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Echoes of Change in Early Twentieth-Century British Literature

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ABSTRACT:

In the beginning of the twentieth century, a profound transformation in British Literature was conspicuous as the writers vehemently responded to the diverse social, political, cultural, and psychological changes of the modern age. With the gradual decline of the Victorian conventions, the expansion of the industrial and urban society, the ordeals of the First World War, spiralling upsurge of totalitarianism, and the steady dwindling of the British Empire amply altered the existing literary expression. The paper analyses the major developments and trends embraced by the British Literature from the inception of the twentieth century onward, underscoring the trends in modernism, psychological enquiry, contours of the literary form, criticism, political allegory, literature involving war, and the quest for spiritual and individual identity. The paper construes the works of writers comprising George Bernard Shaw, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, George Orwell, W. B. Yeats, W. H. Auden, Wilfred Owen, and Dylan Thomas. Shaw's Pygmalion confronts the conventional class categories and Victorian traditions, whereas Woolf and Eliot unveil the modernist impulse on fragmented consciousness and commencement of new literary techniques. Orwell's satirical novella Animal Farm makes ostensible the increasing political and social engagement of literature through its denigration of totalitarian regime, propaganda and hypocrisy of the revolutionary leaders. The twentieth century poets such as Yeats, Eliot, Auden, Owen, and Thomas reflect ideas of escapism, divine transformation, trauma, transience of human lives, and debilitating impact of the war. Overall, early twentieth-century British Literature avers a movement away from conventional Victorian forms and its proclivity towards experimentation, psychological exploration, political upheaval, and more complex representations of modern human life.

Keywords: Modernism, Social Criticism, Fragmentation, Political Allegory, Poetry

Discussion:

The twentieth century marked a significant shift in the worldview of the British people. For a considerable period, the established Victorian writers utilized overused plots, convenient didactics, and stereotypical social categories. Such a traditional and comforting picture of the world was quickly forgotten and replaced by the troubled and fragmented experience of World War I, and the growth of metropolis life. A new generation of writers felt that it was no longer possible to rely on the old tools of narrative prose and poetry. As a result, the early twentieth-century novel discarded the standard Victorian language as more individualistic, one suited to portray the modern man's neutral and rootless soul. One of the eminent authors of the nineteenth century, Virginia Woolf splendidly underscores in her essay entitled "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown," that "on or about December 1910 human character changed" (4). This assertion manifests the dramatic transformation in literary inclination that escorted the commencement of modernism.

Such a turn of events determined the uniqueness of the British literature of the period between 1900 and 1945. The terror of the Great War and the following disillusionment caused a large number of authors to abandon the classical narrative to explore the depths of the individual mind. A unique feature of the modernist literature of the period was the use of the stream of consciousness technique that showed a person's thinking in all its uncertainty and inconsistency. The modernist authors knowingly used unconventional, fragmented and non-linear technique of narrative flow to aver the disjointed nature of human experience. James Joyce, for instance, extensively endeavoured to represent the consciousness, whereas Woolf sought to underline the intricacies of ordinary experience. In her essay "Modern Fiction", Woolf asserted that the novelist should stress on "the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall" (213). This prominence on the dynamics of consciousness illustrates the modernist desire to accentuate psychological experience rather than only external events.

A bold experiment with the form also involved the use of mythical archetypes. These techniques were used, for example, in *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, which thoroughly explores the psychological differences of the main characters through a detailed narrative of their thoughts and emotions. At the same time, *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot is a poetic version of the modernist approach, which shows the fragmented nature of the human experience through an unusual combination of various historical cultural layers. The poem begins with the lines, "April is the cruellest month" (9), that entirely reverses traditional links of spring with rejuvenation and makes ostensible a world marked by spiritual deterioration. Eliot's poem embraces fragmentation, cultural memory, and disillusionment into central features of modernist poetry. The next stage of development of British literature was associated with the tightening of international relations and the growing fear of a new world war. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the focus of British authors' attention shifted from a detached observation of individuals' souls to a description of the reality, in which people lived. The individualism of the early modernist writers gave way to a critical attitude of writers towards society and its unholy theories of class struggle, racial inequality, and exploitation.

Authors such as George Orwell wrote novels with a clear political message that openly criticized the Nazi and Stalinist regimes. Orwell in his novel *1984* depicts a society in which “Big Brother is watching you” (5), making surveillance and political control central features of the modern dystopian imagination. Similarly, the statement “War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength” (183) intimates the manipulation of language and truth by totalitarian governments. The goal of this was to expose the policy of oppression and censorship and fight against them. In other words, while early modernists struggled with the perceived clash of the individual and society, mid-century authors took a more direct approach, calling for an immediate start of the struggle. The traditional tools of narrative prose and poetry were replaced by less controlled and more accessible ways of expression.

At the turn of the century, the world of British literature was faced with a new challenge, the decline of the colonial empire. The increasing independence of the African and Asian countries that were once part of the British Empire meant that the literature of Great Britain was no longer the only literature in town. The once-dominant position of British writers was gradually displaced by a broad representation of voices of colour from around the globe. These authors introduced new topics of discussion such as the legacy of colonialism, racial inequality, and the definition of national identity. Also, they brought completely new forms of expression and a sense of the author’s presence in the text.

Thus, a century of British literature came to an end that changed both in form and content. Leaving behind the traditional narratives of the Victorian period, the writers of the early twentieth century opened the door to a new understanding of art. A new reality emerged, in which people no longer saw the continuation of the Victorian tradition. The fragmented nature of human experience, captured in the modernist experiments with forms of narrative, began to be seen as typical not only for the authors’ intent but also for the real world. The early modernist writers laid the foundation for the criticism that arose later in Britain and expressed a concern about the erosion of cultural and moral values. In its turn, the latter phenomenon has grown out of the direct observation of the harmful effects of totalitarian regimes on society and has changed the approach to the creation of literature. A new wave of authors questioned the authenticity of the individual in the face of a conscious effort of governments to control and manipulate citizens. Thus, throughout the century, British literature changed under the pressure of local and global changes and so, shaped the new conditions of cultural development. The early modernist authors, in their attempts to create a work worthy of modern society, have questioned the possibility of the existing social and cultural models to express a person’s feeling of self-discovery.

Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw

In the early 20th century, British literature underwent an immense change. Authors stopped writing about the Victorian world and gave a rebirth to realistic plots set in the modern society. George Bernard Shaw’s 1913 play *Pygmalion* allowed Shaw to move away from the formula of Victorian novels and make a judgement of his contemporaries. By transforming the myth of ‘Pygmalion’ into a social comedy or problem play, Shaw creates a comic and quarrelsome play about transforming the lower-class flower seller into an upper-class lady and shows that all social categories are built on sand.

Shaw questions the authenticity of the British class hierarchy in *Pygmalion*. Eliza’s transformation in the hands of Professor Higgins is a metaphor for testing how far a poor girl can go in society where money rules. However, Higgins is not a genius who could invent a unique method. He is just a bit of a petty middle-class man who has mastered a set of behaviours that pass for elite manners. Higgins himself explicates the significance of accent and speech when he outlines, “An Englishman’s way of speaking absolutely classifies him” (10). Eliza visits Mrs. Higgins’s home, speaking excellent English but uttering rough and violent stories about drinking and murder. The most remarkable thing is that lower-class slang is pronounced with perfect upper-class accent as she exclaims, “Walk! Not bloody likely. I am going in a taxi” (56). Thus, Higgins exposes the pettiness of the upper class and their inability to distinguish between genuine elegance and pretence. In the quarrel, the professor and his ward demonstrate that the upper-class ladies are not intellectually superior to anyone and that they lack basic knowledge of human relationships and are fixated on their status and manners. The professor and the pettiness of the upper class become the target of Shaw’s satire.

Shaw changes the genre of the play from comedy to melodrama when Higgins and Pickering congratulate themselves on having invented new social hierarchies at the end of Act III. Having transformed Eliza into a perfect member of the upper class, Higgins and Pickering are delighted at their skill, but Eliza realizes that she has become a puppet in their hands. Shaw shows through the portrayal of the professor that he is an arrogant person who can teach others, but cannot humble himself and admit that he has committed a mistake. Eliza, however, finds the strength to oppose Higgins, telling him that she will not sell herself in the future. Eliza sternly asserts her emancipation when she explicitly protests, “I sold flowers. I didn’t sell myself. Now you’ve made a lady of me I’m not fit to sell anything else” (62). She does not regret becoming a lady as she has changed her social status and ways of speaking, but the professor treats her as an object that can be disposed of when it is no longer needed. By making Eliza say this, Shaw indicates that women can achieve social movement in a patriarchal society only by becoming puppets of men.

Pygmalion is a milestone in the development of the modern historical drama. Shaw rejects the Victorian tradition of “sentimental comedy” and offers the audience a realistic play. The play’s finale, in which Higgins reveals himself as a petty and arrogant person, is also a rejection of Victorianism. If a Victorian-era play ended with the heroine marrying Higgins, Shaw’s *Pygmalion* depicts social changes in a society where class differences and wealth are the primary indicators of status. Eliza’s choice of her future shows that she is not dependent on men and realizes that adopting new speech patterns and mannerisms can give her more power in social interactions. While Victorian writers would have made Eliza and Higgins get married, Shaw rejects this idea, demonstrating that he has outgrown his Victorianist predecessors. The realism of social hierarchies and their acceptance by people of all classes is what makes Shaw’s *Pygmalion* a revolutionary play.

Animal Farm by George Orwell

George Orwell was not writing a dull historical essay in 1945, he was creating a meaningful allegory about corrupted political figures and dictatorships disguised as farmyard animals. *Animal Farm* is a tale with a moral that shows how corrupted officials can stray from high goals and mistreat other members of society. From the very first lines, the author raises the reader's hopes by describing a revolution and an equal world where all animals live in harmony. Old Major shares an iconoclastic ideal when he proclaims, "All animals are equal" (10). However, as the narrative progresses, it becomes evident that the pigs do not share the revolutionary energy and soon begin to harass other animals with demands and threats. The reader witnesses how quickly the pigs' lust for power throws the whole revolution and corrupts the new government. The novel's moral is that it is impossible to achieve true equality as long as people are governed and controlled by sinister people.

Power tends to corrupt absolutely, so individuals in positions of power may deviate from the ideals mentioned in the revolutionary slogan. The author demonstrates this process through all the events that occur after the revolution, the pigs use manipulative techniques and lies to deceive the other animals and take over all the power in the village. Squealer's propaganda continually restricts the animals from questioning Napoleon's authority as revealed by him, "Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?" (48). For example, the animals paint seven commandments on the wall to ensure that all the rules are enforced. As the needs of the pigs grow, so do their desires for comfort and luxury. They begin to change the commandments without anyone's knowledge and add new conditions to it. The gradual fraud of the commandments is encapsulated in the altered rule, "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets" (21). The other animals do not object because they are not intelligent enough to understand that they are being deceived. As a result, all the bonuses enjoyed by humans are added to the list of things animals may not do. The author describes the phrase "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (112) with a dark expression, pointing out that tyrants may use not only violence but also intellectual manipulation to keep power.

In addition to the violation of equality principles, *Animal Farm* exposes the way revolutionary ideals are betrayed when political power becomes concentrated into the hands of the few and only led to the rise of new oppressors in the society. From the very beginning, Napoleon, one of the pigs, begins to exile his opponents, such as Snowball, to protect his position. Napoleon's dictatorship is unravelled when Orwell describes the dogs as "nine enormous dogs" that "dashed straight for Snowball" (45). He also terrorizes the animals with his aggressive dogs and manipulates public opinion with the help of his assistant Squealer. Over time, the takeover occurs, and the pigs enjoy all the privileges of the former human owner, while the other animals have to work tirelessly for their benefit. The narration concludes with animals observing how the pigs walk on two legs, get drunk with human farmers, and play cards with them. They look at each other and cannot understand how it could happen because they do not notice any significant difference between the pigs and the humans. In conclusion, this excerpt from the book serves as an important lesson that a careless and unvigilant community will inevitably become a victim of manipulation.

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by W.B. Yeats

Many individuals crave to escape the busy, noisy life of a city and lose themselves in the peace of the wilderness, and such desire was particularly poignant for writers during the late 19th century. Indeed, the crowded industrial centers that emerged in Britain during the early 20th century were the complete opposite of the serene landscapes that people such as W.B. Yeats had experienced growing up in rural Ireland. In "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," a poem penned in 1888 while the author was in London, Yeats recounts his yearning for the wilderness of his homeland and manages to capture the appeal of a simple, nature-centered life through the use of easy diction, vivid imagery, and a pleasantly rhythmic flow of the poem. The poem opens with the lines:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,

And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,

And live alone in the bee-loud glade

As mentioned, Yeats's poem is all about escapism, a theme that resonated and would continue to resonate with people for generations after the Industrial Revolution. Escapism is a literary device in itself, but is better described as a concept that underlines the purpose of such works, as authors attempt to depict how their characters deal with the stresses of modern life. "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" taps into a universal desire to leave it all behind in a place where the mind can rest and properly process the troubles of the every day. To convey this idea and enhance the sense of serenity that the protagonist longs for, Yeats uses a variety of literary devices. First, he uses imagery that evokes the senses, such as the description of the "glow of afternoon" that paints the sky in purple hues, the songs of crickets, and the birds' "winging" in the air. Second, the poem utilizes metaphors, the most relevant one is perhaps "peace dropping down from the veils of the morning," which personifies calmness and that one can achieve it by losing themselves in the beauty of nature. Moreover, the poem has a particularly pleasant musicality to it due to the use of alliteration, such as in the line "on the shore of the lake of Innisfree" or hearing "lake water lapping with low sounds." Finally, in the closing lines of the poem, Yeats juxtaposes the busy city with the still lake in order to emphasize the contrast between the dull, concrete modernist world and the natural world that provides a refuge for the mind. Thus, Yeats emphasizes the abrupt transition from the gray streets of the city to the green shores of Innisfree, and the implied message is that the protagonist is unable to physically be in the countryside. Instead, he is satisfied with daydreaming, with being in a state of constant, pleasant thoughts as he gazes at his beloved land from the concrete jungle.

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by W.B. Yeats is a beautiful poem about longing for the simple joys of nature that can only be missed by those who live in the city. As such, it touches on an important theme that is definitely not exclusive to one individual or even one generation. Rather, it highlights the universality of the desire to disconnect and recharge by being one with nature, and for that, it remains enjoyable to read even in the 21st century.

"Journey of the Magi" by T.S Eliot

A lot of people in their lives once faced a need to break away from their old routines in order to find a new spiritual purpose in their lives, and it never is an easy task. The poem "Journey of the Magi" by T.S. Eliot, written in 1927 is a brilliant illustration of such a path. Eliot wrote this poem after he had converted to Christianity himself, which shows us that the author had a personal interest in the struggles of the main characters of his work. The poem itself is actually a part of a dramatic monologue of one of the three wise men on the way back home after having found the baby Jesus. Not like one could imagine and most likely expect a story about baby Jesus' birth to be usually portrayed, in this poem, the wise men do not talk about the bright side of their journey, but instead, they narrate about all the difficulties and downsides they have faced on their long way.

The poem "Journey of the Magi" by T.S. Eliot is full of dramatic monologues, realistic imagery, biblical allusions and the central theme of birth/rebirth to illustrate how not easy the path to finding a new spiritual side can be. Eliot's use of realistic imagery creates the tone of a troubled and worn-out pilgrim returning home after a long and sorrowful journey. He does not imagine or depict the journey as something miraculous or holy, but instead, it appears to be quite miserable. For example, the pilgrims describe how their camels were "galled, sore-footed," how they had struggled with the cold weather and how the city's people cheated them for money. A hint at what the poem is really about is given through the description of a tavern with "vine leaves" that the narrator and his followers saw on their way. This is where we get an important biblical allusion to Christ's future crucifixion on the cross, which is also symbolized by "three trees on the low sky." Finally, the author appeals to the central theme of birth and rebirth through the description of the pain Death has brought to the wise men. At the end of the poem, the wise man says that "this birth was / Hardly worth the sun being set." Just before that, he describes this birth as "our death," which implies that seeing the new Christian world meant that their old, rich and luxurious pagan life had to end.

The complicated and sorrowful need to change one's beliefs and find a new spiritual side is displayed in the poem 'Journey of The Magi'. The poet shows us the path of the three wise men, full of struggles that made him feel like they were being reborn every step of the way. The poem's end is particularly memorable as it shows that even though the wise men found what they were looking for, they would never be able to go back to their old ways.

"Funeral Blues" by W.H Auden

One of the saddest things a human being could experience in his or her life is losing someone s/he loves, so that the world seems to be ending and no one should be allowed to rejoice while one mourns. A poem that captures the feeling of loss perfectly is "Funeral Blues," written by W.H. Auden in 1936. It was initially intended as a satirical piece for a play but was later expanded on by the author himself. The poem itself is an elegy, a lament addressed by the grieving protagonist to the silent world around him, telling it what to do in order to match the gravity of the loss. The poem conveys the hopeless feeling of loss and shows the extent to which human experience and happiness are dependent on the people around us as unveiled in the poem:

He was my North, my South, my East and West,

My working week and my Sunday rest,

My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;

I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The main theme of "Funeral Blues" is the all-encompassing nature of grief and its potential to paralyze the mourner. The poet uses several tools to illustrate this point. First of all, he uses the second person to address the audience throughout the poem, giving orders. The first example of this is "*Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone*". Such an imperative form in the first stanza is highly unusual, as one would not typically expect to receive orders when experiencing grief. Secondly, the poet makes extensive use of hyperbole as illustrated by the third stanza "*My East, my West, my North and South, / My working week and my Sunday rest*". It showcases the magnitude of the loss by comparing the deceased to the four cardinal points and the entire cycle of days of the week. Finally, in the last two stanzas, the poet uses cosmic level metaphors to illustrate how deep the sorrow of loss can be "Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood", followed by an illustration of the world without the deceased person, where "nothing now can ever come to any good". The list demonstrates how the grief from the loss of a loved one can make the mourner feel as if the entire universe has lost meaning.

The poem "Funeral Blues" by W.H. Auden captures the feeling of loss perfectly in the lament of the protagonist. The theme of the all-encompassing loss and grief is enhanced by the use of multiple poetic devices, among them the use of the second person and imperatives. They give the poem its distinct feeling, with the bereavement being so deep that the protagonist orders the world around him to freeze in time, to stop all means of communication, and to remove all traces of life. The last two stanzas' metaphors show how the loss can affect the mourner similarly to how the end of the world would, no meaning or beauty can survive it.

"Do not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" by Dylan Thomas

Watching a parent or a loved one grow old and face death is one of the hardest things a person can experience. A very famous and powerful response to this situation is the poem "Do not go gentle into that good night," written by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas in 1951. Thomas wrote this intense poem

while his own father was going blind and dying. Instead of accepting death quietly, the speaker begs his father to fight against the end of his life with everything he has. Through this poem, Thomas brings forth the painful reality of aging by using a villanelle structure, repetitive refrains, light and dark imagery, and the theme of resistance against death as ostensible in the lines:

And you, my father, there on the sad height,

Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

The fight against death and the importance of living life with passion until the very last moment is the main theme of this poem. Thomas uses several specific literary devices to show this theme. First, the poem is written as a villanelle, which is a highly structured poetic form that relies heavily on two repeating lines, called refrains. These repeating lines are “Do not go gentle into that good night” and “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” By repeating these phrases at the end of almost every stanza, Thomas creates a desperate rhythm that sounds like someone pleading for a life. Second, the poem uses light and dark imagery as a metaphor for life and death. Light represents life and sight, while night or darkness represents death and blindness. Third, Thomas uses character typologies in the middle stanzas, describing four types of men; wise men, good men, wild men, and grave men. He shows that no matter how they lived their lives, all of these men realize at the end that they want more time, so they fight against death. The poem ends with a personal apostrophe, where the speaker directly begs his crying father to curse or bless him with his tears, showing that any emotion is better than giving up quietly.

“Do not go gentle into that good night” shows that death should not be accepted easily. Thomas shows in his poem that life is precious and worth fighting for. The ending leaves the reader with a strong image of a son trying to give his dying father the strength to keep fighting. This raw emotion makes us appreciate every single moment of life.

“Strange Meeting” by Wilfred Owen

Although war is glorified, the reality of the battlefield is full of horrors and psychological trauma. A powerful and horrifying glimpse of this reality is the poem “Strange Meeting,” which was written by the famous English poet Wilfred Owen in 1918. Owen has written this work during the First World War, and was subsequently killed few months later in battle. The poem describes a story of one soldier who escapes from the horrors of battle, but he discovers that he has walked down into hell, where he meets a soldier of the opposite army whom he had killed the day before. Owen reveals the nature of modern warfare cruelty through the use of a dark sensory imagery, a dramatic dialogue structure, and the theme of soldiers’ brotherhood.

The pity of war and the senseless destruction of the human life caused by hatred between nations is the theme of this poem. The author has created this theme using exceptional literary devices. For instance, Owen has used a unique technique of the sound called by critics as para-rhymes in the lines such as “escaped / scooped” and “groaned / ground.” The poet then continues to use dark sensory imagery to create an image of the underworld as a “profound dull tunnel” with the sounds of the groaning of the soldiers that filled it. This imagery helps the reader to imagine the situation in the trenches of the First World War. Owen has also used a dramatic dialogue between two enemies instead of continuing to describe the horrors of the battlefield. The enemy soldier kindly addresses the first soldier as “my friend” and Owen then exposes the ironic twist of this conversation, saying that the enemy soldier is exactly the person whom the first soldier killed:

I am the enemy you killed, my friend.

I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned

Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.

I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.

Let us sleep now. . . .

This dialogue demonstrates that in the face of the huge tragedy that war brings, the soldiers realize that they are the same as the people whom they were just ordered to kill. The poem, thus, concludes with Owen’s revelation that actually, in the face of the huge tragedy that war brings, the soldiers realize that they are the same people as the soldiers of the opposite army.

“Strange Meeting” is an anti-war poem, which reveals the tragedy of the battlefield. Its ending has replaced the rage of the battle with a quiet and calm understanding between two enemies, which demonstrates that behind every uniform there is a human being, who is not different from everyone else.

Conclusion:

In the twentieth century, the development of British Literature was remarkably affected by the dramatic changes involving the British society and the wider world. With the decline of Victorian certainties, the expanding industrialisation and urbanisation, the rampant annihilation espoused by the First World War, political turbulence, social inequality, and the fading British Empire ensconced a new cultural environment where conventional literary forms failed to render expression to the modern experience. Subsequently, the writers began to experiment with the language, structure, narrative, perspective,

allusion, symbolism, and poetic form while exploring the psychological, social, and political dimensions of human life. Virginia Woolf and T.S. Eliot, as modernist writers in their works placed emphasis on the fragmented nature of consciousness and experience. They subverted the traditional plots employed by the Victorian writers and resisted linear narrative of their predecessors. Shaw's *Pygmalion* undermined the established convictions regarding the concept of class, language, gender, and social identity unveiling the increasing importance of realism and social criticism. Orwell's novella *Animal Farm* makes ostensible pernicious impact of the totalitarian regime and exposes political tyranny, propaganda and the abuse of power. The poems such as "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" exhibit a longing of the poet to escape the miseries of the urban life, whereas Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" displays spiritual transformation and the agonising experience associated with rebirth. "Funeral Blues" by Auden explores grief as an inscrutable force that embitters the mourner's sense of meaning while Dylan Thomas's "Do not go gentle into that good night" changes the fear of death into a passionate inquest of resistance. "Strange Meeting" by Wilfred Owen abnegates the glorification of war and focuses on the shared empathy of soldiers on opposing sides. Thus, in the early trends of the British Literature, a focus on uncertainty, experimentation, fragmentation was visible. Literature began to question the existing patterns and customs and the era laid the foundations for later modern, postmodern, and postcolonial writing by opening British literature to new voices, experiences, and perspectives. The works discussed demonstrate that Literature of the early twentieth century was an attempt to comprehend the way individuals and societies could find meaning in a rapidly changing, fragmented, and often troubled world.

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