

The enduring brutality of WWI impelled individuals to discover the futility of human life, while simultaneously stumbling upon humanity's pursuits. In saying so, both Simon Nasht's movie documentary 'Frank Hurley: The Man Who Made History' (2004) and Wilfred Owen's poem 'futility' (1918) offer social commentary on the paradigmatic, and universally pertinent issues permeating their WWI context. Indeed, Frank Hurley's WWI experiences of the corrupt and dispassionate nature of man's inhumanity harnessed him with the potential to embark on new pursuits for artistic integrity. Correspondingly, Owen presents these perspectives through a Modernist lens, providing cautionary critique upon the anarchy of human life. Ultimately, both texts explore a narrative of discovery immersed in the fractured existence of humanity, while unearthing humanity's yearning to transform perspectives.

The empowerment of Hurley's potential to unearth artistic integrity stems from his unrelenting ardency to capture the barbarity, atrocity and cruelty of World War I. Through archival footage montage of war imposed canons, Hurley's constellation of photographs not only vocalise Simon Nasht's opening exposition, but their odyssey through a progressive and disputable documentary embellishes the nihilistic pandemonium of modernity. Indeed, voice over narrator, Linda Copper, metaphorically reconsiders Hurley's "grand illusions/pieces of history" and their "dalliance with the truth", foreshadowing Hurley's rejuvenation of exuberance to achieve artistic integrity through capturing the effects of WWI. Subsequently, Linda Copper's rhetorical questioning of whether Hurley "was a giant of photography or just a conjurer with a camera?" assesses the reliability of Hurley's illusions, while setting up a genuine conflict unifying Hurley's malicious desires and modernity's collapse of rationality. Despite being "physically and emotionally swept away by fierce gusts of wind" Hurley's manipulative pictorial techniques transformed his misfortune into a classic struggle between man and nature, while the metaphorical allusion to "the fog of war" reflects the fractured and chaotic existence of humanity. As the first officer of the *Endurance*, Lionel Greenstreet's propaganda and advocacy that Hurley was an unrelenting "warrior... And would go anywhere or do anything to get a picture" intensifies Hurley's desire to discover artistic integrity within the brutality of WWI. Indeed, Nasht's slow zoom into a chiaroscuro-style photograph that Hurley composed in 1917 imitates his innate aspiration to capture the inhumanity of man, ultimately, unveiling his potential to achieve artistic sincerity.

Building upon Hurley's discovery of his potential to achieve artistic integrity within the drudgery of WWI, Wilfred Owen critiques the fragility of human life, while reflecting the values of nature's riotous and destructive attributes. In the poem Futility, Owen juxtaposes the warmth of the sun and the arctic numbness of the snow to create a dichotomy between man's idealistic pursuits and man's inhumanity. Published in an anti-war periodical, the elegy captures the plain language that seamlessly adds to the poignancy of the subject matter, which ultimately, intensifies the futility of human life. The personified "kind old sun" acts as a catalyst for Owen's discovery of man's potential to achieve personal endeavours, while formulating a paradox between "this morning and this snow" to establish an avenue harnessing humanity with the capacity to discover, despite encountering impersonal challenges. Heard at Remembrance Day ceremonies and used as a wake-up call, the symbolic "anything might rouse him now" emulates Owen's sense of hope for humanity to meditate on the discovery of their pursuits. However, "the clay", Owen explains, creates a pararhyme between the "clays of a cold star" to intensify humanity's dehumanising feelings of broken communication and remoteness, while also creating an unsettling feeling, reflective of modernity's nihilistic doom. Immersed in the chaotic existence of modernity, Owen establishes an equilibrium between life's futility and man's capacity to discover new and enriching pursuits, while exploring nature's corrupt and destructive attributes.

Both Nasht and Owen delve into the contextual anxieties surrounding the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while fabricating a narrative of discovery unifying the hollowness of humanity and man's endearing pursuits. In Frank Hurley: The Man Who Made History the voice over narration of Hurley being assigned to the "western front as a camera man" embraces an affinity with Owen's own experiences of capturing the reality of the western front turmoil, ultimately reflecting man's inhumanity. By rhetorically questioning "was it for/the sun/...the clay grew tall?" Owen discovers the prevalence of inhumanity, while despairingly understanding that even the "sun(s)/gentle...touch" cannot cast aside mankind's defective and destructive nature. Unlike Owen, who merely observes nature as the embodiment of modernity's cruelty, Nasht's low-angle shot of Frank Hurley's voyage through "the incredible forces of nature", empowers the divinity of natural forces to an extent, urging the yearning to uncover humanity's pursuit for artistic integrity. In saying so, Frank Hurley, the remarkably daring photographer, resorted to metaphorically "unlocking the portals of the undiscovered world" to merely escape the drudgery and monotony of his 20<sup>th</sup> century lifestyle. Indeed, Nasht's seamless motif of Hurley's diary reflects the constantly, never static, complexity of man, always sacrificing the essence of human values for their pernicious desires. However, the mis-en-scene of the "loner, saddened by the nature of human experiences" establishes an equilibrium with Owen's agonised tone of the "tall/full-nerved/warm" WWI soldier who personifies humanity's willingness to exploit harmony by advocating destruction and anarchy. Eventually, both Hurley and Owen's experiences of the brutality of WWI, created a sense of resentment toward modernity, ultimately transcending beyond disillusion and decay in interest of discovering inhumanity and man's unrelenting pursuit for sincerity.