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Narrative Intricacy in Robert Southey's Storyworld: Locutor Voice and Monitority in "The Battle of Blenheim"

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Abstract

This study explores the narrative intricacy of Robert Southey's "The Battle of Blenheim" by examining the use of monitority and locutor voice. Using these techniques, the paper analyses how the poet represents the 'restricted perspective of the locutor' rather than a distanced straightforward historical narrative of the experience of battle, providing an intrinsic and particularised perspective on war and prompting reflection on it. Southey's strategy of monitority thus carries an evaluative dimension, revealing the experienced and characterised aspects of war and deviating from external generalisations of war. However, the locutor voice, which captures the focalised perspective, tone, and discourse, articulates the characters' emotional states. The interplay of monitority and locutor voice creates an intricate narrative of the war, highlighting its brutality, the anguish and the emotional burden it inflicts. The portrayal of war's catastrophic nature counters the traditional glorification of war as a victory, while the protracted emotional engagement indicates psychological effects on individuals. As such, Southey's poem turns out to be an acute narrative of war, driven by a crafty interaction of monitoring and locutor voice, examines the war with polyvocal shades of fancy, joy, suffering and eventual loss, which engages the readers with critical distance as well as empathy and sympathy with those affected by its utter consequences.

Keywords: Monitority, Locutor voice, Robert Southey, Narrative poem, Romantic poetry

Introduction

Robert Southey's poetry is mostly regarded as representing the romantic mood of the early nineteenth century (Meachen, 1979, p.590), and acclaimed as one of the most prolific and multifaceted poets of the Romantic period. His outstanding poetic explorations are marked by deeply rooted in individual senses, emotions, passion, creative imagination, subjective truth and individual sensibility. These acute notions blended with emotive collocations that resist relinquishing senses, provide a narrative dimension for his poems, which not only

focus on individual experiences and afflictions but also depict societal concerns, intellectual aspirations, cultural dilemmas and existential paradox. He stands out as a poet with narrative landscaping or as a narrator with poetic sensitivity. His emphasis on moral and societal issues distinguishes him from his contemporaries, and his narrative worlds function as a platform to problematise power disparities, social ramifications of war, colonial discrepant inadequacy and slavery and class inequality. As a result, Southey's exploration of the human being as an innocent child of nature with the utmost potential for unprecedented realms of imagination cannot be envisaged without his reflective observation of the social and cultural conflicts depicted through narrative frames and dialogues. In his narrative poems, his locutor voice is amalgamated with perspectives and profound insights into the social challenges of his era. This aspect of Southey's poetry is mostly explicated by "his consistent commitment to humanitarian interventionism" (Harling, 1998, p. 630), which positioned Southey as a renowned poet in light of the ideals of his age. The originality of this study, however, lies in its handling of narrative aspects in Southey's poetry and presenting him as a storyteller using the strategies of telling and monitoring at a time.

Southey's "The Battle of Blenheim" examines individual sensitivities and sensibilities against the historical background of the 1704 battle in the War of Spanish Succession, involving Great Britain, the Dutch Republic, and Austria, commanded by the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy, and faced the French and Bavarian forces. This battle was a crucial incident in British history as it represented a triumph over the French and facilitated the emergence of Britain as a leading power in Europe. The poem's bare portrayal of earthly banality upon chronotopically distant and emotionally detached experience of glorified war and so-called victory, visible and invisible consequences of solid devastation become insignificant and decaying, yet the 'fatal' residue of the war exists through the 'vitality' of nature. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century mindset is questioned as continuous imperial ambitions drove such glorified wars. Southey's narrative poem represents social justification with individual interrogation, influenced by "his revolutionary sensibility that was to develop in the 1790s strengthened through his reading of Voltaire, Rousseau, Paine's Rights of Man (1791) and Godwin's Political Justice (1793), and through his friendships with a radical circle including Coleridge" (Sonoi, 2011, p.22). In his poem, "The Battle of Blenheim," he focuses on the emotional and individual toll of the war. He underscores the war's devastating consequences instead of viewing it as a victory, emphasising the suffering of individuals, so he denounces the war as a catastrophic imperial act. Southey's critique of war, delving into exploitation, violence, and suffering, can be situated within the socio-political environment of his era and his Romantic sensibility. He illustrates the destructive consequences of the wars as a reflection of the Romantic movement's concern for individual suffering.

In his narrative poetry, he intertwines his thematic richness with innovative narrative techniques such as locutor voice that captures the perspective, tone and language employed by double narrative agents, a third-person narrator with limited omniscience and a retrospective homodiegetic-narrator with considerable restriction in perspective, that is, monitority. The narrative frame progresses through the third-person narrator's exposition and the homodiegetic narrator (Old Kaspar) takes over the act of narration. Hence, the third-person narrator and Old Kaspar are collaborating locutor voices, telling the readers about the events parading from the past to the present. The external view of event representation and natural/peaceful portrayal of the story is unfolded by Kaspar's narration and subsequent monitority through retrospection. Southey uses this technique in one of his narrative poems,

"The Battle of Blenheim," to articulate societal concern and individual feelings stemming from the war, illustrated through a dialogue between an elderly man and his grandchildren.

The strategy of monitority embodies an evaluative dimension in narratives as it emphasises the '*a*ffect' beyond the surface. Çıraklı (2010), alluding to Foucault's notion of "author-ity" (1984, p. 119) argues that narrative discourses automatically produce "monitority" (pp. 26-28), a compound term for restrictive perspective in narratives:

> Monitor-ity' is a coinage deriving from "authority" and "monitoring," and refers to the authority exerted by an observer/perceiver … over the objects of perception. As any text suggests an idea of author-ity, any narrative text, which always presents perspectivized narrative information and orients its story with a certain point of view, suggests necessarily an idea of monitor-ity (p. 27).

As such, monitority is a multi-functional device that helps to perceive (evaluate) events. Old Kaspar is a monitoring agent in the story, whose perspective orients the story. He represents the emotional backdrop of the story and and conveys experiential reflections. The narrative reveals the destructive effects through the eyes and lens of the older man, the monitoring agent, disclosing deep sorrow and disillusionment. In doing so, the narrative gives the readers insights into the profound and everlasting effect of the war by reflecting on anguish and emotional struggle. The locutor voice collaborating with the restricted perspective (monitority), thus, creates an emotional depth and provides readers with the personal lens to engage with the tragedy of the war and sympathise or empathise with the victims. Accordingly, the dialogue between Kaspar, the older man, and his grandchildren transcends describing the details of the war but questions its nature and prompts the reader to recognise its futility. Through this evaluative approach, Southey, as a poet concerned with "the great issues of political revolution, social change, and morality" (Meachen, 1979, p.590), protests the idea of war as a triumph and invites a profound evaluation of the great destruction, violence and death it causes. In this way, monitority functions as a critical lens through which the prevailing ideologies and societal values or norms are challenged, urging the reader to question the celebration of wars as heroic triumphs and reconsider their beliefs.

The Locutor's Voice Blended with Monitority in "The Battle of Blenheim"

In "The Battle of Blenheim," Southey, through locutor voice blended with monitority, enables the elderly man, Kaspar, to express the profound psychological devastation caused by the war. This narrative method provides readers with a personal perspective to see the realities of war. In the beginning, Kaspar enjoys the sun with Wilhelmine, his young grandson. The happy atmosphere, however, is abruptly disrupted when his grandson, Peterkin, discovers something unknown. Upon observing the unknown object, Kaspar says: "Tis some poor fellow's skull" (III. XVII). At this point, his voice carries deep sorrow and mourning. The expression "poor fellow" is an utterance of pity and illustrates the personal cost of the war. The deceased soldier's name is not known and "the anonymous skull is denied identity" (Schwartz, 2013, p.9). Thus, the term "fellow," spoken by Kaspar, also reveals the anonymity of those lost in the war. His sorrow is further emphasised by his "natural sigh" (III. XVI), a gesture that shows the emotional weight of grief. At this point, although he describes the war as a "great victory" (III. XVIII), this statement is ironic as it

contrasts with the deep emotional burden he bears. This burden is not just related to the skull but to the persistent grief caused by the war.

The homodiegetic narrator Kaspar, the locutor voice and monitoring agent, reveals the destruction of the war through his embedded narrative and dialogue. Suggesting that the skull found by his grandson is not the only one as he says: "I find them in the garden / For there's many here about" (IV. XIX-XX), emphasising the multiplicity of lost lives as a result of the war. The conversation, then, shifts to the question asked by his grandsons concerning the reason lying behind the war. Responding to their inquiry, he says: "what they fought each other for / I could not well make out" (VI. XXXIII-XXXIV), implying that the war merely results in loss of lives, anguish and disillusionment. His statements and emotional state, at this point, indicate that the war ultimately led to nothing for them but sorrow, devastation and loss. Although he concludes his explanation of the reason for war with the phrase 'great victory,' this expression seems to be used ironically again as it contrasts with the destruction the war causes once again.

Kaspar shifts from depicting the destruction of the war to recounting his father's account of suffering, loss and displacement. He recounts the hardships endured by his father, saying:

> My father lived at Blenheim then,
> Yon little stream hard by;
> They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
> And he was forced to fly;
> So with his wife and child he fled,
> Nor had he where to rest his head
> (VII. XXXVII-XLII)

The extract indicates that the locutor voice is not detached from the story as the elderly man conveys a personal story of suffering that belongs to his own father. Through the phrases 'dwelling to the ground' and 'forced to fly,' he says that his father's home was burned, which resulted in the family being forced to escape without a safe place to reside. He illustrates war's intergenerational impact because Kaspar narrates not only a story of war but also the lasting effect of it on his own family, thereby highlighting how the effects of war extend beyond the battlefield and influence the lives of subsequent generations. He has a reflective tone at this point, and he does not merely convey the destructive nature of war in general, but he shares the traumatic displacement of his family due to the war, thus personalising the war's destruction. His voice has the weight of historical trauma and his reflective tone, thus suggesting a more profound personal connection to the human cost of war.

After recounting his family's story of suffering, Kaspar employs vivid language and a reflective tone to elucidate the human toll of war further. He points out that the war leads not only to the loss of soldiers but also to the tragic death of infants and their mothers, saying, "…many a childing mother then /and new-born baby died" (VIII. XLVI). His words, once more, reveal how the profound effect of war on individuals and convey the traumatic experiences associated with it, especially regarding the individual tragedy involved. A mournful and reflective tone tells the loss of lives of even 'new-born' babies and shows the brutal consequences of a war that is referred to as a 'famous victory'. However, this phrase is ironic and Kaspar's locutor voice continues to depict the horrors of war and says: "for many thousand bodies here / Lay rotting in the sun" (IX. XLI-XLII). The lines tell that the haunting image of decaying bodies that are left unburied, persisting to show the traumatic human cost of war. The narrator's voice captures a powerful observation of the chaotic

aftermath of the war and invites readers to confront the pervasive violence, loss and disillusionment that ensue.

Hence, the locutor voice in "The Battle of Blenheim," serves not only to illustrate the historical events and the aftermath of the war but also to reflect the horrors of the war and the profundity of emotional burden the war imposed on individuals and communities. The locutor's voice is not impersonal and detached in the lines because it is the voice of the narrator, who was personally entangled in the events. He recounts not only the individuals' physical and psychological suffering but also expresses his personal sorrow and the tragic legacy of his family. Therefore, the poem is reflective in tone and it places emphasis on specific moments or scenes during and after the battle. The locutor's voice draws readers into the depth of anguish experienced by both the individuals and the narrator. Southey's use of this technique illustrates the personal impact of the war, so it allows readers to confront the harsh realities and traumatic consequences of it.

In "The Battle of Blenheim," while locutor voice emphasises the key moments during and after the war through a reflective tone and draws readers into the destruction it causes, monitority provides a restrictive yet deeper and focalised perspective to interpret and critique the war experience and the perception of war as a victory, shaping the readers perspective on it. It thus functions as a means of evaluative voice in the lines and controls the readers' responses to the events. Consequently, monitority helps analyse the events in depth and makes moral judgements about the war and its traumatic consequences. Southey, in the lines, illustrates "his moral struggle in the political confusion of the day" (Sonoi, 2011, p.26), and through the use of monitority, challenges the glorification of war, emphasising not only its futility but also its destructive nature. He does so through both evaluative and ironic tones as the ironical phrase 'victory' associated with war coexists together with an implicit critique of war in most of the lines. In conclusion, Southey's use of monitority technique recounts catastrophic scenes and enduring consequences of war from a critical perspective, so it guides readers to draw moral conclusions and reevaluate their perspective on social norms.

In his conversation on the 'skull' discovered by his grandson, Kaspar states, "Tis some poor fellow's skull"(III. XVII), suggesting the profound loss of identity experienced by soldiers or civilians. The reference to the deceased as a 'skull' suggests that the war results in nothing but the ultimate loss of life and individuality. Expressing his emotional reaction to such brutality "with a natural sigh," he also illustrates the mental anguish the war inflicts. Kaspar's perspective serves as a critical eye and guides readers to confront both the physical and mental horrors of war. Southey articulates his challenge to war through the prevalent image of 'skull,' a motif frequently found in literature that problematises wars. In this context, Schwartz (2013) asserts, "… Southey's rolling head found in a field is generic. It comes from a long literary tradition and is an image as often used in rousing poems of war as in protestations for peace" (p.4). As the extract suggests, the poet makes use of the 'skull' image that is prevalent in anti-war poetry. He employs an evaluative tone through the monitority technique that goes beyond merely recounting events and presents a moral commentary on war. By juxtaposing the brutality of war with the term 'victory,' Kaspar suggests that war's horrors are often overshadowed by its glorification. As a result, Southey's lines are also ironic in tone and it prompts an inquiry of the true nature of war. Thus, the poet's use of monitority technique problematises the underlying realities of the war viewed as a victory and urges readers to critically examine societal values and prevailing ideologies.

In the poem, Kaspar, as the focaliser, continues to describe the harsh realities of the war and helps readers to understand and challenge the dehumanising nature of the war. By stating "I find them in the garden /for there's many here about (IV. XI-XX), he implies that he is not surprised to see the 'skull,' emphasising the abundance of skulls found there. The lack of surprise in facing the situation indicates that the war has normalised deaths. In doing this, Southey prompts an examination of normalisation of deaths caused by the war and demonstrates the degrading effects of war on people's daily life and critiques it, highlighting the negative impact of the violence it generates through the voice of Kaspar as a moral critique. Therefore, "Southey's "The Battle of Blenheim" pretends that the found skull turned innocent's plaything signifies the emptiness of war" (Schwartz, 2013, p.4). As discerned from the assertion, the poet describes how the war merely leads to destruction and emphasises its futility. Thus, Southey employs monitority technique and evaluative tone to challenge the glorification often associated with the war, inviting readers again to reconsider the societal normalisation of death and the perception of the war as a 'victory'.

In the subsequent lines of the work, Kaspar continues to articulate his reminiscence of the war along with his thoughts on it. Finding no reason for the war, he states, "… what they fought each other for / I could not well make out" (VI. XXIII-XXXIV). His words indicate a lack of understanding of the reason behind the war, thereby hinting at its pointlessness. As soon as he admits that the reason for the war is unknown, Kaspar subtly counteracts the societal tendency to glorify it, saying, "But everybody said / That 'twas a famous victory" (VI. XXXV-XXXVI). The word 'everybody' reflects a communal tendency to celebrate the war as a 'victory' despite the lack of the rationale behind it. As Heleniak (1990) observes, the war's lack of a valid reason indicates that "no good came of it" (p.107), and its glorification underscores a disconnection between the perception of historical events and their actual nature. In this context, through Kaspar's voice, Southey employs monitority technique and adopts an evaluative tone to allow the reader to see the real nature of war. This evaluative tone critiques the war, its futility and its glorification and prompts readers to confront the destructive realities of it, aligning with the poet's stance as an ardent antimilitarist in the 1790s (Heleniak, 1990, p. 107).

The narrative transitions from the war's horrors to the intimate personal losses it brings. In view of those personal losses, Kaspar conveys his father's traumatic story as he states, "They burnt his dwelling to the ground" (VII. XIX), distinctly highlighting the devastating impact of the war on the lives of even ordinary individuals. Proceeding to detail his family's story, he says:

> … he was forced to fly;
> So with his wife and child he fled,
> Nor had he where to rest his head.
> (VII. XL-XLII).

The lines reveal that his father, although not involved in the war, is displaced and compelled to flee to ensure his family's security. The older man recounts that his family had nowhere to reside, underscoring the displacement and loss faced by his family. Southey's lines, elucidate the personal toll of the war and its long-lasting effects even long after it ends, contrasting with the perception of it as a 'victory.' Thus, his lines go beyond a mere description of a historical event and, through the monitority technique, reinforce the aforementioned critique of war by emphasising its catastrophic consequences on civilian populations. Therefore, as Meachen (1980) argues, Southey's writings present insight into the historical context and the poet's personal involvement with the moral implications of the

war (p. 229). The poet encourages his readers to recognise that it is primarily civilians who bear the brunt of destruction and violence the war inflicts. Thus, he complicates his narrative with the monitority technique, through which he prompts a critical evaluation and a moral judgment of the enduring effects of the war on individuals through the themes such as loss and displacement.

Southey's use of the monitority technique, in the lines, continues to offer a moral reflection on the severe suffering and devastation that war brings. The poet clarifies the catastrophic consequences of the war for the country, underscoring its devastating effect on civilians through his character, Kaspar's portrayal of the destructive consequences of war, as he says, "With fire and sword the country round / Was wasted far and wide" (VIII. XLIII-XLIV). The statements suggest that the war results in nothing but extensive suffering from a critical perspective as part of the monitority technique. Accordingly, revealing the tragic loss of lives, the elderly man says, "many a childing mother then / and new-born baby died" (VIII. XLV-XLVI), demonstrating the devastating impact of the war on the innocent. The poet employs an evaluative tone and the monitority technique to counteract the war as an unnecessary event through the atrocities against the civilian population. He also uses an ironic tone, writing, "But things like that, you know, must be / at every famous victory" (VIII. XLVII-XLVIII). The juxtaposition of the atrocities committed during the war and the perception of it as a victory in the lines is an attempt by the Southey to challenge the war and its glorification. As Heleniak (1990) notes, "Southey's antiwar poem was a criticism of this contemporary state of affairs" (p.107). As the quote suggests, the poet's lines highlight the horrors of the war and society's perception of it, thus emphasising the contrast between them. Consequently, his use of monitority emphasises the contrast between the atrocities committed during the war and their normalisation, directing readers to face the true nature of war that is always ignored and critically examine its glorification.

The critique of the war present in Southey's lines persists in the rest of the poem, and Kaspar consistently illustrates its brutality as he states, "many thousand bodies here / Lay rotting in the sun" (IX. LI-LII), emphasising the multitude of fatalities that ensued from the war. Although it is declared to be "won" (IX. L), the fact that the war brings many deaths proves that it serves no practical purpose but leads to horrors. Southey employs the monitority technique to make an evaluative judgment of the war through Kaspar's statements. This technique enables Kaspar to indirectly counteract the war and juxtapose the brutality of mass death with the perception of the war in society as he ironically remarks, "But things like that, you know, must be / after a famous victory" (IX. LIII-LIV). As discerned from this juxtaposition, Southey's lines carry an ironic tone and challenge the societal tendency to normalise death as an unavoidable consequence of the 'victor.' As a result, the implementation of monitority technique in the lines serves both to shed light on the underlying realities of the war and to bring the erroneous societal perception of the war into question.

As the lines draw the conclusion, Southey's critique of the war is further substantiated through a dialogue between Kaspar and his granddaughter, which functions as a key example of monitority. Emphasising how the war is considered a 'victory' and the rulers are honoured, Kaspar states, "Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won / And our good Prince Eugene." (X. LV-LVI). However, his granddaughter's exclamation, "Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!" (X. LVII-LVIII) questions how such a violent occurrence is rationalised as a success. Therefore, her exclamation indicates that even a little child perceives the war as a horrific event, serving as a monitoring voice to disrupt the rationalisation of war as a

'victory.' Southey employs monitority to provide a critique of the war and its glorification through the little child's perspective, thus contrasting this viewpoint with the societal attitude towards the war. The little child sees no positive outcome of the war and seeks to understand if it serves any purpose, asking, "But what good came of it at last?" (XI. LXIII). The elderly man's ironic response, "Why that I cannot tell… / But 'twas a famous victory" (XI. LXV-LXVI) underscores the glorification of the war as a victory despite a lack of understanding of its moral and material outcomes. This irony and the little child's challenge exemplify how Southey's use of monitority highlights the dissonance between the harsh realities of war and its socially constructed narrative. Consequently, the use of monitority serves to reinforce the critique of the war and questions not merely the war itself but the societal norms or narratives of the historical events through employing evaluative and ironic tones.

Accordingly, Southey's narrative expression in "The Battle of Blenheim" provides a customised and personalised account of the war experience from within. Southey employs the monitority technique, which illustrates the details from a different perspective. As Meachen (1979) observed, as a poet "who shared the belief in poetry's affective powers" (p.592), Southey's use of this technique contributes to understanding the horrors and catastrophic events resulting from the war, often idealised as a societal success. The poem, structured as a conversation between an older man and his grandchildren, explores the harsh realities of war with an ironic and critical reflection. Thus, the horrific occurrences that result from the war are explored critically through an evaluative tone and from an ironic point of view. The harrowing realities are contrasted with the optimistic societal attitude towards war to disrupt the notion that the war is a victory. The use of monitority, thus, serves as a critical lens to challenge the real nature of the war and enables readers to confront its atrocities alongside its lasting impacts from a critical perspective and reevaluate societal norms and values surrounding it.

Conclusion

The narrative structure of "The Battle of Blenheim" is crafted through the interplay between locutor voice and monitority. This complexity not only provides readers with insight into the emotional toll of the war but also invites them to evaluate and critique its legacy. Southey employs these narrative techniques to scrutinise the intricacies of human experiences, challenges and suffering within rich cultural and historical contexts, and as O'Neill (2011) suggests, his "originality is to construct a poem whose incidents never detract from the onward momentum" (O'Neill, 2011, p.34). Throughout his lines in the poem, fuelled with his philosophical ideas and humanitarian concerns about the human condition, he examines the details of the war and its long-term effects. He transcends a mere historical recounting of war and reveals its harsh realities and the burden it imposes on people. As a poet dedicated to social reforms (Meachen 1979), he employs monitority and locutor voice techniques to articulate his challenge to the war and illustrate its emotional toll. Through these techniques, he encourages readers to engage with the atrocities of war, reevaluate their perspectives, understand its psychological effects and empathise with those affected.

Southey's narrative poem epitomises a crucial equilibrium between narrative strategies and meaning through the techniques discussed earlier and focuses on a dialogue between narration and monitority, memory and present, ideal and futile, depicted through acute conversation regarding the war and its consequences. As the conversation unfolds, the lines increasingly highlight the emotional and psychological impact of war on individuals. Southey, whose ideas about morals and politics have some signs of anti-imperialist thinking

(Leask, 2016, p.150), underscores the futility of war, illustrating its long-term effects on civilians. In contrast to war's futility, Kaspar's words in the lines suggest that it is viewed as a 'victory' in societal discourse, but no logical justification can be found for this perspective. The central character serves as a narrator-focaliser, embodying the locutor voice and monitoring agent. His retrospective account represents the reminiscences of war alongside his reflections. The emotional burden and impact are depicted through narration (the locutor voice) blended with a restrictive perspective (monitority), which amalgamates sense perceptions, emotional engagements and ideological concerns proclaiming the war yields no beneficial outcome but anguish. Therefore, the lines carry perspectival, perceptive and affective arrangements of an evaluative tone that presents a critique of war as a futile occurrence. In this manner, Southey juxtaposes the prevailing perception of war with its destructive nature, critiquing it through an ironic tone. Kaspar and his grandchildren's words also convey the emotional weight of war, underscoring the disillusionment it causes. In this sense, Southey's use of the narrative techniques prompts readers to see the suffering of individuals and reevaluate their perspective on the war, aligning with the notion that poetic narratives or narrative poems create impressive and gripping story-worlds where readers are invited to mindful awareness and empathy (Meachen, 1979, p.590).

Ultimately, this study, based on the deep analysis of "The Battle of Blenheim," shows the masterful portrayal of the war through narrative intricacy. Southey's portrayal guides the readers' perspectives on war and supports the assertion that he contributed to shaping public opinion or attitude towards political revolution, societal transformation, and morality (Meachen, 1979, p.590). Through the use of monitority and locutor voice techniques, he challenges the idealised notion of war and offers a counterpoint to societal attitudes towards it. By doing so, he provides readers with a different perspective on war and facilitates reflection on its psychological and emotional burdens. Southey's work strives to encourage people to reshape their historical and emotional perception of war, so it aligns with Abrams's (1971) statement that "earlier critics had defined poems primarily as a delightful way of changing the reader's mind" (p. 329). This study offers a deeper insight into Southey's narrative techniques and establishes a foundation for future works that explore similar themes within the scope of war literature. As such, "The Battle of Blenheim" by Southey retains its relevance and helps to reflect on not only historical but also modern perceptions of the war, fostering discussion and thought. Additionally, the lines encourage the readers to acknowledge the paradox of humanity bringing together vitality and fatality, death and life, victory and loss, meaning and futility, purpose and mundaneness, eternity and temporality.

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