

Golden Research Thoughts

ABSTRACT:-

Many Revolutions have taken place in different countries time to time. The Masses or the society of that period was if on one hand the cause of Revolution, on the other hand was deeply influenced by it, so it is with literature. The literary artist being the product of the age could never escape its influence. The revolution have left deep impression upon the mind of the artists. Therefore the literature of that particular period reflects the impact of revolution. Here my study deals with the impact of the war of independence on American Literature.



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AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND ITS IMPACT UPON LITERATURE



INTRODUCTION :

The years between 1850 and 1865 are signalized as the civil war period. The civil war was the bloodiest conflict which the world had witnessed upto that time. It struck a blow which was almost fatal to the American union. On the northern side, the primary objective of the abolitionists was the destruction of slavery as an institution, whereas the aim of the nationalists was the preservation of the union. On the southern side, many fought to defend slavery on institution whose rights had been guaranteed by the constitution. Beneath these immediate issues lay the conflict between two radically different forms of society : the democratic, industrial economy of the north and the aristocratic and the agrarian-economy of the south

The cause that led to the flare-up of the civil war in 1861 were deeply embedded in the American past. A series of dramatic events place in the 1850's resulting in the most inhuman conflict. the fugitive slave law of 1850 which forced the return of run away slaves to their owners, fanned the fires of abolitionism.

The rival efforts of north and south and to control Kansas, where the issue of slavery was to be decided by popular vote, resulted in bloody strife in that territory in 1855. the controversy over Kansas hastened the organization, in 1856, of the Republican party on a platform opposing the extension of slavery. At the beginning of the war, the south believed that cotton alone was a guarantee of victory, that if deprived of cotton, the textile industry and hence the entire economy of the north and of England would collapse. The southern expectation was not realized. Sectional bitterness was increased still further 1857 by the Dred Scott decision of Chief Justice Taney. Having been taken by his own into a free state and then brought back into a slave state, Dred sued for his freedom. The Supreme Court denied his petition, declared that since a Negro was not a citizen, he did not have access to the courts. England, though on the verge of doing so in 1862, never recognized the confederacy. the issue was to be decided by arms alone, and the overwhelming superiority of the north in population and resources allowed little doubt of the eventual outcome.

Its a time, when the country was on the brink of domestic collapse being torn between the opposing interests of the Whites and Negroes. From the foregoing brief survey, it is obvious that Slavery was the great issue before the American people and it is not surprising that slavery was the subject of much of the literature, As for example we see in the literature produced by John Drink water reflection of the civil war. In his noteworthy work, "Abraham Lincoln", he has presented the conflict between the two parties and the heroic character of Abraham Lincoln.

Both England and America recognized in Lincoln a great leader of mankind who had fought for the slaves and abolition of slavery. the great struggle between the northern and southern colonies on the issue of slavery figures pre-eminently in Abraham Lincoln's life to abolish slavery from American and declare all Negroes as free. He could not possibly bear the sigh of Negro-slaves working as slaves of Whitman. The war continued for a period of two year. After a prolonged struggle with the south, General Grant of the North achieved victory over General Lee of the South. The war-ended in the triumph of Lincoln and the abolition of slavery-Lincoln was mighty pleased at the abolition of slavery. He declared all men free Abraham Lincoln is an-antiwar play and it represents the evils of war. The play tells us that war is not desirable and if war is to be fought, it should come as the east resort-Lincoln's constant endeavour was to avoid war. He clearly said, "I, too, believe war to be wrong, I believe that world must come to wisdom slowly." Lincoln never prepared to allow any secession of the south from the union. Lincoln was a man of peace, though for the achievement of that peace, he had to wage a war with he southern states, He was the man of justice and good-well. He wanted to give the people of American the best of life.

'Abraham Lincoln' is the historical play presenting in six scenes the life and achievement of Abraham Lincoln. The events of the civil war which brought about the abolition of slavery and the death of Lincoln that followed the abolition of slavery have been presented in this play. That is the historical material which drink water had at his disposal and that is what he has presented in 'Abraham Lincoln'.

In this connection, Drink water himself says, "But while I have, I hope done nothing to reverse history, I have freely telescoped its events, and imposed invention upon its movement in such way as I needed to shake the dramatic significance of my subject."

Thus in 'Abraham Lincoln' it is not the futility of the war that is emphasised. In this imperfect world wars will be some times a practical necessity, but wars should not be revengeful and wars should always be fought for some noble ends. Another literary artist Walt Whitman also presents impact of the American Revolution in his composition. The age of Whitman is generally known as the age of the civil-war. Whitman saw certain baffling problems before the nation. He was perhaps the loudest voice during the civil war days. Whitman come out with an admirable treatise of democracy known as Democratic vista (1971). He had brought out three successive editions of 'Leaves of Grass' before the war broke out and had laid down his basic principles in those volumes. We shall now trace the element of Democracy in the poem of Walt Whitman 'Leaves of Grass' is so comprehensive and inclusive that it contains a great deal about this noble concept and practice. W.M. Rossetti described it as 'the poem of American nationality'. In 'Song of Myself' there are many references to American men,, women, Sciences and animals. In 'Song of banner at Daybreak', which is expression of the ideal declaration of war. Whitman makes the child exclaim on seeing the American Flag. In 'The wound Dresser', Whitman very touchingly describes his own job during the war. In the poems like 'O captain, My caption' and 'When Lilacs lost in the Dooryard Bloom'd', direct mention of Lincolns, that great patriot, unionist and president, has been made. To Whitman, Abraham Lincoln had become a symbol of Democracy a preserver of the nation.

As a poet of American democracy, Whitman raised his voice in support of it. He was not prepared

to sacrifice it at any cost. He identified American with democracy. To Whitman democracy means equality and equality is much more than a political ideal the great first principle of the Noble world.

American democracy interested Whitman most. He gave voice to the American personality and shaped its character. When Lucien Price asked Alfred North Whitehead what, if anything, original and distinctively American this country had produced, the philosopher answered without hesitation 'Whitman'.

There were many others who knew that he was really the singer of American democracy and nation. In his learned article, "the shaking of American character", Persy Miller has remarked, "Whitman being what he was, are apt to come not from a heightened sense of form or from a quest for more precise language, but simply out of his constantly changing sense of the American destiny." Thoreau exclaimed with delight. "He is Democracy. Whitman was a democrat all his life, and his poetry reflects it. John Burroughs remarks in his scholarly work, *Whitman, A study* (1896) Whitman was a patriotic poet who wished to see his country enjoy honor and prestige in the eyes of the world. He found a peculiar identity his personality and that of America.

The next writer Robert Lee Frost may be regarded as the most beloved, admired and honored of the American poets. He has been called "the essential voice and spirit of the era", He considered himself the very embodiment of New England. "See us and you see England", He once wrote of H.L. Mencken, who was once to visit the Fosters living in New Hampshire. He voiced the hopes and dreams of his country in his poems, Like.

"The gift out right" – the poet tells us how 'the land' flourishes out of the seed that took root in New England. The poem throws light on the patriotic feeling of Frost. His poem 'stopping by woods' crossed the nation border. And touched the heart and mind of a literary thinker like Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. Frost celebrated America in poem after poem like 'Mending Wall' And 'Death of the Hired Man' deal with the theme of alienation of man from man and man from society. "Mending wall' is one of the most famous and most widely quoted poems by Frost the main thought of the poem is that in the present day world man seems to be suffering from a contradiction or paradox forms the essential theme of the poem and the poet's attitude is that this contradiction is undoubtedly a problem and it is difficult to find its solution. He says –

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen ground swell under it,
and spells the upper boulders in the sun
and makes gaps even two can pass abreast..."

Critics also add a wider and symbolical meaning to this poem. Take for instance, the superior race theory 'A white race is superior to a Negro as a greyhound is to a pointer dog.'

We have already seen what crimes were perpetrated by the white people on the black people in the context of superior race theory till Abraham Lincoln, the great president of America finally abolished slavery and saved the Negro people from utter humiliation and untold suffering.

Frost was a child of the rural background what impressed him most was not that much of older New England had been lost but that something had survived. Democracy and America find representative voices in both Frost and Whitman. Both writers are concerned with brotherhood and fellowship, though each approaches the problem in an individual fashion.

Even Ernest Hemingway reflects the influence of war in his works. He is one of the most powerful short story writer and Novelist of America. Ernest was a strongly independent child, belligerent and resentful. When Ernest was ten, his grandfather presented him a man-sized gun, it was in this manner that Ernest cultivated an intimate relationship with the weapons of violence and war. Ernest had suffered much, this made Ernest bitter, later he made these very experiences the theme and content of his novel. His novel 'A Farewell to Arms' published in 1927. Civil war had broken out between the Fascists and the Republicans in Spain in July, 1939, Ernest Hemingway was living in Cuba. An ardent lover of adventure he could not resist himself and took active part in it. Ernest Hemingway was a wonderful person - Born at the threshold of a new century Victorian morality and superficial religious conformism on the one hand and the rising tide of a fresh awareness of American national identity on the other. The confrontation between two opposing camps of thinking brought to surface many humiliating maladies from which the American society in general was found to be suffering. He possessed a deep human warmth and rare grace of easy affability, an unrelenting fighter for justice and freedom. He expounded the republican cause during the Spanish civil war and did it with dedication.

"In our time" (1925), it is a collection of fifteen stories sketches etc.

The subject matter of these are the author's experiences of war, bull-fights and violent deaths, incidents of Hemingway's work as roving correspondent at various places in Europe and America. They mostly deal with violent events in contemporary life. The title of the small volume is characteristic of Ernest Hemingway, reflecting bitter irony. It has been borrowed from the prayer "Give us peace in our time, O Lord!" "On a close examination a thread of unity of themes is discerned in these stories and sketches. "A Farewell to Arms" (1929) It is a classical war novel, the hero of the novel is an American, Frederic Henry. In this novel Hemingway has artistically blended and balanced the two themes of love and war. Every character in the novel is convinced of the futility of war and is fed up with it.

Like other fellow Americans, he volunteers to fight on their side, as a protagonist of liberty,

equality and Fraternity. The impact of so many varied encounters and experiences in such a short time was too much for him. He saw the multiplicity of religious, national and political loyalties, bases strictly on the racial and ethnic consideration had set at naught many of the gains of the American civil war. This negative attitude had at once thwarted the process of culture and political cohesion which had been the ambitious aim of Thoreau and Emerson, Franklin and Abraham Lincoln.

Thus Drink water, Whitman, Frost and Hemingway elaborately reflect the impact of the War of Independence in America. There are certain other, minor writers also who were influenced by the war.

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