

**Responses from Writers: Depiction of World War I in Literature in Light
of the Reading of Eric Maria Remarque, Ernest Hemingway, Wilfred
Owen and Siegfried Sassoon**

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Inspiring Excellence

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**Responses from Writers: Depiction of World War I in Literature in Light
of Eric Maria Remarque, Ernest Hemingway and Wilfred Owen and
Siegfried Sassoon**

A Thesis

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Abstract

Literature is shaped by many influences and war is one of them. Over the time war inspired many great literary works. However, no other event inspired this much literary works as World War I had. Literature began to change and evolve during and after World War I. Many authors of the time became disillusioned by the war and its aftermath, this destroyed their view and belief in traditional values. The amount of death and destruction they saw made them skeptic about everything. As a form of expressing this disillusionment and decay the writers broke new literary ground. The grief and despair caused by the war guided the writers towards modernist sentiment. This dissertation is an attempt to show the devastating impact of World War I, its literary representation and writers' response to this profound human experience. This paper has attempted to examine some of these writers' famous war literature to focus on the views they have expressed regarding war; their experiences during the war time and how those experiences forced them to speak up about these issues despite of strict political situation at that time. This paper has analyzed the work of four writers who wrote during the time of World War I. This research has focused on traditional war literature like the novels of Erich Maria Remarque and Ernest Hemingway and poetry of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon to show how these writers wrote not only to record what they had seen and experienced but also to create a resistance against the glorification of war. The first chapter of this dissertation will look into how Remarque's experience of this cataclysmic event urged him to write such novel that is well known as an anti-war novel and how aptly this novel has depicted the realities of the war. In order to gain different perspectives of writers on war and the impact of war the second chapter will look into Ernest Hemingway's war literature. Followed by this, the third chapter will shed light on Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon to understand what prompt them to produce such profound anti-war novels and poetry despite of strict political situation during that time. After having read these authors of different background, style and

nationality this study has found that World War I generated a platform, a unison where all the barriers transcended, the concept of nationalism, patriotism and bravery were redefined, challenged and thrown away.

Introduction

Ernest Hemingway wrote in his “Notes on the Next War: A Serious Topical Letter” (1935) that: “They wrote in the old days that it is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country. But in modern war there is nothing sweet nor fitting in your dying. You will die like a dog for no good reason.” This was the reality of World War I; a war that created conflict and disillusionment among the young generation and gave birth to a bitterly disenchanting modern world. The amount of death and bloodshed was beyond imagination; even those who survived the shelling were equally destroyed by the war as those who died in the war. The survivors were survivors of bombing, bullets and death but they did not survive the chaos the war left upon them. It is indeed hard to mention anyone who belonged to that time of the Great War and were not affected by it. They were all wounded. Some people lost their arms and/ or legs; some people were only left with one or two scars on their body. No matter how they got wounded, they all were mentally distorted. Unstable, lost, drained such were the feelings all they were left with. World War I; a four year long war left the people of affected countries bewildered and lost. Between this span of time the Western Civilization, and the whole world, as was until then viewed, drastically changed; the whole world witnessed significant changes. An extreme sense of nationalism amongst the European nations, and worsening diplomatic relations amongst the European nations are some of the many causes that triggered forth World War I. World War I which is also known as the Great War and The First Modern War was a very large scale war involving nations around the world and ultimately killing more than twenty million people. The conditions of the war – long months living underground in the trenches interrupted by catastrophic battles – struck its soldiers as uniquely dehumanizing. The emotional pain was excruciating. For these survivors, whether soldiers or civilians, the war had transcended previous notions of reality and thus undermined all official explanation. Only personal experience remained. All World War I affected countries afterwards went to a collective

trauma. Those who fought became commonly known as the Lost Generation¹ because they never fully recovered from their trauma. A whole generation of those who participated in the War and survived the War were destroyed and lost.

Centered in Europe, World War I began on 28 July 1914 and lasted till 11 November 1918. The trigger for the war was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand who was heir to the Austria-Hungarian throne by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. The diplomatic crisis that followed the assassination moved agitatedly. The war drew in world's all the major economic powers, assembled in two opposing alliances: the Allies (based on the Triple Entente of British Empire, France and the Russian Empire) versus the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Later Italy, Japan and U.S.A joined the Allies while the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria Joined the Central Powers. No war in history caused this much devastating cost until World War I. The fatality of the four yearlong battle is hard to count. It is a war that portrays the image of no man's land² filled with rotten unrecovered and unidentified bodies. This also added to the devastation of an entire generation. Another dangerous effect of World War I is that is led to World War II.

The Great War inspired enormous amount of fiction and poetry. This war was far more of a literary event than previous wars. People produced literature with a feeling of the necessity of expressing experiences of this Great War. The hardship, pain, the behavior of the living, the appearance of the dead was accurately described in the literature produced by the writers of the Great War. To address the diverse impact of war on those who experienced it, whether combats or non-combats, the genre of war literature emerged that commented on failure of the war, it exposed the failure the authorities and their inhumanity and it continuously argued for peace. This dissertation essentially aims towards analyzing some of the texts from the modernist era

¹ The term stems from a remark made by Gertrude Stein to Ernest Hemingway, "You are all a lost generation."

² No man's land represented the area of ground between opposing armies

which were affected by the war. Through this process events related to the history of the War, its reflection on the selected text and interpreting these texts in the light of some particular concepts will be taken into account. This paper aims toward revisiting the creation of literary text resulting from the unspeakable agonies of the Great War and to illustrate the ability of human beings to endure the tortured times. Furthermore, focusing on the human condition of the Great War through the text's presentation of the time this paper tends to interpret them in the light of concepts promoted by thinkers like Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean Paul Sartre.

To show how war was reflected in literature and how these writings show the struggle of war, the loss of faith and the birth of the modern, fragmented identity, I have divided this dissertation in three chapters. In first chapter I have analyzed one of the most famous war novels by Erich Maria Remarque to analyze how the soldier's day to day life in trenches are portrayed in this novel, what is was like to be a soldier, to fight, to suffer, to die. I have also showed how he viewed war, what influenced him to write this anti-war novel and how he has challenged the basic premise of the war. To have another perspective, in the second chapter I have looked into the American author Ernest Hemingway's novel and some short stories to examine how these fictions are a realistic portrayal of inter-war period. I have analyze these fictions to gain insight into how his experience as an ambulance driver during the war gave him a firsthand experience on the psychological state of war veterans as well as the human psyche of post-war generation and how as a novelist he enunciated these experiences to the readers. In the third chapter I have analyzed some poems by Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon in order to see how his poems question existentialism, innocence, guilt, loyalty, courage, humanity, duty, death and so on. It talks about how the lives of the soldiers became absurd. In chapter four I have looked into poems by Lord Alfred Tennyson and Wislawa Szymborska- two poets from different era, to show the different perspectives of war in different

era. I chose these literary works based on my personal preference and the recommendation of my advisor. In addition to that I relied on some secondary sources and biographical backgrounds.

Erich Maria Remarque was a German author and veteran of World War I. He was drafted in German army at the age of 18 and fought on the Western Front during World War I. This novel depicted the destruction of an entire class of students, not in order to make the world a better place but on account of arrogance and narrow-mindedness of its elders. This novel is a reflection of widespread disillusionment of the war that took hold of many during 1920s. It was a novel of unyielding realism that described in desolate detail the physical and mental trauma of the war. Remarque also coherently expressed the frustration and anger of the soldiers sent into battle by government for reasons such as politics and power. Another such writer who wrote novels containing such themes and experienced the harshness and brutality of war was Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway was born on July 1899 and lived till 1961. Therefore, it can be deduced that Hemingway was an author who experienced both the World War I and the aftermath of World War I. Hemingway worked as an ambulance driver in Milan, Italy in the year 1918 and went to Spain in 1937 to report on the Spanish Civil War, and had many experiences from which he derived subjects for his fictions. Hemingway explored in his fictions the traumas of World War I; the immense mark it left upon the generation that is commonly referred to as the Lost Generation. Hemingway's novels and short stories are a vivid manifestation of the brutality and meaninglessness of war, the human loss that resulted from it and the lack of balance and morality that persisted in the life of those human beings who survived the war. Indeed in most of Hemingway's works, the protagonist are being constructed and are made to face situation as such that signify man seeking order and a sense of balance into a world that is only pointlessly revolving; a world that has been ransacked and stripped of every sort of meaning, and the ultimate cause of this as Hemingway shows is the War. Unlike

Remarque, a famous war poet Wilfred Owen interestedly enlisted himself to military during the World War I. Wilfred Owen was born and educated in England. He wrote most of his poems when he was in war hospital near Edinburg after being wounded in combat field. There he met another poet Siegfried Sassoon who was also recovering from the shell-shock. Owen's poems such as "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Anthem for the Doomed Youth" graphically illustrated the horrors of warfare, the physical landscapes that surrounded him, and the human body in relation to those landscapes. Siegfried Sassoon's poems "Suicide in the Trenches" and "Counter-Attack" speaks about the truth of the war. I have narrowed down to four major writers of World War I literature and their famous war Literature- Erich Maria Remarque (*All Quiet on the Western Front*), Ernest Hemingway ("Soldier's Home", "Now I Lay Me", "A Clean Well Lighted Place"), Wilfred Owen ("*Dulce et Decorum Est*" and "*Anthem for the Doomed Youth*") and Siegfried Sassoon ("*Suicide in the Trenches*" and "*Counter-Attack*") to analyze and describe how these writers through their writings and characters have portrayed the harshness and brutal reality that the war left the people to live in. After having read these authors of different background, style and nationality what I have found is that World War I generated a platform, an unison where all the barriers transcended, the concept of nationalism, patriotism and bravery were redefined, challenged and thrown away.

Chapter One:

How Remarque's Novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* Depicts the Despairing Human Condition in the Post War period.

We will never understand how people spent each second of their life during the time of World War 1, how they spent their every awakening moment in fear of bombing, fear of death. We will never understand the life of soldiers, how they spent their life in trenches, with dead body of their fellow comrades lying around. However, there were many talented writers who had the aptitude to describe those experiences into words and presented them in front of us. Erich Maria Remarque was amongst those writers. This German novelist became famous with his novel *All Quiet on the Western Front (Im Westen nichts Neues)* which is one of the best known anti-war novels. This novel captured the true horror of the Great War from the point of view of the ordinary soldiers. This chapter will thoroughly focus on the impact of World War 1 on Erich Maria Remarque, how the experience of this cataclysmic event urged him to write such novel that is well known as an anti-war novel and how well this novel has depicted the realities of the war.

The extreme harshness of World War I led to an outflow of literary pieces that either protesting or criticizing or just delineate the gruesome picture of the war. This novel, told from the point of view of Paul Baumer, a German soldier on the Western front during WWI explores the dreadful reality soldiers faced on a daily basis and demonstrates the huge toll the war took on the mental and physical conditions of soldiers. This novel can be considered as an invaluable source for the historical record as it allows the readers to gain a perspective on the war which has not been experienced previously. The prevailing theme of *All Quiet on the Western Front* is the terrible brutality of war, which can be found in every chapter in the novel. Most of the war novels before *All Quiet on the Western Front* basically romanticized what war was like and emphasized only on the ideas such as glory, honor, patriotic duty etc. However, in his novel

Remarque sets out to portray war as it was actually experienced, completely replacing the romantic picture of glory and heroism with a definite unromantic image of fear, meaninglessness, and butchery. This war completely altered mankind's interpretation of war with its shattering levels of massacre and violence, its battles that lasted for months, and its frightening new technological advancements that made killing easier and impersonal more than ever before. Remarque intensified these aspects of World War I and portrayed the extreme terror and savagery of war with an unyielding focus on the physical and psychological damage that it caused. This was a very difficult task to accomplish since as Remarque himself pointed out that the intensity of the war could properly be understood only by those who fought it and it was quite difficult for the civilians to internalize what the soldiers did: "Attack, counter-attack, charge, counter-strike – they are all just words, but what is contained in them" (Remarque, 93). "Continuous fire, defensive fire, curtain fire, trench mortars, gas, tank, machine-guns, hand-grenades – words, words but they embrace all the horrors of the world" (96).

The emotional suffering was hard to put in words. This lack of understanding of the civilians got very clear when we read the conversation of Paul and his mother when he was home on leave: "Suddenly my mother grips my hand and asks hesitantly, "Was it very bad out there, Paul?". Mother what kind of answer can I give you? You won't understand and never will. And I don't want you to" (115).

Maybe they understood and maybe they even saw it, but not like the soldiers. The reality of the war was only seen in the battle fields. This is where Remarque had done a wonderful job, painting the accurate picture of the battle fields so the civilians see what the soldiers saw.

"We see men go on living with the top of their skull missing; we see soldiers go on running when both their feet have been shot away – they stumble on their splintering stumps to the next shell hole. One lance-corporal crawls for a full half mile on his hands,

dragging his legs behind him, with both knees shattered. Another man makes it to a dressing station with his guts spilling out over his hands as he holds them in. we see soldiers with their mouths missing; we find someone who has gripped the main artery in his arm between his teeth for two hours so that he doesn't bleed to death. The sun goes down, night fall, the shells whistle, life comes to an end" (97).

By the time the novel ended, almost every major characters were dead. These characters belonged to the generation of young men who were forced to fight it. These men were subject to continual physical danger, as they could literally be blown to pieces at any moment. This intense physical threat also gave a never-ending attack on their nerves, forcing soldiers to cope with intrinsic fear during every waking moment. Additionally, the soldiers were forced to live in awful conditions such as in filthy, waterlogged ditches full of rats and decaying corpses and infested with lice. Their days went by without food and sleep; they did not get adequate clothing, or sufficient medical care. Moreover, they were forced to deal with the frequent and sudden deaths of their close friends and comrades in extremely violent manner. Remarque portrayed the overall effect of these conditions as a crippling overload of panic and despair. The only way for soldiers to survive was to disconnect themselves from their feelings, suppressing their emotions and accepting the conditions of their lives. They did not think about their past, they did not imagine their future because in the battle fields, there was no scope for a soldier to think anything other than keeping himself alive. They could not get lost in their past memory or future thoughts. They had to keep all their energy and concentration on their present. That is why Remarque had written this novel in present form. We did not see Paul or any character reminiscing about how their life was before war or think about their home or making plans about what they will do when the war is over. They did not have the luxury to do that. They were always busy in keeping themselves alive, coping with the death of their comrades, grapple with the traumatic experience they were having every single moment.

Remarque as a war veteran knew this very well since he had been through this experience. Remarque was enlisted into the army at the age of eighteen and during 1917 he was fighting on the western front. However, Remarque did not only write this novel relating his personal experience, he drew a broader picture here about the experiences of any typical soldier of the war. Additionally, Remarque expressed his view on emotional disconnection of the soldiers that had a hugely irreplaceable damaging impact on their humanity. Paul, for instance, became unable to imagine a future without the war and unable to remember how he felt in the past. He also lost his ability to speak to his family. Soldiers no longer pause to mourn dead comrades; when Kemmerich is on his deathbed, at the beginning of the novel, the most pressing question among his friends is who will inherit his boots. It did not indicate that they are insensitive, it is just that the war had made themselves think about nothing but the present and in those hell like place a pair of soft yellow leather boots is hard to come by. In order to survive in the trenches the soldiers have to abandon most of the traits that made them human, they had to give up the ability to look into the past and imagine a future: "But here in the trenches we have lost that memory. It no longer rises up from inside us – we are dead and the memory is far off on some distant horizon... it is strong and our desire is strong but it is unattainable, and we know it" (87).

Moreover, Remarque suggested that the future for this generation is lost. The older soldiers may survive the trauma of war because they have a home to return to, their wives and kids are waiting for them. They will have an emotional and mental support after the war. However, the young generation who were forcefully sent to join the army before they could lay any root has nothing to return to. They did not leave behind any wife or children who are waiting for them to return. At this age they even do not have any strong bond with their parents. They came to fight before they could figure out what to do with their life. So when they returned they had nothing to do as they left nothing behind. When Paul and his other friends were

supposed to raise a storm in the world with their energy and creativity they were sent to fight the battle. When they will return they will not have the same energy and perspective towards the world. The world will be changed by then, they will be changed and nothing will be the same anymore. They will be broken, distorted, lost, and weak. Their later generation will not accept them, will push them aside and the generation before them will be old and have lived their life. So the generation that has fought and lived the war is completely disillusioned and lost. To further demonstrate the condition of lost, disillusionment, existential dilemma I have taken help of the theory of the famous philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. While Nietzsche talks about nihilism which states that all values are baseless and nothing can be done, Freud talks about the disillusionment of people. Both of these theories help us to have a more clear view of the soldiers like Paul and his comrades. Nietzsche while explaining nihilism in his book *The Will to Power* writes, "Everything lacks meaning" (7). This statement highlights that nothing in this universe has any absolute value and everything is worthless. The war, the shock of war, the mental trauma left the soldiers without any belief. What they saw in the war, the way they fought and survived made them feel valueless about themselves and think of anything else as valueless too. Nietzsche further mentions in his book, "It includes disbelief in any metaphysical world and forbids itself any belief in a true world. Having reached this standpoint one grants the reality of becoming as the only reality, forbids oneself every kind of clandestine access to afterworlds and false divinity..." (13). This statement implicates that how a person wants to live his life is his own choice. However, war survivors have seen such cruelty that they cannot believe in anything anymore. Their belief is broken, their mind is disillusioned. This leads us to what Freud said about disillusioned. While explaining his theory Freud points out the flaws in the state authority. Freud mentions in his essay "Thought for the Times on War and Death" that when the sense of community of nations suddenly fell off citizens felt deceived and left alone by their government. Freud said that state

expects utmost loyalty from the citizens whereas it continuously lies and deceives the citizens. State forbids man to give upon cruel activity, but when it comes to protecting the country from enemies those wrong doings, cruel activities becomes legitimate. State lies to its citizens about heroism, patriotic duty and sends them to war. When men find himself in a state where he have no choice but to kill another human to survive and become shock by his own crime they feel lost, just like Paul and his comrades face out there in the trench. The war did not seem as they were told it to be and thus the immense shock of lying and deceiving left them speechless. When they face their own inner inhuman nature, that shock left them disillusioned.

When we look into Remarque and many other writers who wrote about various aspects World War I a question comes up to the mind that is it just the nerve- wrecking theme that made these war literature so intriguing or did they follow any especial technique, pattern or language? As I researched I found that indeed there are some techniques those writers, sculptors, painters followed to express their view and experience on war. They developed and used especial technique and/or language as they produced war literature and art. For instance, the word “shell-shock” came in use in literature after the war. Jay Winter states in his article that, “that ‘shell-shock’ is a term which helped people to conjure up the long term effects of war service in a political culture unprepared to provide a special place for ex-soldiers and sailors” (9). This word became in use to denote the violent injury that helped the people and families of the sufferers to easily state the condition they were going through. “‘Shell-shock’ was a vehicle at one and the same time of consolation and legitimation” (9). After having a detailed look into Remarque’s this novel I found him following a certain technique in his writing that is known as the *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* (The New Objectivity). This is a pseudo-Expressionist movement that was founded in Germany by two German artists Otto Dix and George Grosz in the aftermath of World War I. many artists follow this movement to express their view about war and its horrible impacts on people and on society. Two of the major traits

of this movement were attacking the evil of the society and those in power and demonstrating the devastating effects of war in harsh times. Clearly in Remarque's writing these traits are visible. Remarque not only has discussed the destructive damage the war has done to the soldiers as discussed earlier in this chapter; also he has pointed out the flaws in the state authority and their decisions about war. Remarque points out that a teacher who was supposed to enlighten his students with knowledge and truth; he fed this bunch of eighteen years old with lies. They fed them with the lies that authority asked them to. These eighteen years old were supposed to complete their education, follow their dream, build a life, build a better future of the country, but rather they were pushed towards death by their elders. "They were supposed to be the ones who would help us eighteen-year-olds to make the transition, who would guide us into adult life" (Remarque 9).

Here Paul remarks the conflict between the authority figures embodied by Kantorek their school master who proudly supports the war and soldiers who fought and died in the war. What Baumer realized about war as a procession of pain and death that serves to disrupt the dominant war narrative of soldiers carrying out a heroic duty to the nations. The students believed in them, in their words, in their wisdom. Little did they know they were tricked by the elders so that they could go to the war and fight like hell so that their elders could live. Paul and his classmates realized their mistake of believing their elders when they saw the real picture of the war, when they understood the true meaning of war. Attacking the authority of a nation, exposing its true form of treachery was something this new objectivity movement preached. Although there is no evidence that Remarque was an activist of this movement, however, it can be deduced that he was influenced by this movement as its traits can be found in his writing.

Remarque paints a very vivid picture of World War I and those who fought and died while fighting it. The nature of war, the struggle of soldiers to make it to the last breathe, their suffering, their pain, and their thoughts – Remarque has captured every essence of the war. We

would have never understood their fear, alienation and the other impact the war had left upon them if writers like Remarque had not have the courage to go against one own country to write the truth. *All Quiet on the Western Front* was banned in Germany, Remarque was being hunted by the Nazi government, and they killed her sister when they could not find him. Remarque suffered a lot for this literary piece. But because of his courage and sacrifice we gained such perspective of this Great War that may be would not have been possible without it.

Chapter Two:

Emergent Skeptical Individualism and the Modern 'Self': How Hemingway's Short Stories "Soldier's Home", "Now I Lay Me", and "A Clean Well Lighted Place" and the novel *A Farewell to Arms* Depict Post War Disillusionment and the Decay of Values.

One of the major American novelist who can be titled as the spokesman of the lost generation is Ernest Hemingway. Along with other American writers such as, Scott Fitzgerald, John Don Passos and Sinclair Lewis, Hemingway tried to show the loss that the First World War had caused in social, moral and psychological spheres in human life. Other than unfolding the horror, fear and futility caused by the war Hemingway also has put precise feelings, longings and frustrations in his writings that were typically common in the lost generation. Hemingway can be associated with the magnetic group of artists known as the modernists. Modernist literature can be characterized as a refusal of 19th century traditions and the modernist writers consciously tried to break free from the conventions of the Victorian era. Modernism movement was set in motion through a series of cultural shock and the first shock was the Great War. The modernists saw decay and growing alienation of the individual and war had the influence on them for seeing the world in such way. The writers of lost generation such as Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald became closely associated with modernism. These artists struggled to find some meaning in the world of chaos.

Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* is undoubtedly a powerful announcement of the horror of the World War I which is filled with Hemingway's unexpressed anger towards the war. Unlike Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* this novel of Hemingway's is love story of Frederic Henry and Catherine whose love story must survive the obstacles of war. The

setting of the story which is Italy during World War I adds tragedy to their love story. Ray B. West Jr. states that:

“But the setting for *A Farewell to Arms* is the war itself, and the romance of Frederic Henry and Catherine Barkley, their attempt to escape the war and its resulting chaos, is a parable of twentieth-century man’s disgust and disillusionment at the failure of civilization to achieve the ideals it had promising throughout nineteenth century” (qtd. In Shams 42).

This novel is greatly inspired by Hemingway’s own experience during war time. It is inspired by his affair with an American Red Cross nurse Agnes von Kurowsky when he served as an ambulance driver in Red Cross on the Italian Front. Although Agnes did not die like Catherine did in the novel, she did reject Hemingway. As Hemingway had firsthand experience of war and about the life of a war veteran, he constantly emphasizes the dreadful devastation it brought on everyone involved in it. Through the story of Colonel Henry and Catherine Hemingway exposes how the fatalistic impacts of war can cause one to have a different psychological outlook than one did before the war. At first, war to Henry was an evil force that he needed to be distracted from. At that time he never thought of escaping, run off to somewhere to find a new life. However, as he began to get close with the nurse Catherine and fell in love with her, he began to see war as an act of barbarity and he sought to escape this with Catherine. In this novel Hemingway has used the binary concept intricately such as love and war, fantasy and reality etc. Through the characters Hemingway shows human life is meaningless and every effort of searching for a meaning goes almost in vein and unrewarded. Like Hemingway’s other novels this novel also shows the predicament, despair and disillusionment of man. In the beginning of the novel Hemingway delineates the background of the war through the climatic condition, condition of the soldiers etc. However, unlike Remarque’s protagonist Paul Baumer, Hemingway’s protagonist Henry finds a way to escape

all this fiasco of war; he found love in the midst of war. But escaping from something like World War I, that precisely destroyed an entire generation, snatched the humanity from human beings, left men tormented and disillusioned is easier said than done. No matter how hard they tried to leave everything and run away to live a peaceful life, the war did not let them do so. There are always some unfortunate events come waiting to overwhelm their present condition with agony and suffering. The novel close on a note of tragedy where Catherine dies while giving birth to a child and Henry is left alone in the despair and disillusionment with the scars of war wounds on him. Their life is a representation of the war. Their love is ill-fated, they never got to get married, Catherine gives birth to dead child and dies, all these represents how the war shattered all the harmonious ties from the lives of people and how it brought only misery and pain in everyone's life. The concept of war and love exists in this novel simultaneously. He was essentially concerned with the death of love in the post-First World War world. Baker points out, "One of the most persistent themes of the twenties was the death of love in World War I. All the major writers recorded it, often in piecemeal fashion as a part of the longer post-war scene; but only Hemingway seems to have caught it whole and delivered it in lasting fictional form". (qtd. In Shams 16). War, retreat kept coming on their way but Henry and Catherine never gave up on their love and dream of being together way from all these chaos. Through the characters Hemingway shows the emotional disturbance that war put them through, shows us that war just did not destroy the roads, houses, country side, it also destroyed the will and spirit of those fighting it. We can find constant criticism of war throughout the novel. It shows the soldiers' unwillingness to fight. By the end of the novel Henry and other Italian soldiers bid farewell to arms, to war and through their rifles.

Heroes of Hemingway acts as a symbol of the conscience that has the power and ability to recognize the brutality and pointlessness of a post World War life, and also heroes that fights

to suppress the harsh and brutal experiences of the First World War. This is a psychological condition that can be seen in many protagonist of Ernest Hemingway. These protagonists take shelter of forgetfulness or attempts to suppress the harsh experiences of the War that cannot be erased by the memory. For example, in Hemingway's short story "Now I Lay Me", the protagonist, Nick, who is lying in a hospital tent, cannot sleep. The reason for Nick not being able to sleep is because he experienced a bomb attack at night during the war. Nick believes solemnly that he must be in a constant look out for such attacks in the darkness, and if he falls asleep, his soul will go away from his body. "I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body." (Hemingway 151). Therefore, it can be deduced from the above lines how Hemingway has portrayed, through this story, the archetypical mindset of the War survivors, which is to be vigilant, consciously or subconsciously, for any type of danger in the dark. Furthermore, as the story progresses Nick says, "If I could have a light I was not afraid to go to sleep, because I knew my soul would only go out of me if it were dark." (155). "Light" in many of Hemingway's stories signifies order, balance and certainty. Apart from that, in "Now I Lay Me" it can be seen how Nick is being advised by another fellow with whom he shares his tent to get married and after the conversation he does try to think of women he knew and what kind of wives they will make. However this remains only for a short period of time and the protagonist again goes on thinking about his old memories of fishing and his prayers. It can be seen in this story that the protagonist only has the past memories of his childhood and his prayers to look to, and future prospects such as marriage remain meaningless to him. This is a very vivid portrayal of the Hemingway's "Lost Generation", of the post World War I generation that Hemingway belonged to, and the generation in which belonged men who were an exile within their own consciousness and "Now I Lay Me" vividly shows the human condition of the then post War society where human beings with traumatized experiences of

the war lived with deep psychological frustration and tried hard to suppress the atrocious experiences of the War. In another short story of Hemingway, "A Clean Well Lighted Place", he shows the life of a man who also is in an internal struggle to find meaning and some balance in a world where the concept of morality and a sense certainty and meaning has been ransacked by the War. This is a story that portrays the internal state of a man who is lost and bewildered being forced to live in a world where he is condemned to struggle. As stated before, in some Hemingway's stories, the protagonists has a conscience that has the power to recognize the banality and pointlessness of the post World War I life. "A Clean Well Lighted Place" is a perfect example of this. This story talks about a man, an old waiter, and how he struggles with life's despair and lack of balance by keeping a place, a café, clean and properly lighted. Here again light comes in suggesting order and balance. Also in the story, in the conversation between the younger and older a gap is clearly visible. The younger waiter, being young has youth and confidence. The younger waiter fails to see what the older waiter already has a realization of, that youth once lost can never be recovered. This sense of recovering time and failing to do so is very important in many Hemingway stories. "'We are of two different kinds,'" the older waiter said. He was now dressed to go home. "It is not only a question of youth and confidence although those things are very beautiful. Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be someone who needs the cafe.'" (Hemingway) What can be seen in the lines above is the gap between the younger and older waiter, in addition to that another thing can be assumed from the lines is the older waiter has a conscience, he has the awareness of life as it actually was in the post World War I generation. The older waiter is reluctant to close the café because there might be someone else, who like him might be in need of a clean and well lighted place where life's despair and anguish, the over powering exhaustion of loneliness, and suffering and uncertainty can be dealt with. It can likely be assumed that such was the general psychological condition of the immediate post World War I society, the human beings living

with the irrecoverable traumas of the War and how it damaged and distorted the life after the War, how the line of life and death blurred equally after the War, as it was during War. Both the story of the wounded soldier and the old waiter manifest within themselves the sad tale of the generation that was left with nothing, its human beings left with no meaning that can be associated with life, and therefore the people who belonged to this generation struggled and fought, to cope with a life of nothingness. A crucial theme in Hemingway's writings is that how those who have been in the war, fought it and seen death cope up with their life after the war with those who have no idea about war. "Soldier's Home" is a story like that where Harold Krebs after returning from a traumatic experience of war tries to find a way to come to terms with the small town life he used to live. Being a part of the disillusioned generation, Harold tries to construct a meaning to why and for what he experienced the war which now have left him completely empty inside. He does not feel anything, cannot connect to anyone, and cannot find any reason why anyone is doing whatever they are doing. Everything seems pointless to him. Even any attempt to try to connect to anything or feel anything makes him uncomfortable. The war has made him socially dysfunctional. Harold tries to conform within his family, his town, the society but he fails to fit in that civilian life. To understand why Hemingway's characters behave in such way, readers need to have the understanding of skepticism. Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus defines the term quiet aptly in his best-known work *Outlines Pyrrhonism*. He states, "Skepticism is ability to place in antithesis, in any manner whatever, appearance and judgment, and thus- because of the equality of force in the objects and arguments proposed – to come first of all a suspension of judgment and then to mental tranquility." Therefore, we can assert that skepticism is a state of suspension of judgment; the skeptic resolves contradiction by suspending judgment. If one is skeptical about something he neither confirms it nor denies it because he believes that nothing can be known for certain. The effect of World War I left people skeptic about everything. They did know anymore what to

believe what to expect. They all lost faith from the traditional values and beliefs. Nothing was certain for them anymore. They started to doubt everything. Their belief on certainty was gone. We can see this trait in Hemingway's characters. The soldiers saw such horrific scenarios in the battle fields that they were no longer a believer of anything. They became skeptic, doubtful to everything. They started to question their existence. When we talk about existence, Jean Paul Sartre's philosophy about existentialism is what comes to our mind immediately. What Sartre says in his philosophy is that our existence comes before our essence. This is the contrary of the traditional view that we have an essence before our existence. What Sartre said is that our action is determined by us and not by the nature or environment in opposed to the traditional views that stated that everything we do is determined by nature. However, because of World War I people started to question their own existence since they became disillusioned and nothing seemed to make any meaning to them. Sartre developed this theory mainly based on his educational knowledge and also on what he saw happened to people after the World Wars.

A close reading to Hemingway's writing reveals that there is always a protagonist in his works who struggles. Almost all of Hemingway's fiction revolves around a hero undertaking a struggle. Some Heroes struggle for survival, others struggle to seek certainty and meaning in a life that is filled with uncertainty and meaninglessness. For a vivid illustration of this point, Robert Pen Warren's article named *Hemingway* is an apt article. In this article he writes,

The [Hemingway's] typical character faces defeat or death. But out of defeat or death the character usually manages to salvage something. And here we discover Hemingway's special interest in such situations and such characters. His heroes are not defeated except upon their own terms. They are not squealers, welchers, compromisers, or cowards, and when they confront defeat they realize that the stance they take, the stoic endurance, the stiff upper lip mean a kind of victory. (Warren 2)

In the quoted lines above, it has been clearly expressed why is it that Hemingway's characters tend to struggle. A thing that can be noticed in almost all Hemingway stories is, regardless of the plot, the protagonist never backs out when it comes to face the inevitabilities of life, even if it is death. In the midst of immense suffering, agony and psychological frustration, Hemingway's protagonists, or also known as Hemingway's "Code Hero", have a quality of endurance through which they undertake actions that are imbedded with some sort of meaning. As Warren states in the quoted lines above, even if Hemingway's heroes are bound to face defeat, they fully face it with a deliberate manner that gives a meaning to it, and therefore even if the heroes are forced to embraced death and defeat, there is a sense of victory or a sense of endurance that carries with it dignity and honor. Frederic, Nick Adams, Harold Krebs all of them exhibits the traits of Hemingway's code hero. They are psychologically as well as physically wounded men who take charge of their life. Sigmund Freud states in one of his essays named, "Reflection of War and Death", "Two things have roused our disappointment in this war: the feeble morality of states in their external relations which have inwardly acted as guardians of moral standards, and the brutal behavior of individuals of the highest culture of whom one would not have believed any such thing possible." (Freud)

In the aforementioned lines it can be vividly seen what Freud talks about while discussing the disappointments human beings face during a war, the destruction of moral standards in human life and the ferocious brutality human beings treated each other with during the War. In both these points which Freud highlights it can be seen that the psyche of the human being, facing the disappointments of the War, is to a large extent disillusioned and shocked by the results of the War. Literatures which were produced during the World War I vividly illustrates this inexpressible shock which the human psyche faced during the age of the Great War, and Hemmingway's works can be said to be a forerunner of the depiction of the aforementioned

issue. However Hemmingway's heroes in over whelming unpleasant situation they possess a personal integrity. Hemingway's code hero is measured by how well he handles situations that life delivers to him facing those hurdles with grace which Hemingway called "grace under pressure". Hemingway's code hero faces life with courage and dignity. Dignity in facing certain defeat is an essential element of Hemingway's morality. With the portrayal of a stoic mentality which is ready to endure and any consequences of life, Hemingway's writing shows, paraphrasing Warren, out of such actions, death of defeated, the characters reclaim some meaning, meaning that the individuals lost fighting the War, and meaning that the post War society has significantly failed to provide for the individuals. Hence it can be said that Hemingway's stories depict man of the Post World War I in its most naked and exposed form, man seeking meaning and undertaking choices in life which includes defeat and death, through which life can be given a meaning, accepting the inevitabilities of life with honor, courage and dignity.

The novels and short stories mentioned above are few of the many works of Ernest Hemingway where he gives a profound and precise impression of the human beings in the era of post World War I. With an amalgam of aesthetic precision and emotional involvement, Hemingway truly did depict man and his different conditions in the world that has been destroyed and consumed by the atrocious First World War. Furthermore, by being personally involved in the War, and analyzing many events that occurred in the War, it can be said that Hemingway was a man who was both emotionally and physically influenced by the war. As a result, the heroes that Hemingway has created in his stories are heroes that similarly were influenced and shaken by the First World War, who were left with an incomprehensible sense of Horror from which recovery was not humanly possible. It is this sense of emotional tension, psychological trauma, an unsaid internal frustration, a sense of nothingness and a bewildered perception of life that portrays human beings of the post World War I, and Hemingway with a

deliberate attempt, created his protagonists conveying these experiences. J. D. Savage writes in his article *Ernest Hemingway*, "In reading Hemingway we are made aware that the violent action itself, of so many of his stories, arises from the need for the alleviation of a prior and underlying psychic vacuity-an emotional state which is sometimes in his work suggested with great skill." (Savage, 381). This emotional state of vacuity, of blankness and nothingness has been constantly explored by Hemingway through which he showed the meanness and pointlessness of war and the life that it creates. In addition to that, as David Daiches writes in his article, also named *Ernest Hemingway*,

And because his attitude has never been simply pragmatic, because he had never accepted existence simply as existence but always sought what had edge and sharpness to emphasize its actuality, Hemingway came to realize very acutely the bitterness of belonging to the "lost generation." He quotes Gertrude Stein, "You are all a lost generation..."(178).

Daiches in this article mainly explores the autobiographical elements and traces in Hemingway's fiction, and what he states, mainly the sense of belongingness to the "Lost Generation", is what helps to comprehend to what extent Hemingway's protagonists are a depiction of a post World War I society. Hemingway was a writer who through his stories provided an intellectual document of World War I and the damage it has caused after it ended. Thus it can be stated that Hemingway was a writer who did depict the true and raw condition of those human beings who belonged to the World War and Post World War I generation.

Chapter Three:

Depiction of World War I in the Poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried

Sassoon

Poets have been writing about war since long ago. However, it was not till World War I that war poetry added as a genre in literature. During the time of First World War many young soldiers used to write poems to express their emotions and experiences of war. These combined voices of soldiers constructed a genre that we call war poetry today. Campbell explains it this way, “The results of such construction are fairly obvious: the canonization of male war writers who not only have combat experience but represent such experience their texts” (204). Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon are the names that strike our mind immediately when we talk about war poetry. Both of them were great voices of the First World War. They served in the military during World War I and they both had first-hand experience of the horror of trench warfare. Being come to believe that war was an unscrupulous slaughter that must be stopped, Sassoon wrote a letter of protest which later published in the London Times. This resulted in political firestorm. After that Sassoon was declared mentally unstable due to shell shock and was sent to Craiglockhart for treatment. There he met another young protestant war soldier Wilfred Owen who was recovering from shell shock. Wilfred Owen worshipped Sassoon and Sassoon nurtured him to be a poet to speak for the truth. Like Hemingway, Owen also focused on the unseen scars that is those who returned from war alive their life will never be as same physically and mentally as it were prior to war. This chapter reflects on the poems of Owen and Sassoon to show how both of them spoke of horror and pity of war, protested against war; spoke of injuries that soldiers got while fighting the war through their poetry.

Impressed by Keats and Shelley, Wilfred Owen showed interest in poetry at very early age and today his poems are considered amongst the best war poetry ever written in English language. He is considered as a significant poetic voice of the twentieth century. His verse

draws on his profound anti-war sentiment. Owen realized the disconnection between the view of the war at home and the dreadful realities of the battlefield and thus expressed this realization through his poems. Owen saw the purpose of educating civilians to the actualities of war and fulfilled his purpose through his poems. This purpose influenced him to focus on the soldiers as a victim of war in his poetry. Norgate mentioned in his article that, "Throughout this time Owen was testing and sharpening the expressions of his own response to war, his poetry shaping itself in contradistinction to the pervading popular sentiment" (2). Owen was so outraged by the unspeakable horror of war that these images became the part of his poetry.

When World War I broke out every nation needed to recruit soldiers to fight for the nation to win the war. Therefore, every nation came with different propagandas to encourage its citizens to join the army eagerly. Propaganda posters and media induced idealistic notions of patriotism, honor and glory which persuaded men especially the young men to enlist in military. Germany, USA, Russia, and Britain every nation took such actions to prompt its men to join the army to fight for the country. They made such posters that made people feel guilty who did not join the war and that not joining the army means turning their back against their own country. These countries made posters, published articles to consolidate its nationalism and portray the enemy as horrible as they could. These publications made the citizens think how respectful and glorifying would be to fight for the country until they saw the real picture of the battlefield and war. Wilfred Owen was young and full of passion when he joined the army. He was also dazzled by the propaganda until he saw the real picture of the Front. The massive losses grew despair in people's mind about war and anger and protest of war began. This chapter will thoroughly describe the horror and pity of war and the motif of the physical and mental damage that war inflicted in Owen's poems.

Wilfred Owen is one of many World War I soldiers who wrote poetry to express the horror of the war and their horrific experience of the war. He wrote poems to protest the war,

his poems stood against the official propaganda of war that glorified the war. “*Dulce et Decorum Est*” is one of his most famous poems, is a strong anti-war poem. This is a title that is taken from Roman poet Horace and the full title is *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* which means it is sweet and seemly to die for one's country. However, Owen's poem criticizes this statement revealing the true scenario of trench warfare:

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, (17-24)

War propagandas, old sayings all glorify war, however, only those who had been to war knows how war really is. No knowledge, imagination, training prepared him for what he saw in the trench, what he experienced in the front line. The minute he stepped into the front line all his illusions about war scattered into pieces. He saw what lies he and the other soldiers had been told all this time, they have been tricked to fight the war that was not theirs to fight in the first place. All the soldiers' family members, civilians think that those who are fighting the war are doing a heroic job protecting their country. Only the soldiers know the real scene, real propaganda behind the fighting. This is what Owen had been writing in his poems so that the civilians know the war is not what they have been told all this time. Owen's resonating tone in the poem “*Dulce et Decorum Est*” makes this poem an unforgettable work about war. Owen

had used powerful images to describe the war. "He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning" (16). This line had great effect as it gave the reader the picture of someone drowning but you know there is only gas so the words "choking" and "drowning" show that it is the effect the gas is having on him and he is having a slow, painful death. This quote uses alliteration in the last few words, which adds to the effect of the already powerful words. This poem is a strong message to the reader as well as to those who by giving false propaganda influenced the young generation to join the war only to face a horrific death. Ending the poem the poem in such a way has a great affect; the irony sinks in, and so does the final facet of Owen's representation of World War I.

In another poem "*Anthem for the Doomed Youth*" Owen addresses all those youth who were forced to participate in the War. He laments at a generation which he saw gradually becoming part of a lost generation. "What passing-bells for these who died like cattles", this is the first line of the poem which signifies the agony of the generation, and this agony and suffering is very vividly reflected in the poem. Owen wrote this poem when he was in hospital recovering from shell shock. "Anthem for Doomed Youth" solemnly discusses death in war and shows how those who die in war do not receive the normal ceremonies that are used to honor the dead. Owen was able to express how he felt about those who passed away while fighting in war, and he successfully communicates a moving message to his readers in this poem. Owen relates to his audience how horrible going to war is. The title of the poem conveys a strong, gloomy feeling; usually an anthem is a joyous song of celebration but when coupled with "Doomed Youth", anthem takes on a whole new meaning that implies much sorrow. Also, "Doomed Youth" provides a dreadful impression because it foretells of young people having no hope.

Owen's soldiers do the best they can with the terrors of war they experience on a daily basis. They perform the basic functions of existence, such as eating, fighting, and sleeping, but

they have to deprive themselves of the power of sensation in order to cope with such an excess of fright, despair, and confusion. They are able to laugh, but only because it prevents them from fully contemplating what they are involved in. They are able to take some solace in their companionship, and mourn as much as they can when a friend dies.

Siegfried Sassoon was about nineteen years old when he joined the military. He was young, passionate and determined to fight for the country being unaware of the reality in the trench warfare. Sassoon's first-hand experience of war, death of his younger brother and his meeting with British poet, novelist and critic Robert Graves were notable factors in changing his perspective towards war. His poems reflect upon the depression and anger of the soldiers who were fighting like a dog to survive in the trenches. "*Suicide in the Trenches*" is the poem he wrote during his time in the military in World War I. While describing the realities of war; this poem illustrates the emotions of war poets in avoiding self-pity. This is one of those poems that brought out the true and uninformed reality of the war to the civilians. Through a young soldier, Sassoon told the tale of all soldiers that fought and died in the war. He described the state of a young soldier before going to the war and the depression that surrounded the soldier in the trenches that led him to commit suicide. "I knew a simple soldier boy/Who grinned at life in empty joy," (1-2), Sassoon started this poem with a tone that reflects happiness. However, as he described the changes in state of the soldier the tone of the poem also changes gradually from happiness to anger and accusation; much like any of the soldiers who thought war would be a great thing before joining it and then fell into depression and agony after seeing its true nature: "Sneak home and pray you will never know/The hell where youth and laughter go" (11-12). Through this poem we also understand Sassoon's view on the civilians who greet the soldiers after coming back from war. Sassoon successfully projects the idea that the public are completely unable to sympathize with the soldiers and they cannot possibly imagine what the soldiers have experienced themselves. They are unaware of the fact that those who have

returned have not returned in one piece; they have left a piece in the warfare which will always be there.

In another poem titled "*Counter-Attack*" Sassoon conveys similar message to the poem mentioned above. In this poem he manifested soldiers' personal feeling regarding war and made us feel linked to the soldiers by creating imagery of the warfare. Sassoon had used such strong words that made us feel both affected and disturbed at the same time. The poem manifests the realistic atmosphere of the war and the actual nature of the generals who ordered the soldiers to attack and counter attack without even thinking about the consequences of their action since they are not the one who was going to pay for that action: "An officer came blundering down the trench/ "Stand-to and man the fire step!" On he went.../ Gasping and bawling, "Fire-step... counter-attack!" (25-27). His words made the poem seemed more realistic; they illustrated the tragic, brutal experiences and extreme aggressiveness of war. A very important factor to notice in this poem is that Sassoon did not use any rhyme scheme in this poem. This absence of structure and rhythm in his poem made the disordered, chaotic situation during war more prominent.

Sassoon was known to write poetry from the soldiers' perspectives. Through his poems he told the truth of the war. His perspective is what made his poem more powerful, gave more meaning. His words, imagery was so powerful that he could effectively communicate with the readers through his poetry.

Chapter Four:

A Contrastive Study of How Writers from the Other Periods Have Responded to War: A Glance at the Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson and Wislawa Szymborska

War is not a new or contemporary event in the world. It has always been existed in the society. Some war was small and damage was controllable but some war was so huge that to this day people feel terrified talking about those wars. If we say that because of the history of these wars which reflected the true nature of those war we know their intensity then it will not be completely accurate. War literature plays a vital role in presenting the true intensity of all the major wars that have took place since the dawn of civilization along with history of those wars. This chapter intends to discuss some war literatures from different era representing different wars to demonstrate the different perspectives of war from various authors' point of views.

Lord Alfred Tennyson is one of the well-loved Victorian poets. He was the most highly regarded poet of his period and the most widely read of all English poets. Tennyson's famous poem "*The Charge of the Light Brigade*" is about valiant but deadly charge in Crimean War. He did not fought the Crimean War himself, however, in this poem he focused on how the soldiers were treated in this war as they were ordered to charge in to certain death. Tennyson concentrated on the timelessly striking stereotype of heroic ordinary soldier versus blundering high command which later continued to grasp the imagination of the writers of World War I. this poem emphasizes on the valor of the cavalry in courageously carrying out their order despite of the obvious outcome. Tennyson portrayed the battle of Balaclava as if he were in that battlefield. The soldiers were fighting a battle where they might lose their life; it was like a valley of death. The soldiers were surrounded by death and there were no hope, no escape from death. The commanding authority was flawed, the commanding officer ordered the Light

Brigade to move forward to fight against a well prepared artillery team. The valiant of the troops were emphasized on this poem not only because they forward towards the valley of death without any objection but also when they were asked “Was there a man dismay’d?” (10), they were too tough and loyal to feel dismayed. Tennyson in this poem commemorated the valor of the soldiers who surrender themselves to a greater cause. Throughout this poem he recognized the great brevity of the soldiers and willingness to trust their leaders even when they blunder. Such behavior demands honor according to Tennyson. In this poem Tennyson focuses on both glorious and flawed side of a war. He praises the soldiers to show unquestionable bravery in the face of heavy artillery and also the error in command of the authority. However, in my opinion Tennyson chose to call the attention towards the brevity and skillfulness of the soldiers in the face of utter horror. Tennyson chose to concentrate more on the courage of the soldiers because those soldiers charged towards the enemy line despite knowing that they are stepping in the valley of death. Tennyson intensified how heroically the soldiers fulfilled their duty and honored them in his poem.

How Tennyson saw war in 1854 is completely different than how writers see war in present days. The nature of war is different, techniques are different. However, the reason behind the wars we are still facing is not so different than the ancient times. Conflict between countries for powers therefore, the authority is forcing its people to fight the war that they sometimes do not even understand. Different authors have seen the effects and aftermaths differently. To depict the understanding of war of the modern writers I have used the poem “*The End and The Beginning*” by a Polish writer Wisława Szymborska. Being a World War II survivor, Szymborska has written this poem with firsthand experience. Unlike Tennyson’s poem discussed above, Szymborska discussed about the consequences and responsibility of war besides the theme of war. Through this poem Szymborska wanted to make the reader acknowledge the amount of damage a war, any war is causing not just to us but also to the

environment. Szymborska brought out different aspects of aftermath of war in this poem. The end of something usually means the beginning of something new that could arise from that end. Szymborska implied in this poem that sometimes it does not matter who won the war and who lost, the damage that are done often the same. Everything, from human to objects needed to be fixed. Szymborska portrayed alluring yet upsetting and very thoughtful picture of the changes in people's lives after any war. She showed the harsh reality that those who are unaffected or little affected by the war can move on with their life at some point. However those who were directly affected can hardly move on. Moreover, these peoples' struggle to move on is often overlooked through generations. In this poem she pointed out that there are a lot of responsibilities after a war is over and people need to take those responsibilities. Casualties left by the war will not mend by itself. People need to claim the responsibility and clean up the mess. In the title the word 'end' means the end of war and the destruction it caused, the loss and the pain and the word 'beginning' represents the start of new organized life in peace.

Conclusion

This dissertation was an attempt to show how writers like Erich Maria Remarque, Ernest Hemingway, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon captured the true nature of First World War; how the people suffered on account of that war. Moreover, this paper illustrated on how adding their own experiences of the war these writers created such literary pieces that considered as masterpieces of war literature. They felt strong urge to produce such literature that will talk about the war soldiers as well as civilians; that will focus on the emotions and sufferings of the First World War victims. They wrote about the disillusionment, disenchanted feeling everyone was surrounded by; they wrote about people's suffering and the decay of values. These writers along with many other did not just sympathized with the sufferers, they were also protesting against the war through their writing, criticizing the brutal, insensitive decisions of the authorities of nations that called upon the war. This paper also attempted to focus writers' perspective on World War I that the war itself was a destructive weapon to traumatize an entire generation and because of that skepticism and cynicism befell upon the people.

Literature and the theme of war have gone hand-in-hand for centuries now. Many poems, novels and short stories were written on war. War inspired many writers to express their view on war and through those writings we get the glimpse of their thought on war and what impact war had on them. World War I was not the only war that influenced great writing. Before the Great War there were Civil War, Vietnam War and these wars inspired some great literary works like Walt Whitman's poem "*The Wound Dresser*", Graham Green's novel *The Quiet American*, etc. Even long before these literary works Homer gave us *Iliad*, a master piece that gave us a different level of experience of war and the consequences of war. Hence we see war literature is not a sudden topic of literature that emerged during the First World War; in fact it has always been a part of literature as war has always been a part of civilization.

Although, World War I did not left any positive impact on anyone, the traumatic experiences, devastating situation, alienation, isolation lead not only the writers but also the veterans of to give their experience and thoughts a written form. In World War I literature we not only see a deviation of topic from the previous era but also we see that the harsh experience of war forced the writers to deviate from the form of writing of their predecessors and produce literature in true but harsh words. After World War I people became alienated and disoriented. It was needed to explain their state and in order to do so writers needed to reflect on the emotion that was prevalent at that time. Thus the writers deviated from idealistic writing form and turn towards realistic form. Idealism is when we conceive and visualize something in ideal or perfect manner, whereas, realism tends to reflect on the pragmatic and actual view of a situation. Realists view a situation with less hopeful eyes. Hope, imagination was something that was lost to the survivors of the First World War. Thus realism was the appropriate form to write in about the sufferings of people of that time. The war had such big impact on all the authors during that time that all the novels and poetry that were published that time were about war and its effects. These literary materials conveyed the writers' concern of the horror of war and hopelessness of the society. Today's literature is a totally different concept in the society than it was in the past. In the past, authors were so affected by their surrounding event; so concerned about the society that it showed in their writing. War literature is a reflection of this impact that society and surroundings had on the writers.

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