**ANALYSIS OF THE LETTER**

The letter I’m going to analyze is one of the 21,439 letters written by people from all over the world invited to imagine what the unknown soldier at Paddington Station in London might have been reading.

It was written by an American WW2 military –Stephen R.Young– and the site of ‘Letter to an unknown soldier’ offers a caption to him: “Stephen R. Military For the brave men who fought on both sides for what they believed in –dedicated to Father Stephen Young, US Army WW2”.

Just from the caption, the intelligent reader could perceive his paternal attitude towards a man who is not his real biological son. Indeed, just from the letter’s start, he calls him ‘My dear son’ and he talks to him with an informal register, that reinforces the bond between them. It is said that the soldier made a big sacrifice by fighting bravely and dying for the country and for his personal ideals. The poet goes on inviting him to save his life so that other people could remain free and future wars could be stopped, but unfortunately this exhortation will not be realized. These first lines underline that the letter can be considered a pacifist letter: the poet strongly wants any war to be stopped. Like nowadays, indeed, soldiers began to think that wars could not satisfy a country’s need or desire anymore but, on the contrary, always led to death and destruction. Later, the poet invites him to think if he would have joined the war if he had really known of his death and of the pain his family suffered at his loss. From this line the intelligent reader can understand two important things: the first is that the poet writes the letter as it is a sort a dialogue (he expects to find in him possible answers to his questions) while the second is that this soldier has got a modern mentality about the war and he is convinced that only peace could make things get better.

From this invitation, furthermore, the poet communicates to the reading that at the time of the WW1 soldiers were convinced of the short-term war and of an immediate victory and triumph, but the result was a long-destructive war of 4 years in the hard condition of the trenches. And the poet seems to know exactly what the war is like and its terrible consequences.

The poet goes on proclaiming him as an hero in their eyes because he represents the brave and patriotic soldier’s symbol. People have to take inspiration from this person who sacrificed his life for the others, the people who loved and his country. But nonetheless, the poet says that, despite of his braveness and physical force, he did not achieve his goal: probably we wanted to make Britain a stronger country or to honour his family. It cannot be said exactly, even if it is true that his wish and other million people ones were not accomplished because of their deaths. Millions died and the poet says that they have joined his ranks and with no doubt he has met some of them.

The poet, once again, reinforces war’s uselessness and the gravity of world’s political social economic situation of the time because war always involves other wars and clashes, crisis, political unrest, ideological disparities. Now the poet is referring to the war he fought –WW2– which was even worse.

After that, the poet tells the reader that people have not learned what the unknown soldier intended: maybe, what he strongly wanted was to put an end to the war and ease the pain of his parents and friends. Pushed by a sense of altruism, he kept fighting for a long time to protect those who loved.

The intelligent reader can understand that it is a message of hope for the living: the poet, as the unknown soldier, dreams a world without war, he is very hopeful about that possibility but he thinks that that day of peace all over the world will not come soon. And till that day, the living must satisfy their guilt by paying homage to the unknown soldier and try to satisfy his wish of peace.

The poet concludes saying that God could bless him, and the unknown soldier is both our soldier and our son, reinforcing the idea of equality among human beings.

**Some considerations about the letter:**

As I have just told about, this letter is characterized by having an informal register: that is very important because in this way the poet and the unknown soldier could get closer, in a more intimate atmosphere; the language is very simple and direct and allows the poet to condense in a few lines a full-of-meaning memorial and letter, conveying his personal and deepest thoughts and feelings about the war. Therefore, the poet could establish an important strong bond with the unknown soldier and with the people of all over the world. Indeed, his pacifist letter is free from any national or religious references, making the poet feel citizen of the whole world. A world that is full of wars, clashes, unrest, ideological disparities and the poet seems to denounce it continuingly: an example is when he says “death is but a dream”. It is a sort of oxymoron because of two contrasting words, but in my opinion the poet prefers dying instead of living in such a world like this. In definitive, I enjoyed reading this letter because of the meaningful words that quickly strike to the heart.