

This is a serious issue since, for the first time in a long time, poetry was considered to be somewhat less important than other literary forms (Edward, 2000).

Despite this, it is important to note that the term “Modernism” encompasses literary and artistic movements such as Cubism, Expressionism, Imagism, Surrealism, and especially Symbolism, which is widely used in contemporary English Poetry. All of these movements were directly influenced by scientific, social, and psychological changes, particularly those brought about by the industrial revolution, the Darwinian worldview, and Freudian psychology (Parsoon, Watson, 2009).

Key Figures and Major Developments

The most significant representatives of Anglo-American Modernism in poetry are often regarded to be Ezra Pound (1885–1972) and T.S. Eliot (1888–1955), but we should never undervalue the contributions of the great Irish poet and dramatist William Butler Yeats. The Irish nationality of Irish poets, particularly Yeats, who was also known as a poet deeply rooted in Celtic mythology, is thought to be one of the reasons they had less of an impact on the British literary landscape, particularly during their lifetimes. This suggests that politics played a significant role in the literary world at the time, as evidenced by the academic elite's preference for Pound, Lawre, and other writers in the late 1910s and early 1920s. However, Yeats' impact had already been fairly noticeable and significant by the middle of the 1920s. We should note that Yeats's work as a poet and Joyce's work as a novelist—both of whom were Irish—are considered by many modern critics to be the two most significant literary accomplishments of Britain's Modernist period (Luebering, 2011). Yeats, who was greatly influenced by the Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite movements, especially when he was young, presented a legendary and supernatural image of Ireland in his early verse using language that was frequently ambiguous. He had sought to inspire pride in the Irish history because he supported the Irish nationalist movement (Luebering, 2011).

It should be emphasized that the English Modernists were significantly impacted by the First World War. Traditionalist writers, especially poets, who drew inspiration from the war's devastation, responded to it in various ways. While Siegfried Sassoon and Ivor Gurney wrote about the intense anger and desperation brought on by the ongoing war, Isaac Rosenberg, Edmund Blunden, and perhaps the most famous of the war poets Wilfred Owen wrote not only about the compassion between the soldiers who fought on the trenches but also expressed themselves to civilians. Poets like Rupert Brooke wrote about the ideal of the opening months of the war in which he actually died while in service (Luebering, 2011). It is crucial to note that Rosenberg and Owen died during combat, making them accurate depictions of the time. However, much of this poetry was not well known until the 1930s, and it is this poetry that has become one of the most recognizable of the Modernist era. These particular literary renderings

show a distinctive mosaic of responses to the war, offering a balanced worldview between idealism and pacifism (Luebering, 2011).

Style

The United States and France were arguably the two most influential foreign nations on modernist poetry in Britain. *Vers libre* (free verse) and symbolism were introduced in the first, while Anglo-American Imagism was combined in the second. There is no doubt that Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot are the authors being discussed here.

Knowing that many critics view the years leading up to the First World War as the lowest time in English poetry made this vital. This was prior to the language and subject alterations made by Wilfred Owen, Edward Thoms, and Isaac Rosenberg, many of whom weren't well-known until the 1930s, as we previously indicated (Childs, 2008).

Early writings by W.H. Auden (1907-1973) emphasize alienation, menace, social unrest, and psychological discontent by drawing on the anxious cultural environment that they describe and seek symbolic representation for. Later, after moving to a new location, Auden's style changes to a more typically coherent tone, becoming argumentative and conversational, didactic and meditative, and generally more philosophical (Daiches, 1997). His metrical range includes proficiency in almost every English form currently in use as well as many others that have been imported from various sources; his translations and renditions of works written in other languages provide a varied but enlivening reading experience (Daiches, 1997).

The disappointment and disdain of the post-World War I era are powerfully expressed in *The Waste Land*. It depicts a sterile world of anxieties and barren lusts, and people hoping for some sign or promise of redemption in a sequence of vignettes that are loosely connected by the tale of the search for the Holy Grail. The poet offered notes and references to clarify the work's numerous quotes and allusions, which are all done in a highly complicated, academic, and allusive manner (Persoon, Watson 2009).

Many intricate images from Hindu, Buddhist, and Western European mythologies are also found throughout *The Waste Land*, particularly the medieval search for the Holy Grail, the fabled vessel that allegedly once contained the blood of Christ, as well as stories like the Legend of the Fisher King.

Eliot inserted a Greek and Latin epigraph from the *Satyricon* by the Roman author Petronius at the beginning of the poem. The epigraph is a quote from Sybil of Cumae, who was asked what she most desired by a visitor to her cave. She said, "I want to die," in answer. In the background of the poem, Eliot and many other intellectuals, notably those affected by the First World War's great upheaval, felt that life was endless and pointless. Eliot added a dedication to his friend, the American poet living abroad, Ezra Pound, after the epigraph (Persoon, Watson 2009).. Lines 1–76 of Section I, "The Burial of the Dead," take their title from the Anglican Church rite held during funerals. This section of the poem is largely concerned with death, which strengthens its connection to the Greek element earth, into which the dead people's bodies will be buried. The title of the second section, "A Game of Chess" (lines 77–172), is taken from a play by English dramatist Thomas Middleton from the 17th century called *A Game of Chess*. Eliot was a fan of Middleton's work. Part III's "The Fire Sermon" (lines 173–311) relates to a well-known speech the Buddha gave to his followers in the sixth century B.C.E. The shortest and fourth section of *The Waste Land* is "Death by Water" (lines 312–321). The part's nine lines center on "Phlebas the Phoenician" (l. 312), a character who also appears in a 1918 poem by Eliot that was written in French and who perished and had his carcass eaten by fish (Persoon, Watson 2009). The poem's concluding section, "What the Thunder Said" (lines 322–433), opens with what seems to be the final collapse of human civilization into a parched landscape without a hero to bring about redemption. The phrase "Unreal" is used to describe a number of significant places, including Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London. The picture culminates with the description of a crumbling church surrounded by "tumbled graves" (l. 387), a reference to the Chapel Perilous of the Grail cycle (Persoon, Watson, 2009). Virgil, Ovid, William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Dante Alighieri, Gérard de Nerval, Thomas Kyd, John Webster, John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Geoffrey Chaucer, Thomas Middleton, Charles Baudelaire, Richard Wagner, Oliver Goldsmith, Hermann Hesse, Paul Verlaine, and Aldous Huxley are among the authors that Eliot quotes (Persoon, Watson, 2009).

Contrarily, T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is a dramatic monologue that was first published in *Poetry* magazine in 1915 and then collected in *Prufrock and Other Observations*. The hardships of Prufrock, a tired middle-aged man who feels as though he has lost both youth and happiness, are described in the poem: "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons."

Both Eliot's first significant publication and the first truly great work of modernism in English can be found in "Prufrock." Eliot broke free from the limitations of conventional forms and language by experimenting with poetic form, meter, rhyme, and voice (Persoon, Watson, 2009).

The poem's title bears Eliot's signature from the time it was written. "Prufrock amid the Women" was the initial name of the work. The poem's first line is taken from the first book of the Divine Comedy, Dante's Inferno. This epigraph foreshadows Prufrock's full exposure of his own inner torment and throws a death omen over the remainder of the poem. In actuality, J. Alfred Prufrock's plunge into his own hell—a life of paralysis and isolation—can be seen as the poem's primary theme. In the conclusion, it is evident that the poem's sardonic title is a play on words because the text is not a love song but rather about Prufrock's inability to find love (Persoon, Watson, 2009).

Lines 111–131 of the conclusion reveal Prufrock's eventual demise. In William Shakespeare's Tragedy of Hamlet: Prince of Denmark, Polonius and Hamlet are initially invoked to do this. Even though Prufrock insists he is not Hamlet, he shares the actor's paralysis or inaction (Persoon, Watson, 2009).

In contrast, the roses and the snow in MacNeice's (1907-1963) poem "Snow" stand in for the diversity of people. The narrator appears to portray a world that is divided between the numerous things we experience in life in a world that is diverse; in reality, the narrator exhibits youthful astonishment as they stumble across this immensity. The author writes, "The room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was / Spawning snow and pink roses against it," The poem's opening two lines prepare the reader for the contrast between roses and snow that seems to be implied by this "big bay-window." The reader can comprehend the symbolism for the rose and snow, which show the distinctions between people, because there is a tenuous relationship between two disparate substances (MSU Archive).

The most polar opposite people can coexist peacefully in the real world and even become lifelong friendships, but this requires that they have at least one thing in common. The words of the poem further reveal its significance: "World is crazier and more of it than we think, / incorrigibly plural... There is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses." Take note of the word choice "world is crazier," which alludes to the absence of singularity in the world by omitting the word "the" from the poem. In fact, by removing "the" from the statement, it redefines "world" to refer to each person who is separate rather than related. Additionally, the emphasis on the final line of the sentence leads readers to believe that even though there may be one resemblance between the roses and the snow, this division or separation cannot be mended because there are so many other contrasts (MSU Archive). The same is true for humanity, which constantly battles obstacles brought on by preexisting differences that, regrettably, frequently lead to utter disaster.

In just four stanzas, MacNeice covers a wide range of emotions in The Sunlight on the Garden. There is a sense of longing for a past love, a more distant recall of a paradise, and the knowledge of its impending demise.

Additionally, the author expresses regrets and, in the poem's last lines, acceptance, 'and grateful too for sunlight on the garden'. It is a poem that highlights the delights of living, both in action and in solitude, but it does so with the somber understanding that life is limited and that all pleasures must come to an end (Smejkalova, 2016).

It becomes clear that MacNeice discusses the finality of death. This is demonstrated in the first stanza of the poem, where MacNeice claims that the 'sunlight in the garden hardens and grows cold'. The sun "grows frigid," losing its aura of warmth and beauty. It is very evident from the phrase "grow cold" that we shall eventually die. This image, which depicts a battlefield, has been used to convey the agony and suffering that accompany conflict (Smejkalova, 2016).

The way the phrase is said: "we cannot cage the minute" inside "nets of gold". The use of the word "nets" conveys the idea that life is transitory and that we cannot grasp onto it like you can with a net. Additionally, the word "minute" makes it abundantly evident that he values his time. Therefore, starting a conflict wastes important time.

The third line's lack of punctuation emphasizes the impossibility to stop time, possibly to emphasize the idea that once you start a fight, you can never leave it. In order to convey the idea that life is short and that death is drawing closer, but that we should live it to the fullest before its pleasures pass away, MacNeice used a complex framework with a shifting beat (Smejkalova, 2016).

Despite the fact that the poem has been given many different readings, some commentators think that the Second World War's outbreak and the end of the pre-war era are the primary themes. It demonstrates how the impending war's threat led to a psychological shift that had a significant impact on the author. We sense some kind of oppression right from the start of the poem. It begins with the phrasing "sunlight on the garden". This is also notable as the poem's title. Whatever the interpretations, it is evident that sunlight does not remain indefinitely and that it stands for a time period that will inevitably come to an end. The first stanza reveals that not much would be left behind if the "sunlight" disappeared. (Walker, 2015)

In order to provide a more thorough description of one of two things, metaphor involves contrasting two things that are very different from one another. Owen (1893-1918) is the poet who frequently employs metaphor, and most of the time he's comparing a particular component of a conflict to a storm or another natural calamity. He compares the adversaries he battled in the war with a cyclone in his poem 1914.

"The foul tornado, centred at Berlin."

He intended to imply that his adversary is unexpected, unstoppable, and would instantly destroy anything that stood in his way. (Howarth, 2005)

A word that mimics a sound is called onomatopoeia. Owen mimics the sounds he hears from the battlefield using onomatopoeia. He uses words to convey the sound of a machine gun in his poem *The Last Laugh*.

“Machine-guns chuckled,-Tut-tut! Tut-tut!”

Giving something that is not alive human characteristics is known as personification. When describing the actions of weapons or vehicles that he encounters in battle, Owen frequently personifies them. We can observe how he juxtaposes various literary devices for added effect using the same fragment as in the previous example. He describes a machine gun giggling in *The Last Laugh*. It is evident that a machine gun cannot actually make such an expression. (Howarth, 2005)

“Machine-guns chuckled,-Tut-tut! Tut-tut!”

Simile is a comparison using like or as. This is a fairly popular technique that is simple to use in poetry. In the poem *I Know the Music*, Owen uses the preposition "as" to describe how to him, all sound was like music.

“All sounds have been as music to my listening.”

He used the word “like” to describe how he and his companions coughed; this we find in his poem *Dulce Et Decorum Est*. (Howarth, 2005).

"Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge"

Ezra Pound, on the other hand, is regarded as one of the 20th century's most significant figures. (Nadel, 1999) He was also a founding member of the imagism movement, which places a focus on using exact language to create vivid, clear images in poetry. His writing was distinctive due to the use of the Chinese poetic style and *Haiku*, a Japanese poetic form and *ideogrammic technique*. He thought that free poetry is a better vehicle for a poet to convey their uniqueness. Most of his writings have the following recurring themes: memoirs, culture, art, society, administration, and economics. (Nadel, 1999)

Pound was a poet, translator, editor, critic, librettist, and dramatist who drew on modern, French, Chinese, English, American, and medieval traditions to produce works that were as intricate as they were fascinating. Pound enjoyed hopping from one concept to another, from one culture to another, and from lyric to epic.

Despite his flip-flopping tendencies, he is undoubtedly the most significant poet of the modernist era.

Additionally, Spender's (1909-1995) poetry exhibits a variety of inspirations. First are the Romantic poets; he was compared to Percy Bysshe Shelley of the nineteenth century for his use of lyricism and idealistic youth. Another influence comes from the modernists of the generation before his, specifically D. H. Lawrence, W. B. Yeats, and Rainer Maria Rilke. Lastly, his notion of the function of poetry in making social commentary was influenced by his Oxford acquaintances, particularly Auden and Isherwood. (Sutherland, 2004)

The lyrical qualities and potent imagery in Spender's verse are highly regarded. His poetry has drawn criticism for its too idealistic nature, nevertheless.

Spender's literary and professional output was extremely diverse throughout the course of his 60-year career; he was a prolific reviewer as well as a writer, playwright, essayist, lecturer, and broadcaster. His early work is inextricably linked to the tension of what is known as W. H. Auden's "low dishonest decade," and he can be regarded as a survivor among poets who established their reputations in the 1930s. The best poems of Spender are lovely to recite and should be read with both the mind's ear and mind's eye.

Additionally, Yeats' (1865-1939) poems generally have a distinctive poetic style. The spontaneous nature of the poem and the use of literary devices like change, substitution, symbolism, allegory, etc. give his style of poetry its distinctive features.

His poetry is a process of discovery, intriguing, and unexpected due to his spontaneity in writing, which adds a surprise to the line and leaves the reader wondering what will follow next. Yeats gives the reader the chance to explore a variety of meanings and concepts in his poetry by using change and substitution (Unterecker, 1996).

Compared to his later work, Yeats' early poems have a very distinct literary style. As we've already established, it had a unique form and aesthetic that was nostalgic and linked Yeats to Romanticism. It had more to do with earlier languages and eras when poems were at a far earlier stage of development. Yeats' style evolved over time to become more modern. It evolved into being extremely focused and particular in all directions. His approach creates an extremely rhythmic and organized order and sound. The reader will be drawn in by the directness and poetic power of the words (Unterecker, 1996).

From a stylistic standpoint, Yeats' writing differs significantly from Shakespeare's.

Even though his poetry occasionally takes surprising twists like a maze, the language is nonetheless considerably more straightforward. Shakespeare, on the other hand, frequently employs a deceptive strategy in which the meaning of the work as a whole seems to only make sense once we have a firm grasp of its component pieces. Yeats' poetry has a clearer style, making it easier to understand what he is saying (Unterecker, 1996).

Conclusion

It can be stated that imagism, a movement that primarily emphasized free verse, reintroduced classicism to poetry, and sought to build a new set of aesthetic standards, is what gave rise to modernism in Britain.

The Waste Land by Eliot is the best illustration of an English poet who appeared to comprehend the effects and repercussions of modernity. Childs (2008) asserts that Eliot is the finest exemplar of English Modernist poetry because he drew inspiration from Baudelaire, mythology, Shakespeare, Eastern religions, paganism, and many other literary predecessors to express contemporary life. According to Blamires (1986), the author is considered to have produced some of the greatest literary works ever, including *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917), *Poems* (1920), and *The Waste Land* (1922). We might draw the conclusion that Modernism was a time when poets lamented the slowly disappearing classical past and consistently worked to highlight the social and psychological effects that war, industry, and scientific advancements had on humanity.

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