading to enthusiastic young men in purpose of getting them enlisted in the English army as a nationalistic and patriotic duty. She writes, “Who’ll grip and tackle the job unafraid?” (lines 3-4). In fact, the poem is completely pro-war and gives evidence in support of patriotism, explicitly with the objective of inducing people to sacrifice, and willingness to die for their country. Anything less than that, the poem induces, is a cowardice.

McCrae’s “In Flanders Fields” is another example of the poems that embodies the idea of propaganda using masculinity. Using a patriotic perspective, McCrae sees that the poppies are placed on soldier’s grave as remembrance. By this, he celebrates the glory of war and convinces the public that dying in a battle is a great honour where dead soldiers will not be forgotten after death, similar to “the the poppies” blown,/ Between the crosses, row on row (lines 1-2).

Seaman also uses masculinity to draw upon the interest of more soldiers. He, in his work “Pro Patria”, glorifies those who decided to join the war. His celebration of war glories is openly cheerful patriotism: “England, in this great fight to which you go,/ Because, where Honour calls you, go you must” (lines 1-2). In stanza 1, Seaman reminds the soldiers that they are fighting an honourable war for their beloved country and assures them that the war is not pointless, despite its outcome; that it is a war of a justified cause. Soldiers are encouraged to march “forth” into “peril of the deep/With smiling lips and in your eyes the light,”, proud and tall as those who fall would have a place in Heaven (lines 13-14). Such portrayals of masculinity with heavenly reward are the gist of Seaman’s poem.

4.1.1.2 SYMBOL OF IDEAL MAN

HM is used to create an image of an ideal man who is strong, a leader, not afraid to be challenged or to challenge others. The ideals of HM were prominently used in WW1 pro-war poems, especially those written by Pope who wrote recruitment poems for the British government and her Allies in the early stage of the war (Araujo, 2014). One of her recruitment poems “The Lads of Maple Leaf”, which was written in 1915 was used to attract Canadian youths to enlist and be part of the Great War. In Stanza 1, the poem uses elements of HM which call upon the Canadians to enlist as she described them as adventurous, strong, loyal, and ready to fight. These lines represent the hegemonic ideals planted in the public’s mind where they are conditioned to believe that one should always be ready to serve the country. The manipulation of masculinity is further amplified when Pope praises the Canadian troops for their strength, resilience and bravery that “keep the line intact” (lines 9-12). A strong tone is

observed to attract young men to be part of the war. She, in her poem “The Call”, challenges young men at that time to prove that they are ‘men’ enough to get enlisted at the front. The persona asks the young men if they are ready to don “the khaki suit” to be part of the war and those, who are not enlisted, are at the losing end (lines 9-11). In lines 4-8, the poetess mockingly asks the readers if they will regret the decision for not enlisting. To those who answer the call are the ones who are eager to be in the frontlines, protecting the empire’s honour. Using words like “fit” and “grit”, the poet entices her readers with masculine images of a fit and gritty man and those who do not respond are anything but masculine (Lines 12-14).

4.2 REBELLIOUS MASCULINE PERSONA IN ANTI-WAR POEMS

The use of the concept HM shifted drastically from pro-war to anti-war as many became more concerned with the true realities of the war and began writing about pain, terror, fear and suffering that the soldiers experienced. At the beginning of the war, poets through using HM focused on fuelling English men only with patriotism. After experiencing the war, they interestingly used HM concept differently in their writings which turned into rebellious perspective.

4.2.1 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AS FUTILITY

By showing the atrocities and inhumanity of war, a group of soldier war poets innovatively employed the concept HM in a new lens; this time, to express their protest and rebellion against violence and the traditional images of masculinity. They shed light on masculinity as a mere futility. Symbols such as the ‘victim’ and ‘anti-hero’ were used to show that HM was useless, vain, and a fruitless gesture producing no results, but pain, complete failure and folly. The realities of war shown by anti-war poets had proven the term HM so futile which implied its failure as a medium of propaganda.

4.2.1.1 SYMBOL OF WAR VICTIM

HM is used to describe the soldiers’ realisation that the war is a contradiction from the realities of war. They became bitter and shifted their focus to only staying alive, instead of fighting for the initial cause. Anti-war poems are opinionated; these poems clearly criticise the war, along with the policies implemented by the government involved. Soldiers, who were initially smitten by the romantic ideas of dying for their motherland, then realised their entrapment and found a new purpose to stay alive.

In this context, the analysis showed that HM was depicted differently in the anti-war poems e.g. Owen and Sassoon. According to Altunsoy (2017), the poets changed their stance from encouraging war to condemning war and its atrocity. One of the poems that strongly opposes war is Sassoon’s “Suicide in the Trenches”. The poem describes war as a causative factor of a carefree boy who turns into a suicidal soldier in the trenches. The persona is described as a happy youth with “empty joy” (Sassoon, lines 1-2) whose life changes upon his enlistment where he experiences the horrors of war that drive him to his death. Unlike other poems which

glorify enlisted soldiers, Sassoon highlights the reality of war; that dying in the war is not a tale with happy endings since those who died are often forgotten. The harshness of war epitomises the coldness of winter. The soldiers are observed to be "cowed and glum." In paradox, the previous "grin" changed to be "glum" and explicitly Sassoon symbolises the spring through mentioning the "lark" which later changed to winter which symbolises "death".

Owen in his poem "Mental Cases" sheds light on the futility of war. The soldiers lived the utmost dehumanised moments at the front; they suffered the war atrocities and felt the cold with frequent bombardment of gas bombs. They witnessed the 'Batter of guns and shatter of flying muscles' (line 16). Owen and his men experienced the war "not as a heroic deliverance but as a terrible international disaster" (Pinto, 1969, p.146). Their poetry bade a genuine accounts of the truthful realities of war and identified "the only form of discourse that can make the experience actually alive" (Lecerle, 2007, p.266)

In the same context, Rosenberg's verse provides an authentic vision of war experience. His poem "Dead Man's dump" reveals hellish events that the soldiers suffered at the front. He refers to the catastrophic and calamitous times which the soldier experienced in the war. In line 3, Rosenberg evokes the painful moments of Christ's crucifixion when the wire "stuck out like many crowns of thorns" purposely to show how futile the war was.

4.2.1.2 SYMBOL OF AN ANTI-HERO

The anti-hero symbol is built to oppose the ideals of being masculine such as brave, courageous, loyal and self-sacrificing warriors. HM here is used to depict the soldiers as damaged products of the war whose personalities and behaviour were altered by the war and the people they lost. This notion is identified in many anti-war poems such as Owen's sarcastic poem "Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori" (trans. It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country). According to Bloom (2002), "Owen's goal from such a title is to attack the concept that sacrifice is sacred, and to destroy the glamorised decency of the war" (p.15). Owen specifies that the glory of being strong and willing to die for a blind cause is pointless and a blatant lie. Although the first 14 lines reflect the poet's weeping over the harsh and sad experience that his soldiers are exposed to as a result of gas bombardment, the other 14 lines deliver messages of warning to those who write zealous poems to drive the enthusiastic youth to their inevitable fate, death. The last two lines Owen assures that "Dulce Et Decorum Est" is definitely a lie. The final stanza is directed to those who still believe that real men fight real wars and cheer for those who join the military. The people may view that taking part in the fighting is heroic which brings fame and admiration, the reality is that only the fighter knows that there is nothing heroic and glorious about the death and horrifying trench life. Sassoon in his poem "Suicide in the Trenches" cynically tells those who are encouraging the war as those "Who cheer when soldier lads march by", that they should be thankful that they are spared from the war as he makes similar of it to Hell that takes away young men from their families (line 10).

4.3 CHANGES IN THE PERSONA'S HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AFTER EXPERIENCING WAR

The poets' change of stance towards WW1 is of great interest since their traumatic experience of going to war inspired them to produce works in expressing their dark ordeals to their readers. Moreover, a closer look at their work revealed that their masterpieces were used not only to express their defiance of an unavailing war but to also show their disapproval with the actions taken by the countries to solve conflicts. Defiance towards the war is prominent in works such as Owen, Rosenberg, and Sassoon who initially developed a strong patriotic stance on the war but later rebelled against the war (Altunsoy, 2017). Their poems are expressions of pain, fear, and disappointment towards the whole warfare and government policies through the use of symbols, innovative mechanisms, and literary musical patterns. Scarry (1985) describes the use of rebelling hegemonic masculine individuals as the soldier poets' way to show means of handling pain and projecting voices among the soldiers during their service for the country at the time of war.

4.3.1 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AS A DENIAL

The term of HM has gradually changed and underwent several developments. It was ultimately used as a device of denial for all shapes of violence during the war. The anti-war poets used the concept to show their rejection of violence and to express their anger towards the war.

4.3.1.1 EXPRESSIONS OF VIOLENCE AND ANGER

The idea of being dominant turned the soldiers into violent individuals who believed in using force to ensure compliance. Changes in persona's HM after any traumatic experience is inevitable and for those who had served the war, they would have undergone significant psychological effects that eventually affected their ability to return and adapt to the lives they once had before the war. Some became either increasingly violent or suicidal. To illustrate, Owen's poem "S.I.W" sends a strong message of poor mental state among the soldiers, reminding them that "We could do nothing but wipe his bleeding cough" (lines 1). The poem narrates a story of a young soldier whose mental strength gradually weakens during his service. In his letters, he informs his family of his wellbeing despite the war. Yet, he withholds his misery since his father is a staunch believer of masculinity and leaving the war would only cause family dishonour. In the end, the young soldier sees suicide as the only solution but camouflages it while he is on duty with the hope that he would be declared killed during action.

Sassoon expresses his hatred towards the war, especially when he realises that he would be sent for another mission after recovering from an injury. In his poem "The Poet as Hero", he unleashes his anger towards the government and the war, describing how his harrowing experience in war has changed him and his perception. Sassoon uses the word "ecstasies" to represent misleading ideals that young soldiers are made to believe (line 4). Despite his initial purpose being similar to those that was inspired by the government and war officials, he eventually loses his confidence in the cause after experiencing the war first-hand. In his other

poem “Dead Musicians”, Sassoon expresses his lack of interest in any forms of literary works caused by his experience with war (as cited in Kennedy & Tate, 2011). HM in the poem is clearly shown where the persona becomes bitter towards those “Great names”. He wears his bitterness through the wreath that he dons, similar to a crown and he prides for picking a side with those who fought. The “symphonies” that are played by the other side fail to carry the truth of the war, leaving his friends, who died in the line of duty, forgotten. These names “I cannot find you now” (lines 9-16). Changes experienced by the HM persona are not subtle since many are mentally afraid of life. As the damages are irreversible, those who survived the war and returned home were often violent and aggressive towards their surroundings. Using HM in a rebellious manner led the poets to create persona who, despite the strong façade they must show, are vulnerable and broken emotionally. Sassoon epitomises himself to Galahad, one of King Arthur’s righteous knights where he metaphorically bids farewell to the idealised character who is expected to “show” gallantry after witnessing the insensible war (Sassoon, line 9-10). He moves away from becoming the “knight of dreams”, who is previously romanticised for saving the country. This change in tone is an exemplary use of HM as an expression of outrage. The idea of violence is obviously shown in Rosenberg’s poem “Break of Day in the Trenches” as the poet combines between the words ‘torn’ and ‘fields’ in line 18 to indicate the violence to which man and nature are similar when exposed to war.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper explored the use of HM in war poetry in general and its innovative use to express feelings towards violence in anti-war poetry in particular. The concept HM and war are inseparable, which thus requires a further examination on both elements. Most of the previous studies view HM as a concept or an abstract idea but none has studied how the concept was used as a rebellious tool against violence and to show horrors and pain felt in the killing fields. At the beginning of WWI, the concept HM was used as propaganda to war, which was adopted by Pro-war poets to promote the cause and encourage participation among male youths. During WWI, pro-war poems were not only used to attract enlistees but to also spread the war’s propaganda. The poems focus heavily on conditioning the public’s mind that soldiers are the faces of masculinity and that their service is only required for a short period of time. The reality of WWI is far more complex, as the detrimental impact of the war affected not only the countries but also those involved. Those who survived struggled to move on in gruesome circumstances. As a response, the poets’ literary perspectives shifted drastically from pro-war to anti-war since many became concerned with the portrayals of WWI in the earlier works. During the pre-war period, poets focused on fuelling English men with patriotism. However, the attitude changed when poets, especially those who were part of the war themselves, became concerned with the truthful realities of the war and began writing about pain, terror, fear and suffering that the soldiers experienced. Interestingly, anti-war poets also used HM persona in their writings, but from a rebellious perspective. The reality of war also influenced the poet’s attitudes towards war and trigger them to express agony and pain in their poems.



As such this article highlights the concept HM in war poetry in general and its innovative use by notable anti- war poets to express rebellious feelings towards violence. Further and in another stand, the article was able to shed light on the importance of poetry as an innovative and apt medium to release repressed feelings and get catharsis.



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