CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
I

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War may be defined as an attempt to resort to force for the settlement of disputes. It is a political act, usually undertaken when it appears that all the other alternatives have failed. The analysis of war is philosophical, political, economic, technological, social and psychological. These analyses are mixed, since war is an extremely complex social phenomenon that cannot be explained through a single factor or through a single approach. War offers obvious opportunities for the basest behaviour, but it is a regulated exercise of violence for particular political ends, since it is a political act. Though wars have been fought since times immemorial, they cannot be allowed to irretrievably injure the functioning of human society and must provide for subsequent reconciliation between warring parties.

Clausewits cogently defines war as a rational instrument of foreign policy, which is "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will. The function of warfare in prehistory probably differed somewhat from among animals. Instead of primarily aiming at the preservation of the species and secondarily at the preservation of the indi-
primitive warfare seemed to have functioned mainly to preserve the social group by increasing its solidarity.

With the evolution of the literate civilisations came an increase in the incidence and severity of wars. The establishment of great cities was followed by the establishment of first professional armies. Techniques of war became more sophisticated. Where wars became more geographically widespread, they also became more concentrated in time, giving rise to a clear distinction between war and peace. Wars were fought mainly for territory to secure domination.

The two World Wars that broke out in the twentieth century are unprecedented since the second, third and fourth decades have seen not only destruction human and material unparalleled in recorded history, but the mind itself revealing a capacity for evil of which it was previously unaware. In England the shock was all the more severe, as the opening years of the century had been full of hope and prosperity. The test of genius in the period is largely the degree to which a writer has been able to convey into imaginative forms an awareness of how profound these changes have been. Whatever might be the technical ability and alertness of the writer, if he failed to recognise that human life was passing through a great tragic period, his work fell flat.
Though the early years of the twentieth century, in the west, were marked by prosperity, expanding opportunity and in many minds of increased faith in humanity and in its capacity for progress, there was also self criticism. Still it was thought the "Pharisees" were capable of improvement and social injustice could be eliminated by a process of gradualism. It was hoped imperialism could in time and without violence be assimilated to democratic ideals. Above all it was to be a world where man would have increasing opportunities of exercising his attainments to the full. It may well be that such impressions were illusory, and that any portrait of the society as a whole would have yielded large ranges of suffering, depression and disillusionment. But the vocal elements, which were mainly of middle class, as yet not deprived of its confidence, gave expression to a conviction of the desirability of the world in which it lived and of its faith in general capacity for improvement.

H.G. Wells, G.B. Shaw and John Galsworthy were engaged in social criticism during the first decade of the century. They were anxious to reform the society, but they did not question the ultimate possibility of reform, nor did they postulate the inadequacy of man as an instrument for the goodlife. Unfortunately they did not have any conception
of the possible disruption of civilisation. Wells and
Shaw sometimes questioned the inevitability of progress,
but never during this earlier period did they explore this
idea with any seriousness. Nor was any of them interested
profoundly in the nature of the human mind itself.

In the period after 1918 the concentration on social
criticism modified. The novelist might still have remained
the critic of society, as he attempted the study of the nature
of men. The exploration of the individual personality was
ultimately the unifying element in works as different as that
The novelist was assisted by psychological methods and the
emphasis was on psycho-analysis. The new method enabled the
writer to a more profound study of the human personality.
Meanwhile, the war of 1914-18 had stirred a vision, never as
yet forgotten, of cruelty and evil in man's nature which would
have proved fantastic and inconceivable in the first decade
of the century.

Thus started a new and creative attempt among the more
original writers to explore the nature of man's mind. During
the earlier years of the century most men had still believed
in progress, even when they denied its existence, and they
believed in the permanence of things as they were, even when
they denied its existence, and they believed in the permanence of things as they were, even when theoretically they were on the side of change. They indulged in the benefits of bourgeois civilisation, even when in their writings they had condemned its very presence. During the inter-war period, the vision, though never complete, was profound. Man waited often frustrated at the door to a new era. He waited hopelessly, for the immediate prospect seemed to be war and the ultimate conclusions were threatening and uncertain.

The failure of the Russian Revolution to ignite the flames of revolutionary socialism in the West has blown open the Pandora's Box of mankind's ills—social, psychological and spiritual. War and war economy are some of the afflictions of the individual. The governments' war abstraction is thrust upon the individuals. Some of the individuals stunted and twisted by the post-war fascist forces are war bred. They are trigger happy war hawks like General Cummings who says in _The Naked and the Dead_. "We are no longer going to cover our eyes with our left hand while our right is extending an imperialistic paw."

The possibility of the next war "which will be between arms and arms rather than men and men is not dismissed. War
has come to stay. It survives often times as "Cold War."

The "Cold War" which had functioned as an exclusive mode of expression of American political leadership in the post war period, had succeeded in institutionalizing itself. To dislodge the cold war from its grey eminence required the sort of broad-scale political reorientation that defense contractors were least suited to carry forth and those best suited, such as labour organisations and voluntary associations were least able to carry forth. 2

Disarmament which entails reconversion and conversion of war industry into peace time industry, has political, social and economical implications. To Americans, the communist menace serves to justify resistance to all kinds of social innovation. The Americans' view of the Soviet Union as a deadly adversary that at any moment may destroy them also makes real disarmament unlikely, and suggests that instead of getting rid of arms they will merely rest on them. The American view is that affluence is abundance of purposes and intense exploration and discovery of new ones. It also means stronger concern for the purposes of others. This view is indicative of the widespread fear that only a monolith can overcome a monolith and that only a bureaucratized state can defeat another bureaucratized state.
The opinion that reducing investment in armaments is to invite chaos around the world, is purely a political argument. This argument is not valid from an economic standpoint. Disarmament being linked with reconversion and conversion of war industry, public has to be convinced that it does not result in unemployment. Crash programmes can be taken up to retain personnel for peace-time enterprise which will not lead to lower income. Reconversion and conversion of war industry are linked to the ability and willingness of governments to engage in a permanent redistribution of investment, consumption and expenditure, which, in turn, is based on the biggest assumption of all the possibility of an extended and durable peace.

More important than the wars pursued by the states is the war mentality. Man carries innately a capacity for evil. The two World Wars manifested their capacity which causes preference for the totalitarian or the fascist order. The reconversion of the "milorg" (military organisation) to the "firm" (non war industry) is a remote possibility which enables enterprise minded like Milo Minderbinder in Joseph Heller's Catch-22 to make money unscrupulously. Milo Minderbinder is the culmination of the business forces in war environment.
The work of the major writers of the inter-war period, Yeats, Joyce, D.H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley was to some extent engaged with the idea of war of 1914-18. But they were not as deeply affected as were the writers who had actual experience in the fighting services. The war of 1914-18 had a profound effect not only on the economic life of man, but on his whole mental and spiritual outlook. Trench warfare as it was endured on the Western Front in the middle and the later years of war, was probably one of the grimmest and most brutalising types of conflict which man had ever had to endure. The result affected the mood of the whole period. It can be discovered in the deeply cynical reaction against the idealism which had been preached with appropriate slogans during the war years. Similarly, in the inter-war period, a sceptical attitude was maintained by many alert minds towards projects for international co-operation.

With the war of 1914-18, from whose lacerating experiences the world never recovered the western civilisation had lost its sense of permanence. Western man seemed sometimes to have a longing for mortality and for the end of traditions in which he had grown up. All that once seemed humane, progressive and hopeful became an evil and contorted shape. Something had entered in against which civilised man seemed
helpless and resigned. Though many ignored this new vision of evil in life, it persisted to gain confirmation in the years when Second World War became inevitable.

Rupert Brooke had defined the romantic idealism of the early stages of World War I. The early stage broke with the actual experience of war and the idealists were replaced by satirists and realists such as Robert Nichols and Siegfried Sassoon. The outstanding poet Sassoon gave the full bitterness of the experience of the individual soldier who neither remembered the cause for which he was fighting nor trusted those who led him. War poetry, fortunately, did not end with the mood of Sassoon. There emerged Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) who possessed himself of some visionary quality through which the cruelty and piteousness of war were at once apparent. In a note on his intentions, Wilfred Owen wrote,

"My subject is war and the pity of war.
The poetry is in the pity."

The presentation of the war in fiction bears some resemblance to the values of the poets, though chronologically the fictional presentation comes later. In part this is a practical matter, for while a poet may write a brief lyric in a trench, or at the base or on leave, carrying it if
necessary for days in his memory, the novelist must have leisure to exercise his craft. Apart from this seemed a conspiracy of silence about the war as a theme for fiction in the years which immediately followed 1918. "The smaller audience which read Sassoon or Owen was prepared to endure again in full tragedy in imaginative retrospect, but the larger audience of fiction demanded in those years immediately after the war, any theme rather than that of the conflict itself and its horrors."

The situation changed after a decade. By 1929 the audience were ready to face imaginatively a war whose memory had filled it with horror. By then confidence and self-assurance ended. Instead there was an enunciation of a mood which was near to despair. The change had emerged not from any individual fretfulness, or distress, but from a recognition of the general disruption of civilisation. The great writers of the period saw the crisis and attempted to express it in imaginative terms. However, brilliant, writers, fell short of the highest level if they ignored the spiritual crisis in man's history.

I attempt to touch upon the variations on war theme among four American novelists: Ernest Hemingway, Norman Mailer, James Jones and Joseph Heller. The attempt is aimed
at, not contrasting their merits as novelists, bringing out the variations among these celebrated writers on their major themes. These writers have not confined themselves to the themes which I highlight, since they have many other objectives and plans. But their other objectives are relatively less important when they are considered mainly as war writers. I present the variations in a chronological order, and my intention is to bring out a composite picture of these themes varied in the writings of the chosen novelists.

Prior to 1952 the standard critical view was Hemingway wrote about violence because he was a violent man. This view of Hemingway as a primitive hindered a full appreciation of the writer. This view also assumed, to one degree or the other that the presentation of violence was meaningless, glorified and gratuitous. In 1952, Philip Young propounded a theory that the treatment of violence was the mark of an obsession resulting from the trauma caused by a serious and massive war wound received by Hemingway at Fossalta during World War I. This theory might be supported by Freud and Jung, but it does not explain Hemingway's progressive and sophisticated use of violence, gyre-like rather than circular, as he matures. From 1926 to '52 Hemingway has made a progre-
cessive use of violence. It is an integral, meaningful and artistically functional part of his fiction. Violence is organic to and intentionally reinforcing the major motifs. The physical violence is viewed as the individual attempting to come to terms with an external, physical environment which is necessarily hostile. The verbal violence is in the individual attempting to come to terms with others in relation to himself. The more sophisticated violence is that of repressed self-aggression with which man tries to come to terms with himself. The first of these, the physical violence as used in *A Farewell to Arms* is studied in these papers.

Norman Mailer's concern is the cultural and spiritual sickness of the contemporary American society. He relates the sickness to the virus of totalitarianism against which Mailer launches his crusade. It is agreed by all that social ills and the plight of the individual loom large in *The Naked and the Dead* as well as in his other novels. But it is contested whether the social ills are bred by the forces of totalitarianism or its mutants, since they can crush the individual into conforming and stagnation. Therefore Mailer's ethic is a compound of courage and commitment to growth.
The thesis novel *The Naked and the Dead* paints men as both "beast" and "seer." It is not that, some are "beasts" and others are "seers." Individual men differ in their beastly and seer like qualities by degree. He concedes ample freedom to the individual to seek his salvation by confronting adverse forces. Thus the novel offers alternatives to the stultifying effects of the modern society in terms of moral principles.

James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* is a peace time war novel based on the complexities and contradictions of the values of individualism and the surrender of self. Therefore it is a book that is more than a novel about the army. The army is a microcosm of the society in which the underdog is the victim of sufferings. Jones is more powerful in delineating the sufferings rather than the solutions. The solutions, he offers, are spiritual based on his conception of a "New Religion." The "New Religion" believes in an ever evolving God who is neither the one conceived in the Old Testament as the God of Vengeance nor in the New Testament as the God of Forgiveness. This God is the ultimate amalgam of individuals. The amalgamation of the individuals occurs by the end of the
Time. This amalgamation argues all men, rather souls are similar. As long as the self is subject to desires and illusions the soul is isolated. When the soul is elevated above animal level it merges with God. Jones makes From Here to Eternity a proletarian novel championing the underdog.

The unprecedented destruction of men and matter by the two World Wars has caused a sense of alienation in modern man. They have shattered humanistic values and the individual's sense of personal dignity. Saul Bellow, Malamud and Joseph Heller have undertaken the task of discovering possibilities to rescue man from the dehumanizing effects of war. They have discovered man in bondage in self, home, organization or society. They protest against this bondage making their works protest literature. By asserting the idea of individual freedom in their novels, these writers have created the hope for meaningful existence. In Catch-22 Yossarian achieves metaphysical freedom by defying his absurd situation in the squadron. Humour, the energetic humour which explodes over all the pages of Catch-22, advances the motif of freedom.
REFERENCES

