

POST TRAUMATIC STRESSES DISORDER IN AMERICAN WAR FICTION

GEETHANJALI. J¹, Dr. ARTHY R²

¹ Ph.D. Scholar, Department of English, Government Arts & Science College - Hosur,

Affiliated to Periyar University -Tamil Nadu.

geethanjaliyepaul@gmail.com

² Associate professor, Department of English, Government Arts & Science College

Hosur - 635110.

ABSTRACT

C.M Joad states that, "man has learnt to fly like a bird, but he hasn't learnt to live like a man". With new technological development and artificial intelligence man possesses the ability to capture the universe but he fails to be a human with empathy and emotion. That's why Mahatma Gandhi rightfully said that Nature has provided us in abundance for man's need and not for man's greed. The worst shades of man can be exposed during a war. War is immortal, Civilization changes, Technology changes, and even evolution changes but war and its consequences remain the same, since ages unmemorable.

Women and children are the first victims of war. Even today in 21st century Geo-political war prevails between Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Hamas and cold wars are happening between many other countries. War is not just the glorified cinematic projection of valour. The soldiers undergo several psychological, emotional, physical and mental trauma which has been carried throughout their life span. Psychologists diagnose these conditions as (PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). This paper projects how war is the impact of the ego clash between two weapon hungry big brothers and not between the two civilians of the countries.

INTRODUCTION

Today in a mechanical life, love and humanism are becoming just words in dictionaries and so too is the case with civilization. We overlook the fact that a cannibal using fork and knife is not civilization. Recently man 'the crown of creation' has become most clearly and ironically machine - human machine. If by "machine" one means a physical system capable of performing certain functions, then humans are proving to be machines of a special biological kind, a soft machine made up of blood and flesh. This is high time humanity needs to be warned and Joseph Heller at his best has done this function through his monumental work " Catch -22 ".

Wars between countries can arise from a complex interplay of political, economic, social and historical factors. Conflicts over land or resources can escalate into wars. This might involve disagreements over borders, contested territories, or valuable resources like oil, water, or minerals. Clashes between countries with opposing political, economical or social ideologies can lead to hostility. This can include disputes over governance systems, human rights, or economic models.

Differences in ethnicity, religion or culture can be a source of conflict.

These tensions can be amplified by historical grievances or a lack of shared identity. Competition over limited resources such as water or arable land, can lead to conflicts. This is especially true in regions facing environmental challenges or where resources are unevenly distributed.

The catch in Catch 22

Catch22 is a satirical novel set in WWII, where the protagonist Yossarian is serving in a U.S. Army force B-25 as a bombardier, stationed on the Mediterranean base on Pianosa during second world war. The novel brilliantly explores the absurdity and chaos of war while delving in to the complexities of human behavior and the struggles of human mind. 'Catch -22' is a paradoxical military regulation that becomes a symbol of the novels absurdity. This catch situation traps soldiers in to a nightmarish loop, making it seemingly impossible for them to escape their perilous situations.

The keynote of catch is projected in chapter one where Youssarian's temperature is too high to send him back into combat, but too low to be a real fever. Youssarian's ailments keep him in a situation of suspended animation : too sick to be well, and too well to be sick.

Catch-22s often result from rules, regulations, or procedures that an individual is subject to, but has no control over, because to fight the rule is to accept it. Another example is a situation in which someone is in need of something that can only be had by not being in need of it. One connotation of the term is that the creators of the "catch-22" situation have created arbitrary rules in order to justify and conceal their own abuse of power.

" Sure there's a catch... Catch 22. Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn't really crazy"

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD is defined as “the development of characteristic and persistent symptoms along with difficulty functioning after exposure to a life-threatening experience or to an event that either involves a threat to life or serious injury.” In addition to military combat, PTSD can result from the experience or witnessing of a terrorist attack, violent crime and abuse, natural disasters, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults.

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association revised the PTSD diagnostic criteria in the fifth edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), moving PTSD from the class of “anxiety disorders” into a new class of “trauma and stressor-related disorders.” DSM-5 categorizes the symptoms that accompany PTSD into four “clusters”:

Intrusion—spontaneous memories of the traumatic event, recurrent dreams related to it, flashbacks, or other intense or prolonged psychological distress

Avoidance—distressing memories, thoughts, feelings, or external reminders of the event

Negative cognitions and mood—myriad feelings including a distorted sense of blame of self or others, persistent negative emotions (e.g., fear, guilt, shame), feelings of detachment or alienation, and constricted affect (e.g., inability to experience positive emotions)

Arousal—aggressive, reckless, or self-destructive behavior; sleep disturbances; hyper vigilance or related problems.

PTSD can be either acute or chronic. The symptoms of acute PTSD last for at least one month but less than three months after the traumatic event. In chronic PTSD, symptoms last for more than three months after exposure to trauma. Youssarian's internal conflict becomes the focal point , illustrating the psychological toll of war on an individual. He grapples with the constant fear of death and a profound desire to survive, highlighting the impact of war on mental health such as post traumatic stress disorder in soldiers.

"As far as Yossarian could recall, he explained to Clevinger with a patient smile,somebody was always hatching a plot to kill him and You are inches away from death every time you go on a mission."

CONCLUSION

" The best way to defeat a catastrophe is to take actions to prevent it long before it happens To do that one must fore see the catastrophe in time and literature helps one to do so" - Isaac Asimov.

The catastrophe primitive man faced was war and frown of nature such as flood, famine, fire and cyclone. Added to all these today, modern man is subjected to mental illness a catastrophe which is more subtle and is capable of affecting both physique and psyche of humanity. The consequences is man - the so called "Beauty of the world, the paragon of animals", is slowly retrogressing towards machine hood. Modern world has become large body of dystopia, where horror, boredom or dehumanization of the planet is accelerated by intelligent machines - We human beings.

Literature, with its authentic and distinct portrayal of the multi-facetedness of life, comes to his aid. The birth of great literature marks the turning point in the history of mankind. The noble ideals and ignoble concepts, lofty aspirations and loathing attempts, sacrificing saviors and scheming traitors are delineated in plenty in literature. Man has both a role model and a wrong model to clearly learn how to be and how not to be. Hence, literature cannot be simply brushed aside as a mere amalgamation of fictitious characters and incidents. It is in fact, the invaluable legacy left for the perusal of humanity to mould and shape their destiny and lead a contended life.