

Representation of War in Victorian era and Modern era: Through Hemmingway's "A farewell to arms" and "Arms and the Man" by G.B Shaw

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ABSTRACT:

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War literature is one of the most outstanding works in English literature, dating back to the Classical and Medieval periods, when war epics were dominant in the earliest cultures of Greece, Rome, and Hebrew. Homer's "Iliad", "Beowulf", the Hebrew Bible, and Virgil's "Aeneid" all reflect the culture of war. Since then, wars have continued, literature based on heroes and warriors, and religious and moral beliefs have continued. When the realistic form of novels emerged in the 17th century, novels based on war began to develop their modern forms. War novels appeared in the 19th century. The works involve the depiction of major real battles, scenes of wartime horror and atrocities, and are also the most important insights into heroism and cowardice and the exploration of moral issues. The theme of war became more important and reached its peak in the 1920s during the post- World War 1. During this period of "War Book Doom", many people who participated in the war were willing to start writing about their war experiences publicly and critically.

In the early 20th century there were a lot of changes that society saw lots of new philosophers and theorists came up but these philosophers didn't lead to things coming up because the old ideas of the Victorian age became stale. World War 1 was one such thing that brought the impermanence of the people to the forefront. People don't know what can happen next and nothing was permanent. This brought a sense of transience or a sense of disillusionment among modern society.

Romanticism of war during Victorian era, ignorance was one of the key element because the civilians were not involved in or affected by the

war. They only used to pray and wait for their army to return back victorious. Glory: in Victorian times war was only fought for one's country. Young courageous and even rash men would join the army in order to achieve a reward and high status. They believe they were doing a great service to their country. Upper class: the upper class plays a very important role in the romanticism of war. Young women were used to read books that glorified the romanticism of war, while rich young men did not have to face the grim reality of war. Thus war became glorious and almost a fun act to perform.

Most of the 19th century plays centered the idealistic elements of life portraying the good deeds and also exploitation of heroes Shaw brought a reformation in society by liberating the disillusionment of romantics in arms and the man G.B Shaw defined war with the practical ideas. He showed in the play that in real life war comes from the situations that can never be avoided and it brings violence bloodshed and atrocity. The heroic warriors who participate in battle are of the same blood flesh as other people are, they also have all human qualities of fear, hunger cravings and desire to present their life. They only fight in the war when it is required and never manifest courage unessentially. In fairy tales of romanticism battleground is only for the warriors to display heroism, soldiers are desperate to fight and thoughtless in courage. In Arms and the Man G.B Shaw eliminated such imagined and romantic ideologies from the nation of war. As the play begins Raina the female protagonist of the play is shown as illusively, whose ideas and thoughts are highly influenced by romanticism as she flutters around Byron and also around the Pushkin. For Raina war is a glorious act of heroism, an action of patriotism where brave warriors put their life at risk for the betterment and glory of their country.

Raina's illusions about war are clearly illustrated by Shaw when she got to know about her fiancé Sergius being in charge of a cavalry in the battle of Slivnitsa earlier she was not sure about Sergius but when she got to know his cavalry charge she became sure that she is going to marry a brave soldier who is a follower of patriotism.

But soon Shaw worn out Raina's delusion with romanticism about war by establishing a contradictory character Captain Bluntschli is a Serbian officer, through the character of Bluntschli G.S Shaw has illustrated a realistic notion of a soldier who is ready for battle when it is required and has no shame to escape when he should. By the character of Bluntschli, Shaw discloses the truth that a soldier fighting in the front can never be a superman. A soldier is the same human being as normal people are soldiers too suffer from fatigue and starvation. Knowing about the Bluntschli's anxiety about fear of death Raina believed him to be a cowardly type of person and she proudly compared him with Sergius claiming her fiancé to be a brave hero who can bring victory to the country, but in the very 1st act Shaw shattered Raina's false believes through Captain Bluntschli's character.

Bluntschli reveals the truth in front of Raina about her fiancé serious cavalry charge which was not an act of bravery, though it was a very stupid decision that he made. Bluntschli also shed light on the fact that Sergius ignored the orders that were given by his Russian chief and kept the entire brigade at risk by making heroic charges on the Serbian cannonry. According to Captain Bluntschli Sergius act was not at all professional and he should be court-martialed for such serious offensive action. He further says that Sergius could only survive because of the wrong ammunition of Serbs "he and his regiment simply committed suicide- only the pistol missed fire that's". All this clarifies Raina's delusions that the captain is the brave man in the actual sense and that he is not a coward he only wants to save his breath as long as it is possible. Therefore the romantic views of Raina about war are shifted to a realistic nation and she decided to save Bluntschli's life. Later in the play Sergius too realized that he could won the war just by chance, due to which he was not promoted and still had the same rank rather than awarded for his bravery.

"For Hemingway, God did not exist, and the universe is indifferent. The resulting world is hostile and muddled, and without God and faith, moral values are also meaningless. War is an example of this."

Ernest Hemingway was sent to the Italian front where he saw the horrors of the trench war. In 1918, he was seriously wounded from mortar fire and he was sent home to recuperate. He was awarded the Italian Silver Medal of bravery for helping an Italian soldier – despite his injuries. He later wrote a fictional book, based on his experiences in the 1922 novel – *A Farewell to Arms*. The main character in the book, is an ambulance driver who becomes disillusioned with the war, who reflects the thoughts of Hemingway in the book.

Frederick Henry regarded war as a normal thing in life because people have become so used to it that it is not new. Their love for each other is unspeakable and full of devastating wars. When Henry met Catherine for the first time, he regarded her as a lady who could help him forget the situation of the war. Hemingway brought a kind of the contrasting structure of normality is an illusion, and reality is absurd and chaotic. Frederick didn't care about war, and he didn't treat war as a problem. He did not see reality, nor did he realize that the destructive warfare Frederick was more affected by the tragic deaths of his children and Catherine at the end of the novel. The tragic ending of their love made the reality of war destructive in Henry's eyes. Frederick has never experienced the loss of a loved one. The author presents Frederick as a character who is ignorant of the reality of war using pragmatism. As Hemingway described it, war can only bring destruction and chaos in the child's life also.

"It has been bad, you couldn't believe how bad it's been. I've often thought you were lucky to be hit when you were" (Hemingway 165), During a war, the only good thing that can happen is getting hurt, because people get hurt and even die tragically, which shows how destructive war is anyway. Furthermore, Hemingway painted the war so destructive that the child of Frederick and Catherine born during the war could not survive. Holding up the Rain as the symbol of the novel symbolizes destruction, the weather Hemingway describes each time is mostly "rain". Bad things happen whenever rain comes to the novel, whether it's the abandonment of Frederick and Katherine, or the tragic death of their children, and every rain washes away people's happiness and leaves dark emotions in the story. Death is one of the most tragic reasons for separation of loved ones, and it happens where war brings destruction and chaos. But in this case, too, the war couldn't separate them, except for a brief time, and death did.

“You expected to be sad in the fall. Part of you died each year when the leaves fell from the trees and their branches were bare against the wind and the cold, wintry light. But you knew there would always be the spring, as you knew the river would flow again after it was frozen. When the cold rains kept on and killed the spring, it was as though a young person had died for no reason.”

According to the Hemingway and also most of the writers of modern era war was a senseless waste of life. The war was so much destructive and chaotic that it can just bring darkness and sadness to the human life. War itself pictures the end of happiness as it is so murderous that no one can escape from it. People believed that war is just an inevitable result of a senseless and cruel world, the world that never acknowledge the true love or can ever preserve or protect it from the cruelty. Ernest Hemingway’s “A farewell to arms” is an open account of realistic and unromanticised account of war. He tried to make it so much real that one can feel that it is actually witnessed by the reader too. War was an evil for his character from whom Frederic wanted to distract himself through drinking and having sex. Though by the end of the novel Frederic’s experience about the war convinced him that war is nothing but it is just an unjust fundamental atrocity that he seeks to come out from at any coast with his lady love Catherine Barkley. People whom so ever Fredric met throughout the book mostly believed that war is useless and clearly described the Hemingway’s belief.

"A Farewell to arms" focuses on war, that is, the process by which Frederic Henry pulls himself out of the war and leaves him behind. The few characters in the novel who truly support this endeavour—Ettore Moretti and Gino—represented as a dull braggart and an innocent youth. Most of the characters are still ambivalent about this war, are deeply indignation at the terrible destruction caused by the war, and doubt the glory of the war. The novel is a superb description of the meaningless cruelty and violent chaos of the conflict: the scene of the retreat of the Italian army is still one of the deepest war memories in American literature. As the orderly ranks began to disintegrate, so did the soldiers' nerves, brains, and abilities for rational thinking and moral judgment.

Henry shot the engineer who refused to help rescue the car from the mud. The two reasons: first, the violent eruption seemed inconsistent with Henry’s calm and detached character; second, the incident took place in an environment deprived of its moral meaning. Middle-Henry's soldiers conspired to legitimize the killing. It seems

reasonable to murder an engineer because it is an inevitable by-product of the escalating violence and chaos of war. However, the novel cannot be said to condemn war; farewell to weapons is hardly the job of pacifists. On the contrary, just as the death of innocent engineers is the inevitable result of war, so war is the inevitable result of a cruel and meaningless world. Hemingway believes that war is nothing but a dark and brutal extension of a world that refuses to recognize, protect, or maintain true love.

In the Victorian, age people saw and lived the age of sensibility. There was stability financially and it was the era of prosperity, people lived a happy life as compared to the modern age. Because in the Victorian era there were very less war one of that the recognized war of the Victorian era was The Serbian -Bulgarian War of 1885 was a brief and largely forgotten war, lasting a scant two weeks in November. Arms and the man by George Bernard Shaw is four act short play set during the war. In Victorian era patriotism was very district people had a feeling of nationalism. People during Victorian era wanted to do something for their nation.

But all of a sudden people were shocked, they lost their faith in God, in social structure, and in everything that was going on in the world due to the world war in the 20th century. This loss of faith, chaos, confusion, feeling of disillusionment, and the feeling of fragmentation to depict all these things ‘ART’ and ‘artists’ needed new ways to express themselves so they choose to write on the reality of war and the destruction behind it. There was a surety in the Victorian era that they will be there tomorrow also but the modern time people did not have this surety.

Writing exactly what it came to the mind and writing it in that raw manner, and this typical technique of writing fragmented thoughts became the key for the writers. The writers wrote about their experience of war with such writing styles. The economy moved in from Agrarian or feudalistic to industrial, through industrialization was coming back from 100-150yrs but the end of 19th century was the peak of industrialization. So society became more industrial in the early 20th century. This led to a break away from the traditional humanism notion. During the 20th century, there was a shift away from the renaissance tradition of humanism that particular individuality was no longer there people wanted to find who are miserable like themselves. The individuality that people were seeking during Chaucer now those people were seeking people with similar emotion.

There were a lot of moral, social courts that were established in Victorian times. There was a very happy time, no war, there was an established society, established norms of morality. And all of a sudden, there was uncertainty and perplexity around. So this spirit of the age was reflected in modern literature. The multiplicity of reactions as in the behavior that the society or the individual element of society has in general reflected in its

literature. The lack of security and prosperity created a breakdown of the established values which in turn was reflected in the literature of modern times.

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