THE IMAGE OF THE HERO IN THE ENGLISH POETRY OF THE GREAT WAR

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the image of the hero in the English poetry of the First Great War, highlighting the evolution of a counter-type of heroism in which modern war poetry becomes anti-heroic. It tackles the nature of such poetry and how it generates basic changes from the traditional treatments of war. The modern hero is revealed to have contradictory characteristics which cause him to be a “demonic” hero. Such transition is traced in the literary, social and political contexts which accompany the development of the anti-hero. It is a transition from traditional heroic idealism towards demonic realism during which the corruption of the “traditional” materializes.