



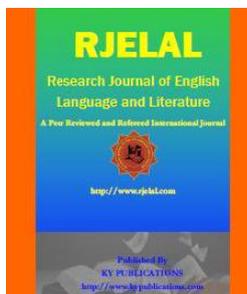
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print):2321-3108 (online)

A STUDY OF PROGRESSIVE THEMES WITH VARYING NARRATIVES IN PAT BARKER'S NOVEL "REGENERATION"

CHETNA MAHAJAN

M.A English, Gold medalist , M. phill.
Department of English, University of Jammu



ABSTRACT

This research paper is geared primarily to elaborate and study the underlying progressive themes with varying narratives as engaged by renowned writer Pat Barker in her award winning novel "Regeneration". While Presenting the essence of her works, it is demonstrated that how far the author's plot & narratives development thrives upon diverse themes of this Anti War novel interestingly covering social class order , gender, sexuality, and their inter relationships. All that vastly influences the mind setup of major characters, their state of motivation, psycho-development, impact of trench war fare on men and the various treatment means engaged by the State and the medical fraternity to regenerate Shell shock" psyche or perhaps a virtual failure of such a recovery in the society at large. Overall the Great War looms large all through the narrative, providing a background and context so dramatic that, at times, the war seems like a character itself. Barker opinions the war as fundamentally incongruous, an arena in which young men's lives are more often than not wasted without any significant reasons. The entire plot of the novel leads us to an understanding that Historical Rivers believes that all the principles he has set out for treatment of functional nervous disorders in individuals can be applied to society. The statesman in the real Rivers and his character is a physician of social disorders. Society is affected by what is under the surface to an even greater extent than an individual is affected by their unconscious. Rivers believes that social disorders are caused by factors in the history of the people.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

This research paper is geared primarily to elaborate and study the underlying progressive themes with varying narratives as engaged by renowned writer Pat Barker in her award winning novel "Regeneration". While Presenting the essence of her works, it is demonstrated that how far the author's plot & narratives development thrives upon diverse themes of this Anti War novel

interestingly covering social class order , gender, sexuality, and their inter relationships. All that vastly influences the mind setup of major characters, their state of motivation, psycho-development, impact of trench war fare on men and the various treatment means engaged by the State and the medical fraternity to regenerate Shell shock" psyche

or perhaps a virtual failure of such a recovery in the society at large.

Acclaimed among the highly acknowledged novelists of the last two decades, fondly named as Pat Barker across the literary world, Patricia Barker's work is aptly appreciated for fluidity of her prose, her stark pragmatism, and lack of sentimentality while narrating insightful portrait of working-class life especially of women in her early works and thus earning her a casting of "feminist writer", a title she humbly tend to dissociate. However sensitive evocation of historical figures and events as depicted in her later most accomplishing works—namely a World War I -trilogy comprising of *Regeneration* (1991), *The Eye in the Door*(1993), and *the Ghost Road* (1995)—echoed her writing domain to a much wider and refined thematic expansion, extending her literary works to the frontiers of human mind ,body & soul conflicts as depicted by her choice of subtle themes of "War neurosis ", "Shell shocked" and Freud's concepts of psychoanalysis vividly interwoven in the trilogy's characters and events purposely. Therefore the title of this present research paper implore upon the extent of the changes that had cropped in the British society during the First World War as presented through varying narratives exploited in each novel of the trilogy with vast swinging arc on the theme of masculinity/femininity, prescribed gender roles, heteronormative sexuality and its subversion as prevalent in that era of war time.

Pat Barker penned "Regeneration" in 1991, depicting the effects of World War I on the British officers and men who were recovering at the Craiglockhart War Hospital in Scotland. Setup in 1917 and 1918, in the final years of the brutal conflict Yet *Regeneration* still features many of the same themes that are present in Barker's first novels, like shifting gender roles, class tension, and the effects of violence on the psyche.

Though *Regeneration* is a work of fiction, Barker relied profoundly on historical facts to assemble her characters and narrative as among the novel's primary characters, only Billy Prior, is a fictional character equally who induces important themes of class and alienation. Siegfried Sassoon and Owen Wilson, the two main characters, were

both officers and well-known World War I poets who actually recovered in Craiglockhart hospital and later developed a camaraderie during the time frame of the novel. Dr. W.H.R. Rivers, a illustrious anthropologist, served as Sassoon's psychologist. similarly, Dr. Yealland, Graves, and Henry Head are fictional renderings of historical figures. However, plot ensures care never to contradict historical records where they existed. This left her much less leeway to fictionalize well-documented individuals like Siegfried Sassoon. On the other hand, there was little available information about Dr. Rivers, which gave Barker the opportunity to imagine and construct his inner life.

The novel begins with the actual anti-war letter published by Siegfried Sassoon in July 1917 and follows his subsequent placement at Craiglockhart Hospital for military officers. Sassoon's psychologist, Dr. Rivers, serves as the book's centerpiece, tying together the disparate stories of his patients into a single narrative. Each man struggles with some kind of war-related trauma that leaves him somehow helpless. At Craiglockhart, Sassoon and his fellow patients begin the difficult process of recovery. The novel's title, *Regeneration*, hints at Barker's main underlying theme: how people heal after experiencing unimaginable mental and physical violence. The core area of interest in my research paper through reference of online secondary sources and relevant literary and historical records is to bring out progressive nature of the employed and how far the Barker's main characters counterbalance their perceived self identities during war times and the related expectations of social norms, resulting in increase instances of war neurosis and shell shocked cases highlighting the complex situation of both soldiers and civilians during the First World War.

Throughout *Regeneration*, dynamics among men is depicted as immensely influenced by the parent-child relationships for instance Dr. Rivers is referred to as a paternal figure whose patients look up to him for care and cure, acutely dependent like Anderson's case does. Even Sassoon notes that Dr. Rivers's departure for sick leave reminds him of his father's departure when Sassoon was a young boy. Yet Dr. Rivers is also referred to as a "male mother"

by Layard, a former patient, because nurturing is viewed as a feminine trait (106). Later, as he is departing the hospital, Prior tells the psychologist that he reminds him of his supportive mother. Regardless of these shifting gender roles, Dr. Rivers remains a strong parental figure to his patients. This mirrors the relationship many of the officers have with their men. In one scene, Sassoon remembers tending to his soldiers' blisters. Dr. Rivers himself compares military officers with harried, destitute mothers: both are trying wildly to save lives they cannot.

Regeneration is packed with an assortment of intimate relationships between male officers and soldiers where seniors seemingly treat their soldiers as sons as one see in the novel Sassoon and Owen put up a sturdy mentorship and comradeship and similarly Graves is "very fond of" another male soldier (203). Interestingly, the nature of this love is often vague, and these associations among them gets intricate through sexual orientations referred in the plot . Owen develops romantic feelings for Sassoon and Graves ends his relationship with the male soldier as during that time, men could face serious legal consequences for being homosexual; they could be arrested, publicly shamed, and certainly discharged from military service. Here Pat Barker through Dr. Rivers highlights the irony of war that on one hand strong friendships among men in combat were encouraged, while on the other hand ,there was always a degree of paranoia and suspicion that these relationships would veer into the romantic realm leading to homosexuality and even bisexuality at times as in case of Prior.

In *Regeneration*, the present is irretrievably coupled with the past; reminiscences of the war contour the characters' lives in distressing and unanticipated manners. This sequential puzzlement enables the writer to converse the harrowing nature of combat and its brunt on those who experience it. For instance, Sassoon's flashbacks of distorted corpses and hallucinations of dead comrades upset his ability even to remain calm in Craiglockhart hospital. Likewise, Prior cannot break away from his memories of the war; when spending a day at the seaside with Sarah, as he becomes envious of the surrounding civilians' knack to enjoy

themselves unmindful of the miseries being faced by their soldier in the war theater . Even Burns, who assiduously represses his reminiscences, is flashbacked to the battlefield wherein he daydreams the remains of gutted fish on the beach. Thus Pat Barker has succeeded in maneuvering the power of the invasive past of soldiers with their present state of mindset using aptly her writing skills, thus analogizing mundane noises of their surroundings to machine-gun fire, shelling, and explosions as if the past keeps haunting their present worries.

As in many of Pat Barker's works, recuperation is one of the innermost themes of *Regeneration*. The officers at Craiglockhart hospital have lived through implausibly upsetting experiences; as the novel traces their convoluted journeys from repression to recovery. Pat Barker intelligently utilizes several fictional characters like Prior's relationship with Sarah assists him prevail over feelings of alienation. Even Sassoon's enduring counseling enables Owen to perk up as a poet and to route the memories of the war through his poetic inscriptions. In fact, Barker as a pragmatist, narrates the entire process of recovery of shell shocked men as a thorny and burdened exercise by state and society at large ; many patients linger relentlessly dented at the novel's end as in case of Willard, who though no longer paralyzed, yet fails to come terms with the nature of his illness. Burns has lastly begun to confront his memories of the war, but he vestiges emaciated and potentially still suicidal. Sassoon's nightmares have grown worse in Dr. Rivers' absence, but he has later decided to chase death by returning to the front. For all Barker's characters, revival is a multifaceted and hard to pin down process, but the prospect of regeneration drives the reader much deeper into the plot of the novel.

Throughout *Regeneration*, men are undermined by their war experiences, both as soldiers and as patients as Rivers reflects how far from being edifice of heroics and glory, soldiers were somehow funneled into a new kind of trench war fare wherein they were forced to stay put for days together under constant shelling while still awaiting haplessly for orders. Interestingly such a passivity and dependence among men was

evocative of the situation of women as inhabited in patriarchal societies. The emasculation of trench warfare among men is highlighted when Dr. Rivers's treatment focuses on processing traumatic memories through conversation, but in an era where silent stoicism and male egoism was tantamount to masculinity; most Men presumed that sharing their emotions make them more feminine and thus emasculated by social expectations. Even while giving supportive care to his patients with Compassion, a trait usually seen closely associated to a feminine profile, Dr. Rivers himself felt being in a maternal role. This role change was in a way leading men to repression during trench warfare as they were hardly performing to their perceived role as shell shocked soldiers awaiting martyrdom.

Purposely the plot being set up in a mental health facility for officers in Scotland, *Regeneration* focuses on the psychological smash up wrought by World War I. As evident, Many officers were left no longer fit enough to function even in civilian society for the extreme violence and death that they have witnessed and caused. Anderson has fright attacks at the sight of blood; Prior and Callan are almost mute; Willard cannot walk; Burns fails to eat. Almost all of these men are haunted by hallucinations, dreamy flashbacks and memories of the horrible front. Even seemingly rational men like Sassoon, as a result of his anti-war protest, start showing signs of mental worsening and agony, raising a query is shell-shock a mental illness, or plainly a sane man's over reaction to the psychosis of war. Even Dr. Rivers, a non-combatant, refuses to shelter himself during air raids, exhibiting the same disregard for safety as his patients. Thus the writer succeeds in conveying the level of damage to the minds of all those who were associated with war madness directly or otherwise.

Overall the Great War looms large all through the narrative, providing a background and context so dramatic that, at times, the war seems like a character itself. Barker opinions the war as fundamentally incongruous, an arena in which young men's lives are more often than not wasted without any significant reasons for instance Burns recounts men dying by the dozen while crossing a river that was erroneously marked on maps.

Similarly Prior describes the carnage that results from the British army's decision to parade their men across No Man's Land for the sole purpose of promoting national pride among masses is itself a senseless and bizarre objective. Sassoon claims that the most pointless risks he ever took had nothing to do with gallantry or duty, but were plainly the result of following undeviating orders from his superiors who knew a little about ground realities causing immense loss of life and morale. Hence by recounting painful unnecessary sacrifices by men on duty, Pat Barker in a way seconds the Sassoon's claims that the war has devolved into an never-ending implement in brutality and pain without any perceivable purposes or objectives.

Though the novel has no obvious narrator or point of view; rather, the narrator seemingly adopts the point of view of whichever character the plot is focused on. The plot moves from character to character, often more than a few times within the same chapter, weaving together incongruent stories and divergent view points. For instance when the narrative follows Dr. Rivers, Barker expresses his internal feelings; similarly when following Sassoon, writer expresses his; and so on bringing contradicting narratives in central theme.

Moreover the novel's considerate pitch matches its melancholy mood. Barring a few moments of humor in the novel, Pat Barker engages gravely with its theme of the violence, brutality and human tragedy by engaging readers to retain some optimism as the shell shocked soldiers seems to succeed in regeneration at the end of the story with Dr. Rivers talking therapy.

Hence the novel explores two prominent conflicts, the first one is all about convincing Sassoon, an anti war poet officer to return to the war front in France. The second conflict is far delicate and revolves around the apprehension between Dr. Rivers' compassion for his soldiers and his role in pushing men back to front and be active in a war system that perpetuates violence pain and agony among men though Dr. Rivers accepts that the war cannot validate the horrors it causes.

Similarly the novel climaxes when Dr. Rivers realizes the futility of resending soldiers back to war front while witnessing Dr. Yealand harsh methods

of treating Callan with electroshock therapy as Pat Barker captures this moment to encapsulate the viciousness of the war and the state's apathy towards the consequential hurt.

As a work of historical facts and fiction, the novel alludes to several individuals, proceedings and ideas unswervingly or indirectly related to the experience of World War I in Britain. Most prominently, Siegfried Sassoon, Owen Wilson, and Dr. W.H.R. Rivers were all real natives; Pat Barker quotes their documented words and deeds to painstakingly restructure the characters that come out in *Regeneration* so are the poems and protest letter in the novel, all real-life writings by Sassoon and Owen. Even the pacifists that champion and harass Sassoon by turns, Bertrand Russell and Ottoline Morrell, are too historical figures, thereby competing views of psychology mirror in a contemporary debate.

In her descriptions of decomposing corpses, severed body parts, and bloody explosions, Pat Barker engages imagery to efficiently converse the horrors of warfare and the way they bleed into life beyond the front. She uses dramatic language to paint a distressing picture as in reality also once men used to leave horrific battle fields, these appalling scenes used to haunt their daily lives causing repression. A hallway becomes a "trench without a sky" (17). The sound of a tree scratching against a window pane becomes the sound of "machine-gun fire" (37)

The novel's central paradox revolves around the character of Dr. Rivers, a kind psychologist who engages soft talking therapy with care for his patients and yet his regeneration was meant to ensure that the so traumatized soldiers will be made to return back to the front to further facilitating their mental and physical injury and potentially their death.

Hence it can be seen Emasculation is a continuous theme throughout *Regeneration*: men are emasculated both by Dr. Rivers's psycho-analysis and by the passive nature of trench warfare. In early 20th century British society, stoicism was celebrated as a masculine trait, meaning that sharing emotions was popularly viewed as a feminine act and similarly Dr. Rivers's methods force his patients to speak

about their feelings, thus putting them in a role commonly reserved for womanfolks. At beginning of *Regeneration*, Dr. Rivers justifies Britain's role in the war by arguing that the German threat must be neutralized; he sees the resulting damage as an unfortunate but necessary side effect. By the novel's end, the psychologist concludes that there is no political motivation that could justify the anguish and pain he has witnessed, and thus, he realigns his views with Sassoon's. At the end of *Regeneration*, Dr. Rivers notes the irony that the man he was tasked with changing, Sassoon, profoundly changed him instead.

The first chapters of *Regeneration* feature several characters who dismiss the new psychological diagnoses and treatments that emerged during World War I. The officers on the medical review board view shell-shock as a performance put on by cowards trying to escape combat. Likewise, Anderson, the medic, views Freudian theories with suspicion. These attitudes are largely reflective of the time period, when psychology was not yet an established field.

Dr. Rivers, however, champions a cutting-edge psychological approach to treating patients. Barker portrays Rivers as kind, compassionate and effective, thus validating the methodology. Perhaps most important aspect of Dr. Rivers' psychoanalytic treatments is his emphasis on remembering and processing trauma, which contemporary society encouraged soldiers to forget. Thus, from the outset of the novel, Barker favorably distinguishes Dr. Rivers from the other military authorities and from society at large.

Barker shrouds Sassoon's actual mental health beneath a veil of ambiguity. Though he is articulate and logical when he speaks, Sassoon experiences troubling hallucinations of agonized, crawling corpses; he is haunted by scenes and images of the war. Meanwhile, the authorities who declare Sassoon mentally ill do so out of political convenience. A sane, critical war hero is much more difficult to dismiss than one who has been committed for shell-shock. Graves also has personal reasons for classifying Sassoon's actions as the result of exhaustion or imbalance. According to Sassoon, Graves agrees with his anti-war beliefs, but has

chosen to support Sassoon's diagnosis of mental illness because it allows Graves to ignore his own inaction in the face of injustice. Despite these various personal agendas, Barker does not explicitly specify whether Sassoon's actions are a sane man's response to an insane conflict or the seeds of psychological unraveling.

In this novel, It has been attempted to research the extent of factual history and fictional features as invariably Barker tends to use first-hand factual sources like Sassoon's diaries and poems, Owen's letters to his mother, his complete poetry and River's notes on his treatment methods to get readers a picture of the character of Sassoon, Owen and Rivers. Rivers's paper "The Repression of War Experience" provides Barker with case histories for her traumatized officers in *Regeneration*. In his commentary on the case histories, Rivers explains that many of the most trying and distressing symptoms from which the subjects of war neurosis suffer are not the necessary result of the strains and shocks to which they have been exposed in warfare, but are due to the attempt to banish from the mind distressing memories of warfare or painful affective states which have come into being as the result of their war experience. (173)

Repression, an effort to push troubling memories away from mind, seems to cause the symptoms, and facing the thoughts and memories of the experience will relieve the symptoms. In fact Rivers's definition of repression deviates in a way from the Freudian definition, as he defines as "the process whereby a person endeavors to thrust out of his memory some part of his mental content," and "suppression," which is "the state which ensues when, either through this process or by some other means, part of the mental content has become inaccessible to manifest consciousness" (175). Rivers does not consider repression itself to be pathological; it only becomes harmful when it "fails to adapt the individual to his environment" (173).

Throughout the novel the treatment of Barker's characters exemplifies how stoutly Rivers presume that repression plays an inevitable part in the preparation of a soldier for war as the military trainings inherently grooms him to act calmly and methodically in the presence of events that are

ordinarily expected to arouse disturbing emotions in the troopers. Rivers's postulates that the very traumatized soldiers who have been trained mandatorily in repression of their natural responses, find themselves in the contradiction of conviction to the primary training while exerting to recover from their war neurosis.

The novel unfolds with A Soldier's Declaration "Finished with the War" by Siegfried Sassoon. He writes, "...I believe the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it." (p 3)

"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." (p 3)

As evident from the opening quote of the novel, Rivers understands repression to be operating on a social as well as a personal level for these officers, and refuse to repress their traumas just to serve as a social end by the prolongation of the war rather he firmly believes that a patient's natural desire to put an unpleasant experience out of his conscious mind is often encouraged by family, friends, and many medical practitioners. So the cessation of repression may or may not relieve the soldiers of their symptoms as narrated in the case of for Barker's figure of Burns in *Regeneration*. "He'd been thrown into the air by the explosion of a shell and had landed, head- first, on a German corpse, whose gas -filled belly had ruptured on impact." (p 19)

his nose and mouth filled with the stench of decomposing human flesh. Now, whenever he tried to eat, that taste and smell recurred. After every nightmare, he awoke vomiting.

So clearly traumatized people may find themselves "acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring," or they may experience "intense psychological distress when exposed to events that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event" (Young 117). In literary terms, PTSD traps the traumatized person within an allegory; he or she has no choice but to interpret contemporary events as repeated occurrences of the original event. Hence all experiences of eating inevitably recall the original traumatic event, and Burns, who can't keep any food down, is in danger

of starving himself. Thus, PTSD traps the traumatized within a repetitive, allegorical script that offers no escape, and no alternative ending.

The traumatized patient tend to use avoidance and numbing to lessen the emotional pain that comes with reliving the experience. They try to avoid thoughts, feelings, activities or situations that could remind them of the trauma, and can become amnesic for aspects of the precipitating event. This avoidance is accompanied by numbing and detachment, a lack of interest in activities they had enjoyed, a generalized dampening of all feeling and "a sense of a foreshortened future" (Young 117). Billy Prior, for example, cannot recall what happened between the time he picks up the eyeball from the trench floor and the time he arrived at the aid station. Paradoxically, although the traumatized limit their lives to avoid experiences that have the potential to trigger their trauma, they cannot prevent re-experiencing the event and all its distressing emotions. An event from the past, displaced from its chronologically appropriate site, haunts the present and threatens to rob the traumatized subject of the future as well.

And no doubt his renowned "Talking Cure Therapy" was primarily personalized, well collaborated and counseling based as "His patients might be encouraged to acknowledge their fears, their horror of the war- but they were still expected to do their duty and return to France. It was Rivers' conviction that those who had learned to know themselves, and to accept their emotions, were less likely to break down again." (p 48)

Rivers acknowledges his debt to Freud as in "Freud's Psychology of the Unconscious." "The dream seemed to support Freud's contention that all dreams were wish fulfilment." Everyone has forgotten aspects of their experience, and these unconscious experiences influence conscious thoughts, feelings and actions. Forgetting is an active process requiring an explanation--it is not passive. Experience is banished from consciousness by a process Freud calls censorship. Rivers believed that suppressed experience can enter consciousness only when the normal control of the epicritic is weakened, for example, when the patient is under

hypnosis or when asleep. (See one of Prior's tasks at the front is to censor letters from the soldiers to their families, thereby preventing the reality of the front from entering the consciousness of those at home.) For Freud, suppressed experience, called complexes, produce bodily and mental disease. The war provided evidence that supports Freud's theory of forgetting, but minimalizes his theory of the sexual origin of functional nervous disorders. Rivers ends with a consideration of Freud's psychology of the unconscious as a partial truth, subject to the modifications that will come with research.

Rivers's two works on dreams are interesting for the way in which they re-organize the relationship between the individual's consciousness and the world that impinges upon it. His theory of dreams as set out in *Conflict and Dream* extrapolates the hierarchical theory he developed from the nerve regeneration experiment into a revision of Freud's theory of dreams. Rivers used assumptions drawn from his epicritic/protopathic hierarchical model to revise Freud's concept of censorship. Rivers noted that in Freud's theory, the latent content becomes the manifest content by means of a process he called "distortion," and Rivers called "transformation." A necessity to counteract resistance to the latent content resided in mind. It is supposed that the manifest dream is an occurrence in which experience appears in the consciousness of sleep which has been banished from the consciousness of the waking life by processes of repression or suppression, and that the process of transformation is necessary in order to overcome a resistance to his [sic] appearance. Freud had given a metaphorical expression to this resistance by the use of the simile of the social process of censorship. He supposes that the experience kept out of the consciousness of waking life can only find access to the consciousness of sleep if it suffers such transformation or distortion that its real meaning will not be recognized by the sleeper. The feature of resistance thus presented to the direct and undisguised appearance of the latent content Freud calls censorship. (5)

Rivers believed that it is unnecessary to postulate such an agency (51). In his theory, dreams

are regressive, expressive of infancy or an earlier stage of life than that at which the dream occurs (50), and therefore they are protopathic. For Rivers, the "disguise of the dream," the transformation of latent content into the manifest content of the remembered dream, "is a necessary consequence of the essential nature of the dream as the coming into being of an early form of mental functioning" (50).

In accordance with his epicritic/protopathic model, Rivers believed dreams differ according to the level of sleep at which they occurred. Dreams that occur during light sleep are more in keeping with the age of the dreamer and are also more easily recalled. In deep sleep, the upper levels of mental activity do not function; thus the dreams produced during this sleep are characteristic of very early life.

Finally I concluded in my work that the historical Rivers rejected Freud's contention that the latent content is the fulfillment of the dreamer's wish. He saw it as too simple, and instead postulated "that the dream is the solution or attempted solution of a conflict which finds expression in ways characteristic of different levels of early experience" (17). He also believed that dreams arise out of the dreamer's current life situation, unless an event has triggered an old conflict from the dreamer's past (104). Rivers returned to his epicritic/protopathic hierarchy to characterize the latent content of dreams as having a protopathic means "intense, explosive . . . 'all-or-nothing' affect" (78). Because of the regressive nature of sleep, Rivers thought the attempts to solve these conflicts were characteristic of much earlier stages of mental functioning. It is evident that Rivers distinguished three agencies used by psychotherapists: self-knowledge, self-reliance and suggestion. In a therapeutic context, self-knowledge consists of unearthing unconscious protopathic experience, bringing it into epicritic consciousness, so that it no longer acted as a distinct force conflicting with the body of conscious experience. Self-knowledge also includes the re-interpretation of elements of conscious experience. Rivers sees that an appeal to the intellect, though secondary, is important: success in treatment depends largely on the possibility of diverting the intellectual activity

from a channel which is forcing it into an asocial or antisocial direction, and leading it into one which will again enable the patient to live in harmony with the society to which he belongs. (133)

So Rivers has an optimistic view of the ease with which the intellect can cure disorders: "The patient only needs to be started on the right path, and his own intelligence will lead him back to health and happiness" (133). This, of course, masks the real and impossible situations in which the fit between the individual and society will demand the sacrifice of the individual for the sake of society. Rivers sees avoidance as a major factor in the prolongation of neurotic symptoms caused by repression, yet he himself avoids facing up to the conflicts raised by his treatment of Sassoon and Prior. "The dream seemed to support Freud's contention that all dreams were wish fulfilment." "Rivers had wished himself back in Cambridge, doing research, and the dream had fulfilled the wish." (p 46-47)

"He was more inclined to seek the meaning of the dream in the conflict his dream self had experienced between the duty to continue the experiment and the reluctance to cause further pain." (p 47)

Overall the entire plot of the trilogy leads us to an understanding that Historical Rivers believes that all the principles he has set out for treatment of functional nervous disorders in individuals can be applied to society. The statesman in the real Rivers and his character is a physician of social disorders. Society is affected by what is under the surface to an even greater extent than an individual is affected by their unconscious. Rivers believes that social disorders are caused by factors in the history of the people.

As the plot of novel progresses, the fourth criterion describes the symptoms of autonomic central nervous system arousal caused by the trauma. A person with PTSD may experience insomnia, irritability, hypervigilance, distractibility, a tendency to startle easily, and "physiologic reactivity when the individual is exposed to events that symbolize or resemble the traumatic event" (Young 117). In *Regeneration*, Barker's description of Ralph Anderson, a surgeon dedicated to the pursuit of golf

balls while at Craiglockhart, shows some of these symptoms

Hence throughout the novel, Barker filters historically accurate accounts of "war neurosis" through the current diagnostic category of post-traumatic stress disorder, indicating that she understands these two diagnostic categories to be identical. That is, PTSD is the current term for what Rivers and his psychiatric colleagues understood as shell shocked "war neurosis." Hence *Regeneration* (1991) is an anti-war novel of its own class and genre wherein Pat Barker focuses on the aftermath trauma of First World War. The novel scrutinizes the upshot of the war and its effects on the characters, masculinity and social structures. The narrative probes into how the physical symptoms of war neurosis communicate the nature of an internal crisis. The essence of the novel lies in the horrifying memories of the war, its traumatic effects on soldiers, their constant struggle for survival and their recovery at Craighlockhart War Hospital only to enable men to go back to the war again. It won't be an exaggeration to say that the novel is a scintillating and ingenious fusion of fact and fiction.

WORKS CITED AND CONSULTED

- Agnew, Kate, and Geoff Fox. *Children at War: From the First World War to the Gulf*. London: Continuum studies, 2001. Print.
- Babington, Anthony. *Shell-Shock: A History of the Changing Attitudes to War Neurosis*. London: Leo Cooper, 1997. Print.
- Barker, Pat. *Life Class*. England: Penguin Books, 2007. Print.
- _____. *Liza's England*. New York: Picador USA, 1986. Print.
- _____. *Regeneration*. England: Penguin Books, 1992. Print.
- _____. *The Eye in the Door*. England: Penguin Books, 1994. Print.
- _____. *The Ghost Road*. England: Penguin Books, 1996. Print.
- _____. *Union Street*. Great Britain: Virago Press, 1982. Print.
- Bennett, Geoffrey Martin. *Naval Battles of WW1*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military Classics, 2005. Print.
- Referrals to [www.Gradesaver.com /regeneration /study-guide/themes](http://www.Gradesaver.com/regeneration/study-guide/themes)
- Binneveld, Hans. *From Shell-Shock to Combat Stress: A Comparative History of Military Psychiatry*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University P, 1997. Print.
- Brannigan, John. *Contemporary British Novelists: Pat Barker*. New York: Manchester University P, 2005. Print.
- _____. *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1998. Print.
- Buchan, John. *Battle of the Somme*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1917. Print.
- Burton, Henry. *The Gospel According to St. Luke*. Chicago: American Theological Library Association, 1985. Print.
- Carpenter, Edward. *The Intermediate Sex: A Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women*. New York: AMS P, 1983. Print.
- "Acquittal of Mr. Billing. Scenes in Court." *The Times* 5 Jun. 1918: 4.
- "The Alleged Poison Plot Trial. Refusal of Application for Postponement." *The Times* 3 Mar. 1917: 3.
- Annan, Gabriele. "Shock Treatment." Rev. of *Border Crossing* by Pat Barker. *New York Review of Books* 17 May 2001: 44-45.
- _____. *Regeneration*. London: Plume, 199
- Freud, Sigmund. *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Trans. James Strachey. London: Penguin, 1973.