

THEMES REGENERATION

Speech and silence :

- novel begins by Sassoon's **declaration** + followed by conversation of Rivers and Bryce on the way they can silence him. No need to physically silence him but more act on his consciousness → send him to a hospital for shell-shocked.
- Sassoon torn apart between his will to speak out the horror he witnessed and Graves' telling him to remain silent.
- Irony of Rivers' talking **cure** : encourages the patient to **speak**. He's the one who remains **silent** during these conversations ('strip of empathic wallpaper'). Proud of his technique but when brings Sassoon to point where he wants to go back to the front, questions his ability to avoid censorship.
- **Silence as eloquent as speech**. Many patients suffer from **speaking difficulties** : Owen stammers, Prior mute, Callan dumb... Can't speak out → body takes power of expression communicating its **protest** through non-verbal ways.
- Example of **Callan** (Yealland's patient) : patient silenced by being given back his voice. Suffering to get back his voice but Yealland makes sure he **doesn't listen** to him when he talks → paradox.
- **Rivers** also **silenced**. Has experienced it with his **father** who never listened to him, only interested in words and not by their meaning. Also silenced when he has to sign the **form** to get Sassoon back to the front.
- **Frustration** when the patients do not talk → doctors like Yealland and Rivers' father are going to push the men hard, **break them** until they can talk. This way, they are silencing them.
- Speech confronted to silence with characters of **Sassoon and Graves** : S expresses his views about the war and admits his homosexuality whereas Graves is the contrary.
- Speech and silence also a **conflict**, with Prior : at the beginning, doesn't want to talk (mutism + when he writes "I DONT REMEMBER"). When recovers his voice, still not cooperative "I don't think talking helps" but In the end, accepts the doctor's treatment reluctantly.

Masculinity :

- persistent **silencing** of men → feelings of **disempowerment** and helplessness. Masculinity = ability to **dominate** and control → nobody in novel is truly masculine. War itself responsible of this situation.
- Rivers' techniques to **heal** the patients is everything but **manly** : makes them talk and express their feelings, which is viewed as feminine during this period. It is through this **emasculatation** that the patients are able to **improve**.
- WW1 = new rules of warfare which prohibit decisive actions. Condition of shell-shock = directly related to constant strain and tensions but men see it as shameful condition which make them less than a man : **society's judgement** very harsh.