

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ARMS AND THE MAN, STRANGE MEETING AND OTHER WAR LITERATURES

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Abstract:

In this account the readers will be introduced to real side of soldiering and war life. Their romantic notions about soldiering and war will be clashed when they will meet the soldiers such as Bluntschli in Arms and the Man, Henry in A Farewell to Arms and Tidda in The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son. They will tell about the true and harsh side of soldiering life.

Keywords: Ammunitions, Destruction, Existence, Humanity, Nationality

Introduction

This research paper is about how to promote peace and harmony amid the wave of aggressive nationalism. It is a realistic and critical account of war related literatures. This research paper is about how to approach towards a better and peaceful human existence. Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore says, "I will never

allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as i am alive". Here humanity means the existence. Vedant says this entire existence is manifestation of one consciousness (sat, chit, anand) Brahman. Man created the borders to divide the existence into different identities. Due to these wrong assumptions of different castes, race, cultures, and nationality he kills and harms his fellow beings.

Arms and the man

In his play Arms and the man G.B. Shaw satirises on the heroic notion of war and soldiering. When Bluntschli says, Dear young lady all are afraid to die, it shows the real pain of every soldier, who spills the blood of his fellow beings. He knows that when battling multi-day fights chocolates can be more important and useful at ensuring survival than ammunitions. No one wants to die. Every human being has right to live and let other live. Bluntschli gratefully eats the chocolate creams, but out of very practical hunger. Just like normal human being a soldier also needs food, cloth, shelter. Shaw's aims in this play is to mock the romantic heroics of war. He wanted to

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depict the realistic account of war and to abolish all ideals of heroism about war. It is not an anti war play, but it wants to expose the harsh reality of soldiering. Arms and the man depicts a superman who lives with no illusions and has no heroic views about war. The wars came as catastrophic loss to the humanity. Man feels isolated, disillusioned, and uncertain after the war.

The Wasteland

T.S. Eliot in his poem collection 'The Waste Land' reflects about it. Due to aggressive nationalism human society is in state of curtailment and literature tries to expose the fear and sufferings of such brutal world.

The strange meeting

The "Strange Meeting" depicts the horrors of world war I. This poem is narrated by a soldier who goes to subterranean world to escape the warfield and there he meets the soldier of enemy country he killed.

' I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark : for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and
killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now....'

The other man tells the narrator poet that they both developed similar hopes and aspirations, but now they have died. They cannot tell others how useless and cruel war actually is. Basically this poem was written during the time of first world war. But it is

absolutely relevant in today's world. Recently world saw the conflict between China and India. Killings of men are far different from the romanticised war of Homer's Trojan War or Aeneid by Virgil. It calls for violence to be replaced by mutual cooperation and humanity.

In this poem there is no sound of guns and bombs, only the silence of the "death".

There is no heroism and glory in dying, only 'the pity of war'.

'I am the enemy you killed my friend' depicts the fact that they were on different sides, but now there is no enmity on the part of the man who died. They fought against each other due to identity of nationality, but now on death they all become the part of same soil. All human beings are made up of five elements and on death they meet the same. Various identities of caste, race, ethnicity, nationality creates the illusory divisions. All human beings fight against each other and on death they meet the same end. The bloodshed, military deaths created by different wars shocks and horrify the masses.

A farewell to arms

In his novel A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway convinces that war is fundamentally unjust brutality. In this novel all characters are humanists and they depict the thought that war is a senseless waste of human life. Henry is main character, who

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thinks that war is an evil and distracts himself through alcoholism and sex. At the last part of novel he escapes war at all costs with Catherine. Just like play Arms and the Man and poem Strange Meeting this novel depicts the same thought that how ideals and notions such as glory, award and honour quickly disappear when one faces the absurd and silly realities of battlefield. Henry and Catherine escape from the world to live peaceful and private life in the mountains of Switzerland. War causes physical, mental, emotional, spiritual loss to human beings.

Arms and the boy

Owen's poem 'Arms and the Boy' on how war corrupts and destroys the innocence of youth. This war leads to destruction of world not in any creation of new empire. In reality boy was innocent but due to the war he will become savage. Human beings have no natural instinct to kill anyone unlike other creatures such as eagle or deer. Due to the war nature of men is being corrupted. He invents unnatural machines for killing.

Poet says,

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple .

There lurk no claws behind his fingers
supple;

And god will grow no talons at his heels,

Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls.

The homecoming of beorhtnoth beorhthelm's son

J.R.R. Tolkien in his play The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son depicts similar theme. This play is story of two characters Tida and Totta. They were carrying the body of Beorhtnoth from the battlefield of Maldon. Totta kills an English battlefield looter for which Tida condemns him. Totta is romantic who believes in nobility and glory of war. Tidda has actually suffered the misery of war. He is familiar with the harsh reality of battlefield. His experience contrasts with that of romantic and heroic notion of war. This play is about contrasting thoughts about nobility and reality of war. It shows how noble and romantic notions about war contrasts with the actual harsh reality of soldiering.

Conclusion

Examples of these all literary pieces depict that how heroic vision about battle is far different from its harsh reality. The quotes such as Dear young lady all are afraid to die and I am the enemy you killed my friend are the essence of this research. Every human being has right to live and let other live. The universe is manifestation of one consciousness. This entire existence from tiny inanimate matter to gigantic human beings all are manifestation of one supreme consciousness. In reality multiplicity is mere an illusion. So, the message which writer wants to give to

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readers is that human beings should stop the war about different national identities. The world is one family. Let all live in peace and harmony.

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