

## Siegfried Sassoon & Savař Şiiri

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### Özet

Bu alıřmanın amacı, Birinci Dünya Şavaşı İngiliz şairi olarak bilinen Siegfried Sassoon' un üç şavař şiirinin tartiřmasından yola ıkarak, onun şavař şiiri özelliklerini ve şavařın acı yönünü ortaya koyabilmektir. Savař temasının modernist şiirde iřlenmesi, şiire sahici bir yaklařım kazandırmakla birlikte, şavařın gerek yüzünü okura ve topluma yansıtmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu alıřma için Siegfried Sassoon'un üç şavař şiiri tematik yaklařım aracılıęıyla incelenmektedir. İlk olarak, Sassoon'un bir siper şiiri olan "The Rear Guard" (Arka Muhafız), onun akabinde dönemin askeri yönetimi sorumlu tutan "The General" (General) ve son olarak da dönemin kadın tutumunu eleřtiren "Glory of Women" (Kadın Büyüsü) şiirleri bu alıřmada Sassoon'un şavař şiirine örnekler olarak ele alınmaktadır. Sassoon bu üç şiirinde sırasıyla yeteneksiz askeri yetkilileri, din adamlarını ve politikacıları eleřtirmekte ve şavařı bořu bořuna uzattıkları için onları suçlamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Siegfried Sassoon şavař şiirine kendi özgemiş tecrübelerinin yanı sıra gerekli ve ironik bir yaklařım kazandırmıřtır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Siegfried Sassoon, Savař Şiiri, Arka Muhafız, General, Kadın Büyüsü, Birinci Dünya Savaşı, İngiliz Savař Şairleri, Savařın Anlamsızlıęı

## Siegfried Sassoon & War Poetry

### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to delineate the general characteristics of Siegfried Sassoon's war poetry and the grim realities of the war through discussing his three war poems. The study of war theme in modernist poetry brings a realistic approach to poetry and reflects the real face of the war to the reader and society. For this respect in this paper, three of Siegfried Sassoon's war poems are studied through thematic approach. First of all, Sassoon's trench poem "The Rear Guard" and secondly "The General", his accusatory poem towards the military officials and lastly "Glory of Women", his critical poem towards women is taken as exemplifications of his war poetry. In his three respective poems, Sassoon holds incompetent military authorities, religious people and politicians responsible for the cause of the war and finds them guilty since they prolong the war for the futility. As a result, Siegfried Sassoon brings not only his autobiographical experiences but a realist and ironic approach to war poetry as well.

**Key Words:** Siegfried Sassoon, War Poetry, The Rear Guard, The General, The Glory of Women, The First World War, The British War Poets, Futility of the War

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The name Siegfried Sassoon is mainly associated with war poetry, particularly the First World War (those who lived through it called it the Great War) poetry along with some of his peer war poets such as Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg, Wilfred Owen, Edward Thomas and Robert Graves. These poets joined the war themselves and some of them were killed at the battlefield; for instance Brooke, Owen and Rosenberg died in the trenches when the war was waged. Since the Great War was mainly on land, it is also named the trench war. The war poets mentioned above have all trench poems such as Sassoon's "The Rear-Guard", Owen's "The Sentry", Rosenberg's "Break of the Day in the Trenches", Thomas's "As the Team's Head Brass" and Grave's "To Robert Nichols". In their poems, these poets reflect more or less the grim reality, brutality and horror of the war first hand. Therefore, the poetry written during the Great War is called naturally War Poetry. On the other hand, the Great War poems can be categorized into two groups as before the war and during the war. In the pre-war period, the poems were written with the feelings of Georgian ease and jingoistic patriotism because the poets had not experienced the war yet. However, when the war broke out and the poets experienced the reality of the war in trenches at first hand, wounded and died hand in hand with the naive young soldiers at the battlefield, their patriotic and positive views about the war changed in a negative sense. John Lucas in his *Modern English Poetry* sums up very clearly the situation which people were in and the war poets' bitter response to it:

It begins with the heady innocence of those public schoolboys who immediately volunteered for action and who were, many of them at least, dead by the time that the disasters of the Somme began to change the minds of others. From then on the poetry becomes marked by disillusionment, bitterness, aching sorrow for the soldiers themselves, and hatred for the Government and generals who were determined that the war should continue until the enemy had totally surrendered (Lucas,1986:70).

In fact, Siegfried Sassoon was one of those schoolboys that Lucas mentioned above, born in 1886 in Kent as a child of a rich jewish family. Thanks to his family's financial abundance, he had a comfortable countryside childhood and his interests were poetry and fox hunting<sup>2</sup>. His first pre-war poems were influenced by John Masefield. For example, "his 1913 *The Daffodil Murderer*, a clever parody of Masefield's realistic narratives, was his first success, albeit a minor one" (Bloom, 2003:43). Later, in 1928 he published "Fox-Hunting Man" in

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<sup>2</sup> See for further information Bloom (2003:43).

which he compared his naivety in this pre-war period and his feelings after the war. After the breakout of the First World War, Sassoon enlisted in the army in 1915 and served with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers at Mametz Wood and in the Somme Offensive in 1916. In the beginning, Sassoon was a brave and successful soldier. He saved one of the wounded soldiers and received a Military Cross. Yet, a bit later he himself got wounded and was sent back to a hospital in England. After this incident, Sassoon understood futility of the war and agony of the battlefield first-hand. At this point, it can be claimed that the class consciousness of pre-war period has been evaporated in the battlefields by the harsh reality. John Williams states “at the front it became possible for those of both high and low estate to experience a situation where peace time class consciousness was replaced by the practical distinction between those who fought and those who stayed at home”(Williams, 1987:27). In addition to these grim facts at the battlefields, because of the incompetent military generals who kept well clear of the trenches, Sassoon refused to serve as a soldier anymore and sent a letter to his commander which appeared in *Bradford Pioneer* on July 27, 1917 under the name of “Soldier’s Declaration” in the form of epistolary literature. The following excerpt is very striking to be able to understand Sassoon’s personal emotions and his reaction to the war and its supporters:

I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority, because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.

I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this war, upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purposes for which I and my fellow soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them, and that, had this been done, the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation.

I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops, and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust.

I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insecurities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.

On behalf of those who are suffering now I make this protest against the deception which is being practiced on them; also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize.

July, 1917. S. Sassoon. (Norton Anthology Online/ssassoon.htm)

This letter full of anger and repulsion towards war and its consequences on the soldiers and civilians is not satisfactory enough for Sassoon. Furthermore, “in disgust with the war, he threw the ribbon of his Military Cross into the sea. With the help of his friend Robert Graves, Sassoon was declared to have shell shock instead of being court-martialed. The British army placed him in a hospital at Craiglockhart, near Edinburgh, where he met with Wilfred Owen<sup>3</sup>. After a brief break in Edinburg hospital with Owen, Sassoon joined back the army. He felt that he betrayed his soldier friends since he was not really shell shocked. Then, “his battalion were rushed to France. On July 13, Sassoon, returning from a patrol through no-man’s land, was shot in the head—one of his own sergeants had mistaken him for a German. The war ended before Sassoon saw any more fighting” (Bloom, 2003:44).

At home, Sassoon continues to write poetry on the brutality, inhumanity and harsh reality of the war. John Lucas calls Sassoon’s poetry then as ‘verse journalism’<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, Sassoon undertakes a social responsibility in his poems. He warns public and also the other poets who didn’t join the war about unreality of Georgian imagination<sup>5</sup>. His enemy was not only the illusionary patriotism about the war and the lull of Georgianism but also the incompetent military generals, indecent politicians and indifferent religious men. While writing his war poems with these feelings, his style was “ ‘direct’ and ‘spontaneous, like the unfolding of a flower’ ” and “ ‘visual’ and possess ‘clarified construction and technical control’ ”(Campell, 1999:49). Nonetheless, public reaction to Sassoon’s poetry was diverse. Some found little patriotism in his poems and some “found his shockingly realistic depiction of war to be too

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<sup>3</sup> There are also some inter-relations between war poets on the poetic and personal levels. For example, Sassoon is Wilfred Owen’s both mentor and brother. When they met at a hospital near Edinburg in 1917, because of the shell shock treatment of both poets, Sassoon helped Owen’s romanticism with his satiric realism. Owen had changed some parts of his poem, including the title “Anthem for Doomed Youth” according to Sassoon’s suggestions and it became one of Owen’s best.

<sup>4</sup> See for further information Lucas (1986:79).

extreme. Even pacifist friends complained about the violence and graphic detail in his work” (Bloom, 2003:44). Further, D.J. Enright “remarked that Sassoon’s satires nearly always hit their target, but that the target was usually a sitting duck”(qtd in Lucas, 1986:79). On the other hand, Sassoon’s poems, “with their shock tactics, bitter irony, and masterly use of direct speech (that he learned from Hardy), continued to attack the old men of the army, Church, and government, whom he held responsible for the miseries and murder of the young” (Abrams and Greenblatt, 2006:1960). According to Michael Thorne, “his response to the War is not confined to angry satire, sentimentality or a morbid preoccupation with his own predicament. A handful (admittedly) of his poems have a moving directness and simplicity which eschews sentimentality or morbidity; on a humbler scale than Owen’s they plead human sympathy and understanding”(qtd in Bloom, 2003:50). Besides, according to Joseph Cohen, Sassoon “abstracted the futility, despair, loneliness and mockery of the war, and with fury thrust it into the faces of his unsuspecting countrymen, safe and snug in England ”(qtd in Bloom, 2003:52). John Williams defines Sassoon’s poetic style as “direct recourse to bitter anger, and the use of simpler language and ballad metre”(Williams, 1987:29). Therefore, it can be asserted that in his war poetry Sassoon underlined the difference between the trench conditions of the battlefield and those of sweet home. While doing this, as stated above, Sassoon’s “approach was direct and his technique was simple: he emphasized and re-emphasized the contrast among the relative comfort and safety of the homefront and the misery and insecurity of the trenches”(qtd in Bloom, 2003:52). Joseph Cohen regards Sassoon as “the enemy of ignorance, complacency, hypocrisy, and sin, the advocate of the poor and oppressed, the leader in social reform”(qtd in Bloom, 2003:53). In another words, he ascribes Sassoon as a prophet poet as he sees the truths and warns the others. Furthermore, according to John Middleton Mury, “it is the fact, not the poetry, of Mr.Sassoon that is important”(qtd in Bloom, 2003:54). He associates Sassoon’s poetry with a human cry. Hence, it is certainly true that Sassoon’s war poetry is a natural effect of the inhuman conditions of war time, and battlefields. His poems do not touch our imagination but our senses. While reading Sassoon’s poems, Mury further claims, we face such a realistic picture of battle experience that we do not doubt about their truth<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, John Lucas comments that “he loathed all the things it was proper to loathe: the callous incompetence of generals, the warmomgering hysteria of those who did not have to fight, the hypocritical patriotism of the home front”(Lucas,1986:79).

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<sup>5</sup> See for further information Abrams and Greenblatt (2006:1960).

<sup>6</sup> See for further information Bloom (2003:54).

After this brief information about Sassoon's personal life and his poetic style, his three poems will be thematically analyzed for a further and detailed exemplifying of his war time poetry. Sassoon continued to write poems and novels after his active service in the army. However, they are not as bitter and graphic as the previous war poems. Hence, both his early bohemian and his later devotional poems will be disregarded in this paper. The focus of this paper is his poems written during the Great War. The first poem we are going to go through is "The Rear-Guard" or "Hindenburg Line, April 1917". The poem is based on Sassoon's own dreadful experience of the Hindenburg line. Hindenburg was a German commander who is famous for his blocking and not allowing the passing of the allies through the Western Line in France. Its barbed-wire entanglements, deep trenches, and gun emplacements ran from Lens to Rheims<sup>7</sup>. Patrick Campbell says that "Sassoon had never before witnessed death and mutilation on the scale he here encountered as the survivors mingled with the corpses of yet another failed offensive" (Campbell, 1999:141). Under the city of Hindenburg there is a vast network of caverns, quarries, galleries, and sewage tunnels. Assault tunnels were also built under the city, and they stopped just of the German line. Mines were laid under the front lines, ready to be blown up immediately before an assault<sup>8</sup>.

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,  
He winked his prying torch with patching glare  
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.  
Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know;  
A mirror smashed, the mattress from the bed;  
And he, exploring fifty feet below  
The rosy gloom of battle overhead. (Abrams and Greenblatt, 2006,  
p.1961)

"The Rear-Guard" consists of three stanzas and there is no rhyming among the lines. The first stanza starts with a description of a soldier moving in a tunnel. Most probably, it is one of the tunnels opened for connection between the trenches to assault the rival army. The soldier is alone because in line 2 the subject pronoun 'He' is used for him. Nonetheless, 'He' can be a soldier who Sassoon knows personally very well, most probably one of his friends or Sassoon himself. He is probably tired and wan because of his heavy rifle and rucksack. The soldier may also get wounded since he is moving through the tunnel step by step. Besides, it is so dark in the

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<sup>7</sup> See the foot note 1 in Abrams and Greenblatt (2006:1961).

tunnel that he can hardly see around with his blinking torch. The weak light of torch may probably symbolize the fear and desolation of the soldier in the tunnel. It is an absolutely unattractive and uncanny place. This light can only pry the cracks on the wall with a patching glare. Then, there is so filthy air in the every side of the tunnel that it is hardly possible to breathe. That stench can be a gas attack or the smell of rotten corpses. However, the soldier doesn't have any chance to escape from that tunnel at the moment. This is a war time and the setting is a battlefield. Therefore, although it is not a good place to stay in, the soldiers must go on living there. Besides, there are domestic things around like tins, boxes, broken mirror, mattress and the other ambiguous things that the soldier can not define. This place is fifty meter under the ground and the soldier has ambivalent feelings there. As a result, the oxymoron 'rosy gloom' describes this kind of contradictory situation and emotional state that the soldier was in. On the one hand, he wants to be hopeful like a rose, on the other hand the grim realities of the trench make him and his soldier friends gloomy and desperate.

Tripping, he grabbed the wall; saw some one lie  
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,  
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.  
'I'm looking for headquarters.' No reply.  
'God blast your neck!' (For days he'd had no sleep)  
'Get up and guide me through this stinking place.'  
Savage, he kicked a soft unanswering heap,  
And flashed his beam across the livid face  
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore  
Agony dying hard ten days before;  
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound. (Abrams and  
Greenblatt, 2006:1961)

In the second stanza, while the soldier is moving, he stumbles upon something on the ground and so has to grasp the wall. However, he couldn't define it at first since it is narrow and dark in the tunnel. Then, he realizes that there is someone with a swollen leg lying under a rug. He is on the ground motionlessly. The soldier supposes him another soldier who is sleeping and resting there. Then, he touches him to wake and ask where the headquarters is. However, there is no answer from the lying soldier. The standing soldier envies this lying soldier for a moment

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<sup>8</sup> See for further information <http://voices.yahoo.com/analysis-siegfried-sassoons-rear-guard-8504945.html>.

since he hasn't slept for days. He shouts down him to get up and lead him out of this hellish place because it is stinking and pitch-black around. As there is no response from the lying soldier, the soldier curses and kicks him as if he were a mass. Then, he throws a weak light from his torch to the glaring face of the lying soldier. Suddenly, he realizes that this lying soldier has been dead at least for ten days because he has blackened wounds on his body . Suddenly, the standing soldier identifies this lying-dead body's agony with himself.

Alone he staggered on until he found  
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair  
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground  
Who hear the bloom of shells in muffled sound.  
At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,  
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,  
Unloading hell behind him step by step. (Abrams and Greenblatt,  
2006:1961)

In the third and last stanza, the standing soldier is alone again since the lying soldier has already been dead and there is no one else around to be present. He looks around until he finds a stair shaft to the outside through which a light is leaking. While the sound of bombing outside has a deafening effect the leaking sun light through the tunnel gate has a blinding effect on him. The atmosphere in the tunnel and outside are totally different from each other. Since the soldier is used to darkness and silence of the tunnel for a long time, he is hardly able to get himself out of the tunnel at last. Nevertheless, he sweats a lot and walks step by step again because of his fear stemming from the terror of the battlefield around. It can be deduced that it is partly from the burden on his back and partly from weariness, disillusionment, grim realities and horror of the battle field itself. Outdoor normally symbolizes rebirth, regeneration, hope for the future and happiness. Yet the present outside which the soldier is in is a battlefield and it is like hell. In fact there is not much difference to be in the tunnel or to be out of it for the present situation. In both situations, he knows he will have the same end. He will die sooner or later.

As for the poetic devices and thematic level Sassoon applies for "The Rear-Guard", it is clear that the poem is written in a direct style and has a straightforward meaning. It is an anti-war poem and represents the grim realities of the battlefield for those at home who are ignorant of the troubles. However, it can be claimed that it has no ambiguous meaning and irony in it. It tells the reader the true picture of the war and gives the message that "do not articulate patriotic illusions at home".



The next Sassoon's poem, "The General" is a short but ironic one. As it is clearly stated above, Sassoon holds the military authorities responsible for dying of young soldiers at the battlefields. He finds them incompetent, irresponsible and unskilled. Further it is clear that the general in this poem doesn't fight with his soldiers. He only commands the soldiers at headquarters like many other military commanders in the Great War. Contrary to the situation of the soldiers at the battlefield, he is in a safe and comfortable place on the way to the line. Therefore, he can not know the real meaning of fighting and dying in the battlefield. He just grins and says: " 'Good-morning; good-morning!' the General said / When we met him last week on our way to the line". Nevertheless, most of the soldiers that he grinned last week are dead now, including soldiers Harry and Jack as well; "Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of em dead". The surviving soldiers who are in the battalion now reproach and curse him as "incompetent swine". In addition, Harry whispered ironically to his friend Jack that the general is an old senile; " 'He's a cheery old card,' grunted Harry to Jack". However, the soldiers move with their rifles and packs on their backs with difficulty to the battlefield which is in the city of Arras. Since the soldiers have no choice of their own free will, they have to obey the general's commands; "But he did for them both by his plan of attack". Probably, most of them will die or become disabled during this attack. At first glance this poem seems an ironic one because it is hard to believe he is such a mocking general with his doomed soldiers. Besides, according to Jimmy Dean Smith it is one of Sassoon's blundest satires<sup>9</sup>. However, it is not infact. The picture Sassoon depicts and the message he gives in this poem are so clear that Sassoon wrote this poem in a direct style with a straightforward meaning like the previous and most of his other war poems. Moreover, Jimmy Dean Smith states that "it is, then, not simply a particularly bitter poem, but also close companion to Sassoon's 'Soldier's Declaration,' his plainspoken refusal to go on accepting official lies"(qtd in Persoon, 2009:192). In addition to this, according to Patrick Campell, "The battle of Arras offers up yet another example of incompetence, a wrong-headed strategy in which the general's 'plan of attack' accounts not for an unseen enemy but for the long-suffering and tolerant British 'Tommy.' "(Campbell, 1999:144). Therefore, the enemy that the British army fights with is not an outside rival army but the incompetent military commanders in the army.

The third and the last Sassoon's poem discussed in this paper is "Glory of Women" with a sarcastic title. Hence, at first glance it is supposed that Sassoon praises women in this poem because of their hardworking and supporting soldiers during the war. On the contrary, Sassoon

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<sup>9</sup> See for further information Persoon (2009:192).

is famous for his misogyny<sup>10</sup>. According to Patrick Campbell, the cause of Sassoon's misogyny rests on his homosexuality. Campbell states that "at its worst a kind of misogyny fueled by his conviction that women had no place in his world of fox-hunting, cricket, race-riding and now soldiering, it was at root a product of a homo-sexuality which he could no more openly admit than could soldiers 'wounded in a (un)mentionable place' "(Campbell, 1999:168-69). On the other hand, it is clear and true that during the First World War the women at home helped their soldier husbands and sons when they are at the battlefield by making shells and supplying food for them. However, Sassoon criticizes them that they only love the soldiers when they fulfill heroic deeds or get wounded in a famous battlefield; "You love us when we're heroes, home on leave, / Or wounded in a mentionable place". Furthermore, according to Sassoon, women pay attention to decorations and chivalry instead of the bitter realities of war time; "You worship decorations; you believe / That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace". Then, while women are making shells for the soldiers, they only talk about trivial things and listen to the brutal facts of battle fields like folk tales told from a far distant country; "You make us shells. You listen with delight, / By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled". There is an ironic situation next. In fact, the victorious generals are crowned with laurel wreaths. Here, when the soldiers die, women mourn for soldiers' memories in which their heads were crowned with laurel wreaths<sup>11</sup>; "You crown our distant ardours while we fight, / And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed". In this poem, Sassoon presents women so ignorant that they can't even suppose or feel the brutality, harshness, coldness and hell likeness of the battlefield. They are safe and warm at home. Sassoon also suggests that these women do not suppose that these soldiers will survive at battlefields where they fall into a hellish situation; "You can't believe that British troops 'retire' / When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run, / Trampling the terrible corpses-blind with blood". Nonetheless, it is possible to suggest that brutality and sarcasm of previous lines turn into pity in the last three lines<sup>12</sup>; "O German mother dreaming by the fire, / While you are knitting socks to send your son / His face is trodden deeper in the mud". Since the German mother is ignorant of his son's situation at the battlefield, perhaps he is already dead, she is still knitting socks for and dreaming about him. Contrary to the contempt for the first group of women mentioned in the first eleven lines, it is possible to feel pity for the German mother at the end of the poem. On the other hand, Patrick Campbell asserts that through German mother, Sassoon "shows his compassion for all the victims of war, regardless of the side on which they fight, it uncharitably stresses the pointlessness of the female war effort, whether it be making shells or 'knitting socks' to send a son who will never wear them" (Campbell, 1999, p.169). All

<sup>10</sup> See for further information Persoon (2009:196).

<sup>11</sup> See foot note 2. in Abrams and Greenblatt (2006:1962).

in all, it is clear that Sassoon sees women as ignorant and selfish by particularly calling them “You”. Hence, Sassoon makes women as a target of total blame for their ignorance of the war and its effects on soldiers who are at the battlefields.

To sum up, Siegfried Sassoon is one of the major poets of the Great War. In this paper, his three war poems are studied in a thematic approach. The first poem “The Rear-Guard” was written in a direct style. Nevertheless, the second poem “The General” and the third poem “Glory of Women” are ironic. Therefore, as most critics such as Abrams and Greenblatt, Neil Corcoran, Jimmy Dean Smith, Robert Hemmings, David Goldie, Fran Brearton<sup>13</sup>, as well as Siegfried Sassoon himself<sup>14</sup> agree that his poetry is ironic. On the other hand, Sassoon uses not only irony but a realistic poetic style for his war poetry as well. That is to say, these poems address to the reader directly and also have a literal and straightforward meaning. Sassoon’s main objective is to restate the grim reality and horror of the Great War. Sassoon himself portrayed a developing life-long experience in his career as a poet and soldier. At the beginning of the war, he was patriotic and a supporter of the Great War. However, when the war broke out, he himself was in the fronts as a soldier. He experienced the brutality of the war first hand and as a result of this, he was disillusioned soon. After this self confrontation with the real face of the war, he aimed to demonstrate and warn the British people about the real meaning of the war. Furthermore, Sassoon wanted them to ask themselves what this bloody war is really for. Sassoon accused respectively military authorities, religious people and politicians for the cause of the war and dying of the young soldiers at battlefields. He also finds them guilty since they prolong the war for the futility. Therefore, most of his poems which are written during the war criticize directly to these kinds of people and institutions. The first poem in this paper “The Rear-Guard” can be taken as a warning for the non-combatant people and politicians at home about the brutality of the war through death and fear in the war tunnels. The second poem, “The General” is an ironic criticism of the incompetent military commanders who send the young soldiers to die by their incompetent commands. Lastly, “Glory of Women” is the satire of the women, who knows a little about battlefields, but behaves ignorant instead. Lastly, in regard to Sassoon’s three war poems, it can be concluded that Sassoon’s war poetry portrays the grim realities and agony of the Great War. Hence, Siegfried Sassoon brings not only a realistic attitude but also his autobiographical experiences to his war poetry.

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<sup>12</sup> See for further information, Persoon (2009:196).

<sup>13</sup> See Abrams and Greenblatt (2006:1955-1960), Corcoran (2007:95), Persoon (2009:36-192-196), Hemmings (2008:84), Roberts (2001:49), Bearton (2007:220).

<sup>14</sup> See Hemmings (2008:90).

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