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WOEFUL WOUNDS OF WAR: PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURIES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT

Literature is the reflection of our life and struggle for life. It is a study that helps to look into the effects of war that indulges in an evolution of human's character and life. *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy and the play *Mother Courage and her Children* by Brecht are very well known works that depicts war and its effects. It is a well-known fact that both the works deals with war and its effects. But the treatments of war by the two writers are different from one another. These two works are about the real war that took place in two different nations at two different periods. The war that is dealt in *War and Peace* is the French invasion of Russia. Then the war that is dealt in *Mother Courage and her Children* is the Thirty Years War from 1618-1648. In these works war acts as a deciding authority. Ultimately, the paper suggests that war is not to lose the lives of thousand and declare peace. The art of war is to make the enemy to surrender to oneself without the use of weapons. This paper will help to attain peace in chaos, and gain meaning from absurdity.

Key Words: War, Evolution, Peace, Mastery.

Introduction

War has always been an equalizer, it has reduced and destroyed the social discrimination. The very word war itself states that it has a darker side. War has laid its hands on everyone in the society. Such cruel natured war has been depicted in many ways. But the only motive of war is not to bring peace but to capture a nation and become a master (ruler) of the nation. The world has seen many wars but its motive is to show off its supremacy over the nation. By the end of every war a hero will be established who had destroyed thousands of life for the sake of his nation and for pride. Every literature had its own skill or potential to depict war. Bravery, valour and chivalrous nature of a warrior will be delivered through his action in the war. In such conditions the writer has all the responsibility to bring forth the nature, situation and effects of the war. Likewise, in the novel *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy and in the play *Mother Courage and her Children* by Bertolt Brecht there is not much of significance to the male characters. Both the works has taken its source from real war that took place in the history of Russia and Germany respectively.

The Background of war

Tolstoy has written the novel on the basis of the war that took place in the Napoleon era. The novel begins in 1805 during the reign of Tsar Alexander I and leads up to the French invasion of Russia by Napoleon

in 1812. During the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-96) the royal court in Paris was the center of western civilization. Catherine is fluent in French and she wishes to make Russia as a great European nation and make French as the language of royal court. So for the next one hundred years the Russian nobilities were made to speak French and understand French culture. The historical and cultural context in the aristocracy is reflected in *War and Peace*.

*War and Peace* tells the story of five aristocratic families the Bezukhovs, the Bolkonskys, the Rostovs, the Kuragins and the Drubetskeys and the entanglements of their personal lives with the contemporary history of 1805-1813, principally Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. The Bezukhovs are very rich. The old Count, Kirill Vladimirovich has fathered dozens of illegitimate sons. The Bolkonskys are an old established and wealthy family based at Bald Hills. Old Prince Bolkinsky, Nikolai Andreevich served as a general under Catherine the Great, in earlier wars. The Rostovs have many estates, but never enough cash. They are loving family. The Kuragin family has three children who were indifferent in nature. The Drubetskoy family consists of an elderly mother and her only son Boris. The war affects the lives of all these characters. There are changes in human relationship and their character.

The play *Mother Courage and her Children* was about the war which lasted for Thirty Years. The Thirty Years war (1618-1648) was a devastating one to be fought on the German soil before World War II. The Reformation that was started a century before had shattered the unity of Catholic Christendom. The Protestant church was divided into Lutheranism and Calvinism due to Reformation. The governing class of German states stood for Lutheranism. Martin Luther was the founder of Lutheranism. His teachings freed them from the interference of foreign Pope Sweden and Denmark –that were the countries that followed Lutheranism. John Calvin was the founder of Calvinism. The countries which followed Calvinism are Germany, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, and Austria. These two groups became a threat to Catholicism which led to Counter-Reformation. The Jesuits were most influential in Spain and Austria. The Thirty Years war took place in the name of God. But it's only aim is to dominate, capture and suppress the opponent. There are also some other factors which led to the Thirty Years war. In 1618, the Habsburg dynasty was the major power in Europe. It ruled most part of Central Europe including Kings in Portugal and Spain. The elder most in the hierarchy of power is king and the youngest is in the House of Austria. Spain and France had political rivalry for past three centuries. The royal dynasty Bourbon belonged to France. The antagonism between Habsburg and Bourbon remained the most important political factor in Europe. Then the Dutch problem is also one of the factors. Spain had control over Southern Netherland which practices Catholicism and the Northern Netherland are Protestants and they feared an attack by Spain.

The immediate cause for the war is an internal quarrel in Bohemia which involves other German Princes King Ferdinand II was a catholic Emperor so the Protestant Czechs who were large in number had pulled down the King and elected Protestant Elector Palatine as the head. In 1630 the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus landed and opposed Germany. He was opposed by the Catholic General Tilly. The Swedish King succeeds against Tilly. After the death of Tilly the Catholics were led by Wallenstein. In the Battle of Lutzen (1632) Gustavus was killed unknowingly by his own troops due to heavy fog. Later Wallenstein was also murdered. The death of the King was a major cause for the Thirty Years war. France formally waged war against Spain in 1635. France accused Spain for its unwanted intervention into the affairs of another nation. Finally Spain lost to France in 1643.

#### **Analysis and Findings**

The two works are from different age and by different writers. There are also some similarities between the characters. Prince Andrew from *War and Peace* and Eilif from *Mother Courage and her Children* had only one motive; that is to serve the nation. Prince Andrew is from a royal lineage so his notion to fight for the nation is not a big deal. Whereas Eilif is a person who is the eldest son of the family but he gives priority to serve the nation. Eilif's father may have been a soldier who must have dead in the war. So Eilif is supposed to be scared and ignorant of war. But he opts to take part in the war. He knows that the war has only made him a fatherless son. The only motive he has is to serve the nation. Here the nobility and bravery of Eilif is seen. He has not gone to war for the sake of food rather he volunteers himself to war only to add strength to the

nation. He is patriotic and he loses his life. Prince Andrew takes part in war from which he returns home with some wounds and later due to ill- health he dies. Here both the characters were the victims of war. But there is always a difference between dying out of sickness and getting killed.

Pierre Bezukhov in *War and Peace* and Katrin in *Mother Courage and Children* are unique. Pierre is handsome and he carries himself admirably so that he gets what all he wants. He has the charm to make even his enemy into his friend. Pierre who inherits his family fortune has become a centre of focus for the society. Everyone wants to associate themselves with Pierre. It shows the mind-set of the people who lived during the era. The man who is rich and handsome is given more importance. His wealth gives him an identity which has made the society to be blind to his flaws. He is one of the illegitimate sons of his father. He becomes rich because he is the favourite son of his father. He has been targeted by many women but unfortunately he marries Helene who is disloyal to Pierre.

On the other side Katrin in *Mother Courage and her Children* has kindness which brings her death. Katrin herself is in a pitiful state she is dumb but her nature and thoughts are heard loudly. Katrin never speaks and the reason is not that she is unable to speak rather her silence is only her protection. She is fair in complexion so men can easily be attracted so easily if she is able to speak out. Her dumbness is not a curse instead it is a fence that prevents men from noticing her. But Katrin is able to express her emotion which has brought her doom to her life. Her kindness paves way for her death. But Katrin is self-driven by her own nature of kindness she is generous and kind to everyone so she finally climbs to become the title character.

In *War and Peace* many characters almost every character knows the effects of war. But the one who has not been affected by but affected only by the unruly behaviour of her own self is Helene. She is originally called as Princess Elena Vasilyevna Kuragin. It shows her royal lineage but she is destroyed only because of her demeanor. Helene marries Pierre for his social status. But she is disloyal to Pierre. She is a sexually alluring woman who has many affairs. She is also rumored to be in relation with her own brother Anatole. She herself ruins her life by indulging in relationship with many men. It shows the mind set of people who lived their life with no motive. It shows that love making is seen only as a physical need and pleasure with no motive is what needed according to Helene. Her character portrays the betrayal, disloyalty carefree living in a society. As a result of such disloyal act she uses to take abortion pills. Due to overdose of abortion pills she loses her life. There is one other character similar to Helene in *Mother Courage and her Children* Yvette and Helene are used physically. But there is one striking difference Yvette is made as a prostitute. She unwillingly gets into it only to get her livelihood. But in the case of Helene who is royalty by birth is low in characters. She herself involves in illegal relationship. Yvette made her body as commodity who sells it by showcasing it in front of soldiers. In the case of Yvette she is a victim whereas in the case of Helene she volunteers herself to attain pleasure. The pitiful victim Yvette is able to survive and settle in life. Helene who willingly involves is dead by the end. Her royal birth is doomed as she dies. Yvette Pottier who is betrayed by her lover Peter Piper have become a prostitute. Her worn out hat and boots symbolizes her frustrated and tormented state. These are her only possessions which are symbolic of Yvette's fate and position.

Mother Courage is money minded woman and for her nothing is more important. She has lost all her children. It's all because of her materialistic attitude towards life and war. From the beginning of the play she travels along with war for her war is the only companion. She always sticks around with war. She is rude, inhumane, and selfish. She never gave anything for free. She is economically protective and not a spend thrift. Throughout the play she is shown as miser who is not ready to spend money even to protect her own son's life. She is protective but self- protective. On the other side Courage is seen as wealthy woman in the war stricken country. She is self-driven independent and arrogant. But her three children are unique and unlike their mother. Each child has its own unique quality but whereas in Courage there is no such self-defining qualities and she even lacks motherhood.

Natasha in *War and Peace* is introduced as a thirteen year old girl and then gradually growing along the progress of the novel. Her beauty and innocence captures people's heart. She has many men in her life. Natasha senses love and falls for every good looking man. She is easily getting trapped by the words of men. She believes in whatever she sees and hears. She is shown as a heroine who has only beauty and love. She has

no respect for herself and for her family. She has been tried between men because of love that too because of the innocent love she has in her heart. She gets promises and makes promise but everything ends up in vain she is loved for her beauty and not for her soul. So, none of her ex-lovers were able to live with her. She finds happiness in everyman she is not looking into the men behind their words. Natasha is also not much bothered about the war. But she is worried when Prince Andrew leaves for war. She looks at war as a hurdle that prevents her from getting married to Andrew. After Andrew departs she finds her soul mate in Anatole. As a girl she has grown only physically; her mental capacity is still that of a child. So, men take easy on her. She falls for everyman who seems to be good. After Andrew returns from war she begs him to accept her. But he is aware of her behaviour after he left the place so he refuses her. Here the child like behaviour of Natasha is seen. She is used as a doll which has no self-dignity. By the time she is with Pierre's family she has already some liking for him then after the death of Andrew, both Pierre and Natasha are married.

When, Natasha is compared to Mother Courage, Mother Courage stands far beyond Natasha. Natasha has nothing other than loving people and getting love from others. But whereas Mother Courage is a strong woman character who talks about war, politics, life, philosophy and at one point she also prophecies. Mother Courage is not only a woman who carries bundle of goods instead she is a bundle of knowledge. She has the talent of making money. She has the caliber to be alone. On the other hand being alone doesn't mean independent because she is a parasite who sticks to war. She relies on destruction for her own materialistic construction. And she also lacks the quality that Natasha possesses, that is the unconditional love. Courage is not loved by anyone and she too pours no love on anyone. And she can claim to be a strong male character considering her nature.

#### **Conclusion**

So far the destruction of human life and relationship is discussed. In both the works almost all the characters are victims of war. But they are affected in different ways. In *War and Peace* the characters are from upper class society who mostly witnesses the effects of war. In the novel, only few characters are affected or enlightened through war. The other characters keep roaming around from place to place just to protect themselves. From war these people lose their luxury but not their dear life. In *Mother Courage and her Children* the characters are very few in number. But, these few characters also devote themselves to the welfare of the people. They do not care about their own lives. So war is unbiased. It always creates an impact on everyone's life.

Throughout the paper the nature of war and treatment of human life in the hands of war is discussed. Leo Tolstoy the great novelist has the motive of not only of recording the past but also to learn from the devastated past experience. The motive of every work which has war as prime motive will ultimately lead to result similar to the following words of John F. Kennedy. Mankind must put an end to war before war puts an end to mankind.

It shows that men make war but ultimately they are victimized by the same war. The works of Leo Tolstoy and Bertolt Brecht shows the nature of war. It also describes the suffering that the characters endure throughout the works. The representation of war in the two works is symbolic of the devastation caused by the wars in the past, in the present and in the future. War can never be constructive. Every war is like a wild fire which spreads rapidly and demolishes everything. The nature of war is beautifully said as War front change but war never changes which means the place, cause and situation of war may change but the nature and effect of every other war in the same.

The two works that are discussed in this paper deserves to be read and analysed. And it is perfect for the present scenario where people lose their virtues and they become selfish. It will help to attain peace in chaos, and gain meaning from absurdity.

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