The previous chapters deal with plays which are critical of war. Different playwrights such as Brecht, Miller, Arden, Al-Hakim, Soyinka and Bharati condemn war. However, O’Casey is different in his attitude towards war. The third chapter presented his anti-war stance and dealt with the motives pertaining to this attitude. This chapter will present his pro-war stance for a just cause as well as will deal with Ali Ahmed Bakatheer’s pro-war attitude and will attempt to relate these attitudes to the concept of Jihad and the just war tradition. O’Casey’s idea of war follows the just war tradition. In Oak Leaves, he is against Pobjoy’s pacifist approach and he ridicules it through Feelim. It is important to note that O’Casey was a Christian in his early stage of life and a communist in his late stage. Through some statements made by Feelim, O’Casey seemed to be against the Christians who would ‘turn the other cheek’ and ‘would put the sword back to its place’ when they are attacked. O’Casey did not want people to be passive like that and wanted them to hold the sword in their hands and fight their enemies. Bakatheer looks at war from an Islamic point of view which states that war is necessary for self-defence and for protecting Muslims’ sacred places. His idea of war springs from the ‘lesser Jihad’ which is to fight for and defend the Muslims. He called for resisting Israel through legal means such as economic boycott as in Shylock Al-Jadeed (The New Shylock). He also called for a joint stand of the Islamic and the Christian countries to expose Zionism as a racial movement as Fascism so that the world puts an end to it as in Al-Torah Al-Dhaeca (The Lost Torah). In Sha’ab Allah Al-Mokhtar (The Chosen People of God), Bakatheer dramatises how Israel as a state collapsed following the revolution of the Jews against it after they had discovered its shortcomings. He predicted or probably wished the collapse of Israel as in Shylock Al-Jadeed, Sha’ab Allah Al-Mokhtar, Impraturiyah Fi Al-Mazad (An Empire in Auction). In Shylock Al-Jadeed, he pointed

---

11 Jihad is classified by the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) into ‘lesser Jihad’ and ‘greater Jihad’. ‘The lesser Jihad’ is when Muslims are engaged in fighting with enemies. The ‘greater Jihad’ refers to spiritual struggle against ones own desires and lust. It is noted that the Prophet always insisted that a Muslim should engage himself in the ‘greater Jihad’. He considered the ‘lesser Jihad’ as temporary imposed by circumstances.
out the evils and the ill intention of Israel to the world so that the International Court of Justice takes the legal action against the illegal presence of Israel in Palestine.

It is important to give a brief outline about the just war tradition and the Jihad tradition since they serve as a relevant background to the plays in question. The just war tradition had its roots in Greeks and Romans and was developed by Augustine of Hippo (354-430), an important figure in the western Christianity, as a reaction to the Christian’s pacifist approach ‘Turn the other cheek’. The just war tradition addresses important issues related to the morality of war such as when and how war is waged. It established rules that govern the ethics of war – when war can be just and what combatants can do when they wage war. The following article from ‘Just War theory’ explains further what the just war tradition means:

Historically, the just-war tradition—a set of mutually agreed rules of combat—commonly evolves between two similar enemies. When enemies differ greatly because of different religious beliefs, race, or language, war conventions have rarely been applied. It is only when the enemy is seen to be a people with whom one will do business in the following peace that tacit or explicit rules are formed for how wars should be fought and who they should involve. In part the motivation is seen to be mutually beneficial—it is preferable to remove any underhand tactics or weapons that may provoke an indefinite series of vengeance acts. Nonetheless, it has been the concern of the majority of just war theorists that such asymmetrical morality should be denounced, and that the rules of war should apply to all equally; that is, just war theory should be universal. (para. 2)

The aim of the just war theories is to ensure that the ultimate purpose of waging a war is to establish the lasting peace between the nations in conflict. They also examine whether resorting to the use of arms is morally justifiable after exhausting all the peaceful means to settle the disputes. These theories of course abhor war but they accept it as a necessary act in certain circumstances such as in self-defence and in aggression and to eliminate the evil posed by certain nations and dictators.

In modern times, Michael Walzer in Just and Unjust Wars discusses the moral issues related to the wars waged. The following lines taken from this book are related
to aggression which is relevant to O'Casey’s idea of waging a just war against Germany during the Battle of Britain. O’Casey thinks of Germany as an aggressor and therefore, it is just to wage war against it. The first condition in the just war tradition is to have a valid cause such as self-defence. The motive behind O’Casey’s stance is self-defence and to restore peace to Europe. This is how Walzer puts it:

Resistance is important so that rights can be maintained and future aggressors deterred. The theory of aggression restates the old doctrine of the just war: it explains when fighting is a crime and when it is permissible, perhaps even morally desirable. The victim of aggression fights in self-defense, but he isn’t only defending himself, for aggression is a crime against society as a whole. He fights in its name and not only in his own. Other states can rightfully join the victim’s resistance; their war has the same character as his own, which is to say, they are entitled not only to repel the attack but also to punish it. (59)

In the fifth proposition of the theory of aggression, Walzer states: “Nothing but aggression can justify war. The central purpose of the theory is to limit the occasions of war. ‘There is a single and only just cause for commencing a war,’ wrote Vittoria, ‘namely, a wrong received.’ There must actually have been a wrong, and it must actually have been received” (62). One can state that O’Casey in Oak Leaves does not talk about commencing a war against Germany. He calls upon people to resist ‘the wrong received’, i.e., Germany’s aggression against Britain. He feels that this aggression justifies war. In the play, he urges other nations to ‘join the victim’s resistance’ against Germany.

The medieval writers classified the just war tradition into two categories: *jus ad bellum* (justice of war) and *jus in bello* (justice in war). Michael Quinlan refers to commonly held principles under *jus ad bellum* such as: just cause, proportionate cause, right intention, right authority, prospect of success, last resort. He also refers to two principles under *jus in bello*: discrimination and proportionality (3+).

According to some ideologies, as elaborated below, war is seen as constructive and necessary in certain circumstances to keep the society in the right track and to defend it against tyranny of rulers and unjust practices. Theodor Meron in his study of war and chivalry in Shakespeare’s war plays looks at the various war issues related
to the treatment of soldiers and women and children in the times of war. He explores
the conduct of war in the medieval ages which has relevance to the modern age as
presented in the war plays of Shakespeare. In Bloody Constraint, Meron remarks how
thinkers like Honoré Bouvet looks at war as a good thing and attributes the human
cost associated with war to the false usage:

In his authoritative treatise The Tree of Battles (ca. 1387), Honoré
Bouvet wrote that a prince not only had a right to resort to war to
defend subjects from pillage and murder, but a duty as well. He
regarded war as ‘not an evil thing, but [as] good and virtuous,’ because
it sought to ‘set wrong right.’ The aim of war was thus to ‘to wrest
peace, tranquility and reasonableness, from him who refuses to
acknowledge his wrongdoing.’ Like Giovanni, Bouvet argued that war
derived from divine law and from God because, as in the case of the
biblical Joshua, God not only permitted war, but ‘ordained it.’ It was
also authorized by the law of nations, including canon law and civil
law.

However, Bouvet could not remain entirely oblivious to concerns
about the innocent victims of war. He maintained, nevertheless, that
the evil things that happen in war are caused not by war, but by abuse,
as in the case of a soldier raping a woman or setting fire to a church: ‘if
in war many evil things are done, they never come from the nature of
war, but from false usage.’

.... Honoré Bouvet claimed that war should therefore be compared to a
medicine that, while curing the disease, has some adverse effects as
well. A gardener who pulls weeds inevitably plucks some good plants
as well; for the fault of one man, many can be destroyed in war. (19-
20)

In addition to the brief outline about Jihad mentioned in the Introduction, I
would like to add that the Jihad tradition also includes rules pertaining to jus ad
belligum and jus in bello. Jihad, for example, permits war in the following conditions:
in self-defence, to protect an Islamic nation or a sacred place to Muslims, to restore
peace and justice, and to have a right intention to putting right a wrong. If Jihad is
performed, there are certain ethics to be taken into account when soldiers are in the
battle field. They have to go strictly by those rules as mentioned in the Introduction or they will be punished by Allah. Qura’an and Sunnah direct Muslims to be ready for Jihad in certain occasions as mentioned earlier and strictly follow the rules of Jihad. A verse from Qura’an states when war has to be waged: “fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God does not love transgressors” (Qura’an 2:190). Like many Muslim scholars, Ibn Taymiyya states that Jihad is “to defend Muslims against real or anticipated attacks; to guarantee and extend freedom of belief; and to defend the mission (al-da’wah) of Islam” (Zawati 12). Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) called a war waged against an aggressor or against an enemy for the cause of God ‘the lesser Jihad’. He defined ‘the greater Jihad’ as the internal struggle against lust and against one’s own desires. Jihad according to many Muslim scholars is not to force people to convert to Islam, to conquer other nations or settle disputes. Jihad for a just cause is fundamental from an Islamic point of view as the film Lion of the Desert (1981) illustrates. This film is based on the leader of the Libyan resistance Omer Al-Mokhtar (1862-1931) against the Italian occupation.

It is true, as Nicole Woods puts it, that Jihad and just war traditions reach the same conclusions on a number of moral issues (para. 13). He mentions that both Jihad and the just war traditions conclude that self-defense is the most elementary ethical cause for war (para. 13). One may add that Jihad and just war traditions consider ‘the right intention’ as an important principle which has to been taken into account when waging a war. The right intention in those two traditions has to be for restoring peace and justice and not for settling old or fresh disputes. In this regard, O’Casey and Bakatheer look at war as a just cause to restore peace and defend oneself. Regardless of their ideological background, both of those two writers share this view of just cause as elaborated below.

The glorification of war has been with man since time immemorial. In the old times, man glorified war and considered it as a manly activity. In fact, one may not find playwrights in the modern era who write about war and glorify it in the way Shakespeare did. This is because, without doubt, that the modern war is not seen as a ‘manly’ activity and does not follow the rules of the just war tradition or the rules prescribed in the various religions. War, in modern times, may break out for trivial

---

12 The secondary source of Islamic law after Qura’an (the way of the Prophet Mohammed pbuh). * Asterisk, in this chapter, means that the scholar has attempted the translation from Arabic
things which do not make it justified enough. If one looks at Shakespeare’s history plays about war one may find that the plays emphasise the spectacle of war with a mass of troops and their destructive potential. In these plays, war comes through as a game played by kings and conquerors for their personal glory and grandeur. Shakespeare’s history plays in particular are full of patriotic fervour intended to arouse passion of pride in one’s nation or race or creed. War is a manly game, a sought-after activity particularly for marshals, generals and kings. Henry IV and Henry V, for example, are pro-war plays in which Shakespeare is certainly a partisan of war. Glorification of war which advocates chivalry, honour, courage, patriotism, and justice is the central motif of many of his history plays.

In the introduction to Shakespeare in Performance, James N. Lochlin points out that Henry V celebrates a great warrior of England:

The ‘official’ Henry V is the story of one of England’s greatest military triumphs, a young and valiant kind leading a badly outnumbered army to victory over the French at Agincourt. It is the story told by the Chorus, when he instructs the audience how to respond to ‘the mirror of all Christian kings’:

\begin{quote}
O now, who behold
The royal captain of this ruined band
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
Let him cry, ‘Praise and glory on his head!’ (1)
\end{quote}

Henry V presents the theme of war in a variety of ways and well-balances between the views that glamorise war and that which condemn it. There are many references where the play illustrates how patriotic the war is. One finds this patriotism in the speeches of the chorus who glorify their warrior king and call him ‘the star of England’ as O’Casey calls the RAF pilots ‘the sword of England’ in Oak Leaves. Unlike Oak Leaves, Henry V contains many references to the futility of war and the intentional havoc and victimisation caused to people and cities. There were towns which were completely destroyed and demolished and its young males were massacred. However, the play remains one of the greatest works which shows war as a manly activity characterised with courage, honour and patriotism. And if there is someone to blame for the innocent victims killed during the conquest of France, it is the board of the advisors who assured King Henry V of the justification of the war. It
was common and also a part of the religious practices for the king or the prince to take the advice from his consultants in serious matters which the kingdom faces. Advisors are sometimes prejudiced and unfair in their judgements which might be based on personal and narrow interests as happened with Henry V.

As mentioned in the Introduction of the thesis that religion plays a vital role in driving and instigating people to wage war against their enemies. Henry V was hailed ‘the mirror of all Christian kings’ which gives the play a religious overtone and makes the war looks holy, especially after king Henry consulted the Archbishop of Canterbury for honest advice whether the war to be waged against France is just.

Hinduism, as discussed in the Introduction, does not desire war as many religions of the world but it justifies it against evil and injustice. It also insists on following the rules of the just war when waging a war. It believes that war is inevitable and difficult to avoid in certain circumstances as happened between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Krishna attempted to negotiate peace between the two clans but he failed and he stood with Arjuna against the Kauravas after exhausting the means for peace. Bharati in Andha Yug presents his reader with a variety of views on war. He, as discussed in the previous chapter, exposes his audience to the human cost during war and how man is dehumanised and debased. He also, as will be discussed below, exposes his audience to the nature of war. The play dramatises that the war is unavoidable and it is a law of nature and it will keep happening time and again, especially when evil surfaces. These views of just war are present in the great Indian epic of Mahabharata as Stephen Knapp points out:

War is acceptable only if there is no other way to uphold dharma. After having been given ample opportunities, if the enemy refuses to follow the ways of dharma, then there may be a need to take up arms. To stand by and watch evil unfold or grow is an even greater evil. That is why Lord Krishna urged Arjuna to fight as we read in Bhagavad-gita

Lord Krishna never exhibited special attachment toward one person over another. When Duryodhana wanted Krishna’s army to fight for him, Krishna gave it to him. And when Arjuna wanted only Krishna on his side, Krishna accepted but told Arjuna He would not take up arms during the battle. He would only act as Arjuna’s Charioteer. But that was enough for Arjuna. (351)
This view of war is also explained in the following lines with a quotation from The Bhagavad Gita as presented in “Is War Justified? What Do Hindu Scriptures Say?”

Krishna in order to persuade him to fight, reminds him that there is no such act as killing. He explains that the "atman" or soul is the only reality; the body is simply an appearance, its existence and annihilation are illusory. And for Arjuna, a member of the "Kshatriya" or the warrior caste, fighting the battle is 'righteous'. It is a just cause and to defend it is his duty or dharma.

‘...if you are killed (in the battle) you will ascend to heaven. On the contrary if you win the war you will enjoy the comforts of earthly kingdom. Therefore, get up and fight with determination... With equanimity towards happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat, fight. This way you will not incur any sin.’ (The Bhagavad Gita)

Krishna's advice to Arjuna forms the rest of the Gita, at the end of which, Arjuna is ready to go to war. (para. 5)

Dying for the defense of one's own country is also sacred in Hinduism as Jayaram V puts it: “Hindus also believe that if a person dies while waging a war in the defense of his country, he would attain the heaven of the warriors (viraswargam), a belief which often proved suicidal form many Rajput warriors and their rulers in medieval India when they came into conflict with the Muslim invaders. Armed with this belief these warriors often marched into the battle field, with a death wish rather an aim to win” (para. 3).

The following analysis of Andha Yug reflects the concept of war in the great Indian epic of Mahabharata. It tells the audience that war has been with man since his existence on earth and that war will keep recurring when imbalance in society surfaces. Krishna was himself part of the cycle of war which he could not stop or avoid. This is how Bharati puts it in the play: “Krishna said to Arjuna: ‘Lift up your bow, Arjuna. Fight without fear. The meaning of a man’s existence lies in the actions he performs, not in his refusal to act’” (Andha Yug 58-59).

Blessed are those who bring peace upon the earth. This essential truth of life is known to everybody. With this knowledge there are people – only a few – who stride across the earth to stop war and to establish peace on the earth. But they always fail.
War is waged; once it starts, it engulfs even the lovers of peace. Sanjay, the wisest, becomes a part of this all-destructive war as pointed by Chorus:

And the prophetic Sanjaya.
– immortal and detached –
who sees all and know all
who fears not the wars that Gods promote
who is free from doubts and confusions
who can dare to confront the king with the truth –
even that Sanjaya
is ensnared by the dark night of delusions
and stands lost
on this path of thorns and stones. (Andha Yug 44-45)

Even though unwilling, he becomes a part, though passive, of this destruction. It is so because war is not the creation of the moment. War is always waged in the present. But it is not the creation of the whim of one or many individuals going berserk over an issue, a cause or a selfish desire. All these are visible and apparent and it is felt that the war has been caused by them. It is felt that the Mahabharata war was caused by the selfish desires of the Kauravas. It is also felt that the Pandavas participated in the war to defend an ideal cause. These are all causes apparent and operational in the present. But the present can not be taken as an event isolated from the eternal time. It is an essential part of that time and so the present takes its shape in the womb of time preceding, it can be called the past. Then it becomes a part also of the time to come; it is called the future. What takes place in the present comes out of the womb of the past and grows to include the future. That is how time operates and makes things good and bad – to operate in the world. War also, thus, is an inalienable part of this time.

Thus, War occurs when the whole Age becomes blind; the Age is the Blind Age, ‘Andha Yug’ – which functions and as an inalienable part of the eternal time. The Age is like the little waves in the vast current of time in which the present is created out of the past and both put their impact on the future. This is how Dhritarashtra, the blind king understands and explain the Mahabharata to his son Yuyutsu: “Son / you were conceived in blindness. / It defined the boundary of your
existence. / You tried to escape the enclosing circle / and live in a circle of light” (Andha Yug 110).

It is a circle of darkness, of blindness, slowly and slowly forming itself, gradually encircling everything and drawing everything, everybody in its vortex. Once in its vortex, one fails to see any light. One who tries to see it gets lost like Yuyutsu. It is a useless effort; nothing is in his control as Dhritarashtra explains it to his son. One has to be blind and to live in utter eternal darkness. That is why Gandhari, though she has eyes and can see, chooses to become blind by closing her eyes with a black piece of cloth; she vows to remain blind to the end. The Mendicant, symbolising time, explains it; he had been in the past, he is in the present; his vision extends to the future. He knows the age well and explains it thus: “Life in this age / is not a smooth-flowing river / but a dark and tormented ocean / that seethes and surges / like a pit of snakes / in which thousands of serpents / blindly twist and turn / coil and uncoil / creep and curl / and crawl over each other …In this age / life is like / a blind and turbulent ocean (Andha Yug 89-90). He explains this blindness of the age very symbolically. Gandhari became blind by choice, in the past by putting white bandages over her eye; in the present, the same white bandages cover the wounds of the soldiers who are dying in the battle field now. So it is the same continuous process, time, operating in the world: “white bandages / cover Gandhari’s eyes / and bind the wounds of soldiers” (Andha Yug 90).

Time is so powerful; it overwhelms everything and everybody. Whoever tries to escape it is simply lost like Yuyutsu and even Sanjaya taken as the wisest: is lost; his ‘visionary power’ is lost: “Gandhari, Gandhari! / something has happened / to my visionary power” (Andha Yug 106)! And he sees his own predicament: “wall! / Walls! / There are walls everywhere! / I can not open my eyes. Trying to show the truth / to the blind / must I too become blind” (Andha Yug 106). The first two words in the previous quotation are significant. The first word is singular; it has a weak note. Both the singular number and the weak note point to the weak assessment of the situation. The next moment the singular turns into plural with an emphatic note pointing to the enormity of the situation. The walls of the circle of darkness are impenetrable. The thickness of the darkness of the Age compels everybody to be blind. In this Blind Age, he cannot keep his light and “must … too become blind?” (Andha Yug 106). The sentence points to the compulsion in the absence of any other
alternative. And he has actually stopped seeing beyond the walls: “No, Vidura / only walls / and walls and more walls” (Andha Yug 106)! And another wise man, Vidura, accepts the predestined fate: “it is as if / the time / for everything to end / has come” (Andha Yug 106).

This is according to him, the time for Mahapralaya, the Doomsday, when everything has to finish, ‘everything to end’. This is the predetermined, predestined way of life. War is a part of this way of life. So nobody can start it. Nobody can stop it. It is a part of the fundamental law of creation. When the creation desires its destruction it starts the process not momentarily. The process is long; it starts when everything is “Conceived in blindness” (Andha Yug 110). There the creation starts defining “the boundary of your existence” (Andha Yug 110) which manifests itself in terms of war. Anarchy, referred to in Yeats’ poem “The Second Coming” is let loose. Vidura says: “Everyone has lost / his bearings today. / The axle is broken / and the wheel spins / without a centre” (Andha Yug 77). The two – Dharamvir Bharati and Yeats – share the same vision of destruction. They also share the cause of destruction; it also a part of Creation. An age – a blind age – comes to finish every thing to create total anarchy. Every body feels as if the axle of the very creation is broken.

Yuyutsu feels: I am like a firm wheel
   That was fixed to a chariot
   throughout the war.
   But now I feel
   as if I had spun
   on the wrong axle
   and have lost my bearings.

Sanjaya feels: My greatest misfortune is
   that I can never
   stop spinning on that axle.

Vidura feels: But now my voice is full of doubt
   for it seems that my lord
   is like a useless axle
   which has lost its wheels
   and can not turn by itself.
   But it is a sin to doubt

219
Naturally this anarchy creates doubt in the minds of the faithful. Where is the Lord? What is he doing? Why can’t He save?

When man fails he looks up to the sky, to the Lord and finds Him nowhere. Does He become ‘like a useless axle’? He also is helpless before the onslaught of time. Since He is the creator, He cannot stop time and change the course of Creation. Everything has been determined by Him; how can He unfix himself? They must move on their predetermined course. Gandhari raises this question. The Lord is there present in the shape of Krishna. Why can not he use this power to stop Mahabharata, the war of total destruction: “… if you wanted / you could have stopped the war” (Andha Yug 122). Krishna is helpless. He accepts his Godhood but he also accepts his twin responsibility as the Creator. Here is his first explanation: “If I am life / then, mother / I am also death” (Andha Yug 123).

Life and Death are the twin ends of Creation; where there is life, there must be death. Otherwise the Creation will become meaningless. Things created cannot be eternal. Krishna cannot interfere with his own principle and creation for the sake of stopping the war of Mahabharata. His next explanation is that the Lord is born on the earth in the shape of man and hence he must act and live like a man, and not a superhuman power. He says: “I may be a god / I may be omnipotent / but I am also your son / and you are my mother” (Andha Yug 123).

The relationship of earthly mother and son must be maintained. He must behave and act within the limitations of an earthly son and not a divine superpower. If he does that he will again commit the mistake of breaking the law of Nature. That is why he willingly accepts the curse of Gandhari which is all about his death: “I accept your curse. Mother” (Andha Yug 123).

His own death is a part of the law of Nature and as such it is acceptable to him. The Lord is the source of both of life and of death of every creature. The responsibility for both life and death lies upon him. If a man is born, he owes his birth to Him. If a man is dead, he owes his death to Him. Apart from Him there exists nothing on the earth. If a man does some good in life, the credit is due to the Lord. Equally true is the fact about doing something bad in life; the Lord shares it as much as the man. Man’s joy is the Lord’s joy; man’s suffering is the suffering of the Lord.
Thus Krishna says: "I said to Arjuna: I take upon my shoulders / the responsibility / of your good and evil deed" (Andha Yug 123). He says again:

In this terrible war of eighteen days
I am the only one who died a million times.
Every time a soldier was struck down
every time a soldier fell to the ground
it was I who was struck down
it was I who was wounded
it was I who fell to the ground.
It is I who shall flow
in the pus
in the blood
in the spittle
that will ooze
out of Ashwatthama’s body
from age to age
forever and ever. (Andha Yug 123)

Man is expected only to act; he is duty-bound to act. His responsibility is limited only to that. He can not and should not escape from his action. He should not think of the consequences of his action; that is to be thought about by God. Only, while acting, he should see he is following the Dharma; he should see that his action is righteous. If he keeps himself to such an action, he is on the right path. But here there is a problem. According to Krishna, there are three distinct categories of men—Satoguni, Rajoguni and Tamsi. Satoguni are persons keeping themselves to the righteous action. By nature, they are so. Rajoguni are egoist craving for power by any means; end is important; means does not matter. Tamsi are, by nature, aggressive and evil-doers. The presumption is that the last two categories of men indulge in all sorts of evil for selfish reasons. Evil in the world is because of them. War is a part of that evil perpetuated by these people. They are subject to their nature. And as such they indulge in all sorts of evil. And once they break the ‘dharma’, they open the gates of destruction. The chorus in Act Four says: “But they have violated / the dharma of war / and opened / the doors for their destruction” (Andha Yug 97). Thus destructive war becomes inevitable. Man can not escape it; he is a slave to his nature. He. with his
nature, has been created by the Lord. Thus he is helpless at his own hands, at the hands of the beast in him. Bhima is the first to let this beast come out of him: “And then / with his foot on Duryodhana’s head / Bhima stood on him with all his weight and roared like a wild beast!” (Andha Yug 82). And once the beast is out on a’prowl, he can be checked and killed only with the beastly force. Even Krishna, in the shape of man is ‘unprincipled’. Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna says: “I have known you since childhood. / you have always been / an unprincipled rogue” (Andha Yug 79). Krishna can not escape the impact of the Blind Age and the beastly man. That is inevitable; war is inevitable. Death and destruction are inevitable as life is inevitable. War, death and destruction are an inalienable part of creation. That is the inner contradiction of life and creation. The mendicant, in the Interlude, speaks of this inner contradiction: “With my visionary powers / I shall stop the flow / of this narrative / and still / the characters in their places / assign them a function / a purpose / so that I can / rip them open /and understand / their inner contradictions (Andha Yug 90).

War is part of the creation and beyond control of man. It happens because it is the principle of Creation and Nature. This is the truth of life. Ashwatthama has, at last, found it: “I have found the truth! / Ashwatthama the beast / has found the truth” (Andha Yug 87). After 18 days of terrible war, he has grown despondent and aimless. What should he do now? Should and can he run away from war and its consequences? War he has fought; he can not run away from its consequences. That is the truth he has to face – War and more destruction. It is not complete yet; he has to complete it: “Like a beast / I will crush / Dhristadyumna / with my feet – / like a mad beast / trampling on a lotus flower. / I will not even spare / Uttara / who is carrying Abhimanyu’s son / and the future / of the Pandava clan / in her womb” (88).

The war may be the consequences of the Blind Age over which man moves on its own course, independent of everything in the creation. It is the supreme force responsible only to itself for the cycle of good and of bad in the universe, for creation and destruction. In its course, it is blind to what becomes of the creation. Man is all helpless before it, once it takes to the course of destruction. He is simply sucked into its vortex of anarchy. He has to live and act under its impact. Even the Lord, when living and working in the shape of man, Krishna, has to be subordinate to it. Even he can not break through its wall. He has to live and die according to its rules. The time must move on its course; its wheel must spin; it can not make a distinction between
Krishna, Arjuna, Yudhisthira or Ashwatthama. It is blind, whatever the consequences, it must go on rolling. So, no one can put the blame for war on any particular individual. If the Kauravas are held responsible, so are the Pandavas equally responsible. Even Lord Krishna must share the responsibility. Naturally everybody has to bear its consequences in equal measure. Even Lord Krishna has his share of the consequences. “Its corrosive shadow / spread from age to age / and stained every heart / and every soul / with sorrow” (Andha Yug 125).

Corrosion is the law of Time, of Nature as creation is. It overwhelms even Lord Krishna. Krishna, unaffected, unattached, in the midst of a ferocious war is killed by the simple arrow of a hunter: “The moment Krishna was killed / Dvapara yug came to an end / and this god-forsaken earth / kali yug took its first step. / And that forest of fear / became even more terrifying” (Andha Yug 151). With Krishna, one age comes to an end and another age is born. The past and the Present are over. The future is born out of the Blind Age; out of the womb of its darkness, a future age is born. Is there any hope for it? That hope is to be generated for the man is now attached to this hope for the future: “That is why / I proclaim boldly / that our fate is linked / not to the death of Krishna / but to the future of mankind! / To the survival of Parikshit!” (Andha Yug 155).

The beauty of the drama Andha Yug lies in its conclusive message. War is inevitable – an inseparable part of the creation and life. The myth of the Mahabharata proves it. For the destruction of the old and the creation of the new it takes place in the world as an instrument of the eternal time. It is futile to wish its end and try to stop it. But there comes a time when it ends and gives ample time and scope to humanity to create and build a new universe, even under its shadow. Build when there is space and time for it may visit the earth any moment. The Lord in the shape of Krishna may be dead and yet there is the Lord within man. He has only to bring Him out and create a future world for the humanity. The responsibility is his. The views of Dharamvir are very much similar to the belief of E.M. Forster in his essay “What I believe”. Create till the destructive force is shut in the box. It will always be rumbling and tumbling there. But man has to go on creating his future for a better humanity. Bharati’s view is that there is no reason which justifies war and destruction against mankind: “From Bharati’s prospective, then, whatever it is that calls mankind to such destruction – be
it the ideal of goodness or the cause of loyalty to a nation, or clan – is meaningless and unjustified” (Singh 181).

In many religion, dying in the name of God is considered holy and worthy of heaven. In Islam martyrdom is highly praised and there are many references in the Holy Qura'an:

Lo! Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs: they shall fight in the way of Allah and shall slay and be slain. It is a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. Who fulfillleth His covenant better than Allah? Rejoice then in your bargain that ye have made, for that is the supreme triumph. (Qura'an 9:111)

This is how martyrdom (the act of sacrificing one’s own life in the path of Allah) is viewed in Islam. The ‘lesser Jihad’ is based on this belief. There are many rules to be followed before going to Jihad which I have briefly discussed in the Introduction of this thesis and will be further discussed below. The true martyr is promised the Paradise in return. There is quite misunderstanding of Jihad among Muslims and non Muslims. Jihad has to be in the true path of Allah. For example killing an innocent man is extremely prohibited in Islam. Bombings the public places and markets is not Jihad. Even some Muslim preachers consider the Palestinians blowing up themselves to kill Israeli soldier as a wrong act because this kind of act involves killing oneself in the first place against which Allah has explicitly warned his believers (Al-Khattar 167). Some other Muslim scholars permitted blowing up oneself only if the target include soldiers. In the discussion of Bakatheer’s Ikhnaton wa Nefertiti, an attempt will be made to analyse how Bakatheer looks at Jihad as a just cause to fight corruption and exploitation. His anti pacifist character, Hur Muhib, insist on Ikhnaton to use the sword to fight the priests and the pagans who use the religion for their advantage and to exploit people – a similar way which the Muslims adopted in the early days of Islam. The conquest of Makkah was to demolish the idols and fight the pagans who corrupted the society and misguided the people. Ikhnaton, who believed to be living before the advent of Islam and Christianity, was calling people for

\[14\] for further information about Jihad, bombings and terrorism see Aref M Al-Khattar’s dissertation: Terrorism in the name of Religion. Pages 167-187.
monotheism (worshipping one God ‘Atun’). Therefore, Bakatheer believed that Ikhnaton is much near to the spirit of Islam as will be discussed below.

Ikhnaton wa Nefertiti (1940)

Bakatheer’s Ikhnaton wa Nefertiti is based on king Ikhnaton and his queen Nefertiti who lived in ancient Egypt about 3000 years ago. Bakatheer uses history like Brecht to tackle a relevant issue to his society. The issue which Bakatheer tackles in his play, as Al-Zubaidi states in part 2 of his article about Ikhnaton wa Nefertiti, is justifications of the concept of Jihad in Islam. There is no doubt that Bakatheer devoted many of his writings to the Muslims’ cause in different parts of the world. He was concerned with the liberation of Bait Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) form the Israeli occupation. His Play Shylock Al-Jadeed (The New Shylock) (1944) predicted the Palestinian crisis and explicitly illustrated how the Jews managed to get into Palestine with the help of the British government. In the second part of the play, Bakatheer dreams that the International Court of Justice passes a verdict to the effect that the occupied part of Palestine has to be retuned to the Arabs. As a result Shylock commits suicide. Bakatheer was deeply involved in the developments of the Palestine crisis. Al-Tantawi remarks that Bakatheer, shortly before his death, delivered a valuable lecture titled ‘The Role of an Arab literary man in the Battle against the Colonisation and Zionism’ in the 7th Conference of the Arab Literary men held in Baghdad in 1969 (67). Here he meant that the Arab writers should devote their writing to expose the threat of Zionism to the Islamic and Christian nations.

Bakatheer wrote Umer Al-Mokhtar, a one-act play in which he presents the heroism of Umer Al-Mokhtar, who was called sheikh of al-mujahideen (the chief of fighters), who fought against the Italian colonisation to Libya. He was captured and was hanged on Sep 16, 1931. Bakatheer also wrote many short plays about Arab-Israel conflict some of which are: Laylat 15 May (The 15th of May Night), Mu’agezat Israel (Israel’s Miracle) etc. The following dialogue between Abdullah and

---

15 The Egyptian pharaoh Ikhnaton was the first Sun King, who lived some 30 centuries before Louis and built on this spot an opulent royal city that was the Versailles of its day. He called the city Ikhnaton. Horizon of the Sun, in honor of the sun god Aton, whose name was incorporated in his own, meaning Servant of the Sun. From his new capital on the Nile, roughly midway between Memphis and Thebes. Ikhnaton and his celebrated wife, Nefertiti, governed Egypt for 12 of the 17 years of his rule, from 1353 to 1336 B.C., and established a one-god (Aton) religion to supplant the polytheistic system that had obtained for centuries. Source Annette Grant, “Making a God More Human.” The New York Times. November 14, 1999. http://www.virtual-egypt.com/newhtml/articles/Making%20a%20God%20More%20Human.htm.
Mikhaeel taken from The New Shvlock reflects Bakatheer’s condemnation of the Jewish tricks which seduced the Palestinian people with gold in return for land. Abdullah was sure that the gold which the Jews received from organisations abroad was to take control over the land first and later to drive the Palestinians from their homes. Therefore, Abdullah believes that the only way out of the situation is to revolt against and expose Zionism as an evil movement. But Mikhaeel thinks the best policy is to support the Palestinian financially which will cut off the Jews’ dirty trick – ‘gold for land’.

MIKHAEEL. Don’t you want to serve your country?

ABDULALLAH. I am ready to offer my life for the sake of the country. Revolt, call for Jihad. I will be the first one to join.

MIKHAEEL. We are in Jihad now, Abdullah, and I feel bad because you have not joined yet.

ABDULALLAH. If you consider this inactivity and submission a Jihad, forgive me from taking part in it. No Jihad without a credo.

MIKHAEEL (to AbdulAllah). The Jihad we are following now is greater and stronger than the Jihad you mean. The Jihad we follow is not only limited to the warriors, but it includes the whole nation with its young and old, men and women. Today we perform Jihad to stop whatever homeland left for us from falling into the hands of the Jews. Today we stand against the gold flowing into our country from the Zionist organisation in various parts of the world.*

(qtd. in Al-Saadni 231)

Abdu Al-Hakim Al-Zubaidi in The Jews in Ali Ahmed Bakatheer’s Theatre (in Arabic language) discusses Bakatheer’s treatment of the Jews and classifies those plays which deal with this theme into two categories: plays that deal directly with this issue and plays which deal with it indirectly such as Masat Oedib (The Tragedy of Oedipus) with a detailed study for each play. Similarly, Abdullah Al-Tantawi studied the plays which are concerned with ‘Palestine and the Jews’ in his book Palestine and the Jews in Ali Ahmed Bakatheer’s theatre. This reflects the amount of literature which Bakatheer devoted to the Palestine crisis.

It is important to mention that Bakatheer was not against the Jews as a nation but he was against Zionism as a movement. This idea can be worked out easily from
Bakatheer’s writings about the Jews. Bakatheer was among the first who called against reconciliation with Israel in many of his poems. In the fifth stanza of his famous poem ‘To be or not to be’, he calls upon his nation not to reconcile with Israel even if the occupation continues for a long time and even if Israel keeps on slaughtering the women, children and the elderly people. He goes on saying that whatever the enemy does he will not be the master and we will regain our robbed territories. He rejected the reconciliation with Israel but insisted on getting the ‘robbed rights’ through legal means – through the International Court of Justice and through the joint efforts of the world nations against Israel. This does not mean that Bakatheer is against war and Jihad, but Jihad is varied to Bakatheer and not limited to fighting with arms. The above mentioned dialogue between Abdullah and Mikhaeel illustrates that Jihad is not the physical fighting with the enemy. It can be in different ways which could be more effective than fighting such as financial support to the Palestinians and boycotting the Israeli products.

Ahmed Al-Saadni’s critical study of Bakatheer’s dramatic literature is valuable too in this regard. His book Bakatheer’s Dramatic Literature: The Political Theatre (in Arabic language) contains a thorough analysis of Bakatheer’s political plays. An example of this study is the comparison he has made between Bakatheer’s Mismar Guha (Guha’s Nail) and Brecht’s The Caucasian Chalk Circle. He points out that Brecht’s play, based on his socialism, questions: who is to own and run an area of land farm? Is it the previous owners or those who cultivate it (285)? He adds that Bakatheer’s thinking is based on his nationalism and Egyptianism. Bakatheer is Egyptian because he spent most of his life span in Egypt where he was educated. from which he learned and to it he devoted his creative energies. Therefore, his cause was: What is the way out to independence (285)? Al-Saadni also remarks that Guha’s Nail reflects Bakatheer’s dramatic competence in changing the people’s thinking which leads them to take part in the action the play deals with:

Hamad sold the palace to Ghanem on the condition that he would be visiting a nail he drove in a wall anytime he wanted. Ghanem suffers from this turmoil as a result of the numerous visits at night and day. Ghanem does not want to sell the palace back to Hamad who neither wants to pull his nail nor stop visiting the nail. The judge can not pass a judgment on this issue. The public opinion begins to wake up and the
spectator’s judging faculty awakens as a result of the voices of the people outside the court shouting:

Oh, owner of the nail  pull out your nail
From the house of the freemen since it’s not yours.*

(Al-Saadni 289-90)

There are many Arab writers whose writings have centered on Jihad. Naguib Al-Kilani (1931-95), for example, is known as the first novelist who wrote about Islamic issues in different parts of the world. Some of his novels are Amaliqat Alshamal (The North Giants), Aldhel Alaswad (The Black Shadow), Umer Yazhur Fi Al-Quds (Umer Appears In Jerusalem) etc. Ala Aswar Damascus (On the Walls of Damascus), was the only play he wrote about the Muslims’ resistance against the Tatars which dates back to 699-702 according to the Hijri calendar. In this play, Al-Kilani deals with the attitude of Ibn Taymiyya towards the Tatars. Bakatheer also wrote a play with the same title which deals with the Islamic conquest of Damascus during the reign of Umer ibn Al-Khatab (634-644), the second Caliph.

From the above account one can understand that Bakatheer’s concept of Jihad is varied and is not limited to armed struggle. Jihad for him can be performed in many ways such as economic boycott with Israel and by exposing its evils to the world. He did not urge Jihad against non-Muslims but against those who caused a threat to Muslims, attempted to invade or desecrate a sacred place for Muslims. Most of his works dealt with the just struggle (the lesser Jihad) to defend the Muslim nations and their sacred places. Along with a host of Arab writers, he devoted his writings to the Palestine crisis and the Israel-Arab conflict. Ken Whittingham points out how different Arab writers reacted to the Palestine issue:

In the aftermath of the June 1967 disaster, and more particularly with the rapid growth of the Palestine Liberation Movement, most Egyptian dramatists gave some attention to the problem. Sa’d ad Din Wahba tried to expose the reasons for Egypt’s defeat in his play (7 Commandos) while al Sharqawi and the Lebanese author Suhail Idris wrote in praise of the fortitude of the guerrilla units and martyrs. Alfred Farag, the last but perhaps most accomplished of this trio of leading dramatists, found himself faced with a dilemma: how could he convey the whole question to the audience, rather than concentrating
on the heroic exploits of an individual? He found his solution by creating the first political revue in Arabic drama – a melee of song, dance, and rapid sketches, in which the author attempts to put before the audience the historical and ideological dimensions of the Palestine question. (18-19)

Alfred Farag wrote Sulaymān al-Halabi 1965 (Sulaymān from Aleppo), which as Roger Allen, points out is “a complex and fast-moving drama about a young Syrian student who murders the French general Kléber in Cairo during the brief French occupation of the country at the eighteenth century” (206). Farag also wrote Fire and Olives (1970) which deals with Palestinians struggle against Zionism after Balfour Declaration.

Bakatheer’s Ikhnaton, a poetic drama written in Running Blank verse (Bakatheer, Ikhnaton 12), is about a pharaonic king who preached monotheism and attempted to abolish polytheism. His new religion called for establishing peace and love among people and rejected any military interference in spreading his new religion. He claimed that his religion did not favour the use of force to convert people to monotheism. He was peaceful with his enemies and did not allow his military leaders to use the sword against the rebels and pagans. At his deathbed, he realised that he was wrong for not using the sword to spread peace and restore it to his kingdom.

Bakatheer argues that the sword is necessary in certain circumstances and it has to be used to ensure peace and to defend oneself, one’s own nation, and one’s own religion. This is the idea of Hur Muhib, the leader of Ikhnaton’s army. Muhib argues with Ikhnaton that the peaceful approach which he follows is of no use when the kingdom is under a threat. Riots broke out everywhere in Ikhnaton’s kingdom and became uncontrollable. Bakatheer is of course in agreement with Muhib’s viewpoint, who asserts that the use of power and force is the only method to achieve the ultimate peace and put an end to the rioters and rioting in the country. In this way, Ikhnaton would be able to spread his religion. Muhib views that peace and love can not be established without the use of force to put an end to the rioters. But, Ikhnaton was against Muhib’s pro-war ideology and affirmed that bloodshed and arms would not lead to peace. He felt that peace should mark his new religion. The following dialogue illustrates Muhib’s insistence on the use of arms and Ikhnaton’s refusal to use them.
IKHNATON. There should be no compulsion in God’s religion, Hur Muhib.

HUR MUHIB. With argument and proof?

IKHNATON. Yes with argument and proof.

MUHIB. My Master! Even this won’t be achieved without peace. Keeping peace would require putting an end to the rioters!

IKHNATON. How do I propagate the religion of love and peace while at the same time put them to the sword?

MUHIB. Has God forbidden you to make war, my Master?

IKHNATON. But He asked me to establish peace and love.

MUHIB. Have you received an explicit command from Him to leave fighting?

IKHNATON. No. But the propagation for peace and love does not require fighting.

MUHIB. It seems to me that your God does not mean this, my Master.* (Ikhnaton 111)

Muhib understands well that the use of sword is mandatory in such a situation. Bakatheer, at the end of the play, approves that Muhib’s argument is valid and logical. Ikhnaton ultimately agrees to Muhib’s idea and calls upon him to make use of ‘the wisdom of his sword’. He realised that Muhib was right to use the sword to restore peace after the situation had gone out of control.

Bakatheer depicted that peace was the motive behind war as noticed in Muhib’s words. No doubt that Bakatheer was with Muhib’s logical argument that God called for peace but He did not forbid war. Muhib inferred from Ikhnaton’s that God was not against war especially when the intention was to restore peace to society. Bakatheer’s wish was fulfilled after few years of his death. Arab states under the leadership of the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, waged a war against Israel known as the October war – “Egyptian forces struck eastward across the Suez Canal and pushed the Israelis back, while the Syrians advanced from the north. Iraqi forces joined the war and, in addition, Syria received some support from Jordan, Libya, and the smaller Arab states” (”Arabic Literature”). Cease-fire was signed with Israel and the Arab nations on Oct 25 bringing back their robbed dignity of 1967. It was a great
victory for the Arab nations. These events led to Israel-Egyptian Peace Treaty (1979) after the Camp David Accords (1978).

The October War so altered the balance of power in the region as to ensure all parties were interested to find a mechanism that would prevent the outbreak of another war. It was this war, therefore, that marked the true beginning of the peace process and radically altered attitudes on both sides. The Arabs committed themselves practically to peace while the Israelis began to realise the need for peaceful coexistence with their neighbours. (El Baz para. 7)

This is what Bakatheer desired in the region. He wished that the Arab leaders jointly put an end to the Israeli arrogance. He did not appreciate the presence of the Israeli state in a sacred land for Muslims. Bakatheer was obsessed with Arab nationalism that connected the east region together with its past and present tradition and history (Ismaeel 45). He had been dreaming that the Arab nations would unite one day and would stand as one body against invaders. In the introduction to the play, he states: “we should draw a lesson from our great history, from our great grandfather (Ikhnaton) and from his success and his failure in his struggle. We should cling to the means which lead us to achieve the first one (success) and be aware of the causes which lead to the second one (failure) and we should increase our faith in our grand unity under the leadership of the rising Egypt …”* (Ikhnaton 12). Egypt had been the destination of Arabs who dreamt that it would lead the Arab nations to attain victory over their enemies. Bakatheer was hopeful and optimistic that Egypt would spread its light one day to the world again as it did during the early days of Islam. Bakatheer’s optimistic words about ‘the rising Egypt’ mentioned above and also confirmed by Ikhnaton “be happy! Long live Egypt and amply stretch your guidance and light to the universe”* (Ikhnaton 90) reflect his hope that Egypt would achieve the Arab’s ambitions for unity under a joint leadership which would make them stronger.

Bakatheer attempted to present Ikhnaton’s story within an Islamic framework. In the beginning of the play, Bakatheer quotes a verse from the Holy Qura’an which explains that Ikhnaton might have been one of God’s messengers who were not referred to by the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) – “of some messengers we have already told thee the story; of others we have not” (Qura’an, 4:164). Ikhnaton’s belief in monotheism propagated that love and peace were the core of this new religion. His
call to people to embrace it was fraught with difficulties since polytheism was common at that time. He did not want his religion to cause bloodshed. His peaceful nature had made him follow this non-violent code of conduct. He did not even harm those who attempted to assassinate him while he was strolling alone outside his palace at night. Instead, Ikhnaton softly asked the man about his motive to kill his king and called him to embrace the new religion which the man did. From this incident, it seemed to Ikhnaton that words, not swords, could make people good citizens under his new religion. When he realised that the Taibah town, the capital city of his kingdom, was full of corrupt practices, he decided to leave for the peaceful town of Ikhnaton where he decided to establish the pillars for his new religion.

Bakatheer intended to make his audience realise that Ikhnaton was mistaken in his pacifist approach. He made him realise that the sword was indispensable to defend his new religion and made him feel that he should have used the sword in one hand beside his pacifist approach to destroy the obstacles that stand between the people and his religion. His realisation of his mistake came after he had seen his brother, Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) in his sleep. In his vision, Ikhnaton saw the prophet with the Sun in the right hand and the sword in the left hand. He understood that he should have held the sword in his hand if he wanted to destroy the pagans who corrupted the people in his kingdom and misguided them from following the right path. This is how Ikhnaton envisages his brother Prophet (pbuh) — "Now I have just understood why my brother, the Sun-bearer, was holding a sword in his left hand"* (Ikhnaton 154)! The idea that Bakatheer proposes here is that peace is a rule and war or ‘the lesser Jihad’ is an exception posed by certain circumstances such as self-defence, protecting a Muslim nation or a sacred place. This point of view is held by many Muslim scholars such as Ibn Taymiah. In fact Bakatheer was not calling for Jihad against non-Muslims (a view of some Muslim extremists) but he called for Jihad against those who initiated an attack against a Muslim nation or occupied some of its land. He also made a reference through Ikhnaton to a verse from the holy Quraan that force should not be used to convert people to Islam — ‘la Ikrah fi al-Din’ (Let there be no compulsion in religion)* (Ikhnaton 111). Through this statement made by Ikhnaton, which already exists in the Holy Qura’an in Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 2:256, Bakatheer points out that Muslims did not spread Islam by force at the early times of Islam. It was upto people to accept it or not. Early Muslim leaders spread Islam through
peaceful means and they used the sword when they were forced to defend themselves and their brothers against the attacks of the Roman and the Persian empires at that time. What Muslims need to do at present time, as the play dramatises, is to defend Islam, protect their sacred places and ‘fight those who fight them’. Ikhnaton’s words addressed to his God justify the use of sword against the rebels who demolished the places of worship and revolted against his supporters and preachers – “Your great mercy is the surgeon’s mercy who amputates a part of the body to save the rest from getting infected”* (Ikhnaton 146). Bakatheer, here, justifies the use of sword to get rid of a ‘diseased’ and ‘undesirable part’ so that the infection may not spread. Bakatheer felt that Muslims had become insecure in their homes due to the threats from all corners. Therefore, he felt that Jihad is a natural consequence of this insecurity in an Islamic region. In this regard, Ibn Taymiyya explains Jihad, as presented in Hilmi M. Zawati’s *Is Jihad a Just War?* is relevant to Bakatheer’s idea of Jihad to restore security to Muslims:

> The chief aim of Jihad is not to force unbelievers to embrace Islam, nor expand the boundaries of the Islamic state. Ibn Taymiyya, for his part, notes that the Jihad is a just war waged by Muslims whenever their security is threatened by infidels. Killing unbelievers who refuse to adopt Islam is worse than disbelief, and inconsistent with the spirit and the message of the Holy Qur’ān. This point is illustrated by Ibn Taymiyya who argues that ‘if the unbeliever were to be killed unless he becomes a Muslim, such an action constitutes the greatest compulsion in religion,’ which contradicts the Qur’anic verse Lā Ikhrāh fi al-Dīn (Let there be no compulsion in religion). (11-12)

Bakatheer’s idea of Jihad for a just cause is derived from the Holy Qur’a’n in which Allah says: “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors” (Qura’an 2:189)\(^{16}\). This verse explicitly asks Muslims to wage war when they are attacked and not to be initiators. Bakatheer looks at war in the play from this point of view. Ikhnaton is peaceful till the last moment and attempted to implement peace in his kingdom but the rebels rose against him and demolished the places of worship. Therefore, Ikhnaton, according to Bakatheer, seemed to be much nearer to the spirit of Islam which is described as the

religion of peace. But he had a few shortcomings in his approach against which Bakatheer warns the Muslims. He tells his readers that they should be like their forefather (Ikhnaton) in his Jihad (struggle) to spread peace and love in the society and to avoid the means which lead to failure in their mission. That is, people should not hold back the sword until it is too late as Ikhnaton did but prepare themselves early to defend their own sacred places.

Izzadin Ismaeel states that Bakatheer stands with Muhib’s points of view, who states that peace is not in contradiction with war since war is necessary to establish peace (48). Ikhnaton’s wrong approach to spread his belief cost him dearly. Rebellions and revolutions broke everywhere and his close relatives discarded him and joined his enemy. At his deathbed, he realised his mistake in adopting a pacifist approach. Ismaeel attributes the failure which Ikhnaton experienced to the following:

From Bakatheer’s point of view and from the Islamic viewpoint, in which Bakatheer believes, Ikhnaton was wrong because the sword of justice is indispensable to peace and that peace and sword are two inseparable horses tied to a cart. Ikhnaton’s tragedy, as Bakatheer examines its cause, was because he cancelled one of those horses which made his cart hobble.* (48)

At the end of the play, Ikhnaton became a different person, a person whom Bakatheer wanted him to be. This positive transformation on the part of Ikhnaton was Bakatheer’s deliberate characterisation. He made him repent his past for not using the sword of justice against the sword of injustice. His words are full of strong feelings to fight his enemies and force peace in the society. Bakatheer wanted Muslims to get the message of the play which conforms to the common saying ‘better safe than sorry’. He did not want them to react late to the looming threat or things would go amiss.

This how we find Ikhnaton towards the end of the play determined to use the force:

I’ll unsheathe my sword – will disobey You – will permit killing.  
Will slaughter my enemies - the Amun17 Priests and those who follow and support them and will kill all their fire blowers!  
They are not Your enemies but mine!  
Sword Sword! Call me Hur Muhib. Where is Hur Muhib?!*

(Ikhnaton 142)

---

17 A name of deity in the Egyptian Mythology, sometimes spelled as Amon.
The dialogue continues between Ikhnaton and the leader of his army, Muhib. Ikhnaton switched to sword as it was the only option left for him to face his enemies. Peaceful approach did not work and the situation was worsening. Here are Ikhnaton’s argument with Muhib in advocating and justifying the use of sword:

IKNATOON. No peace nor love after today!
MUHIB. Today is the day of love and peace. (He unsheathe his sword)
We’ll destroy the sword of tyranny by the sword of justice!
IKNATOON. Indeed!
MUHIB. And will destroy the gods of valley by the true god.
IKNATOON. You are right!
MUHIB. And spread the religion of god.
IKNATOON. All over the world.* (Ikhnaton 143)

Muhib appears to be clever and logical in his argument with Ikhnaton who just responds with ‘indeed’ and ‘you are right’. Bakatheer of course wanted to make Ikhnaton appear repentant in front of Muhib who advised him to use the sword against the rebels and Amun Priests early. But it was too late for Ikhnaton.

Another important remark is that the sword is not meant to spread the new religion in the first place but to demolish the priests and pagans who make a business out of religion. The new religion will cause a trouble for the pagans because they will not be able to exploit people and collect donations from them in the name of religion. The sword is used to stop the priests from misleading the innocent people by telling them that the donation to the gods will bring happiness and drive away the evil. The sword which Muhib insists on using is to fight those who attempt to dissuade people from listening to and accepting the new religion. Ikhnaton sent his preachers to Al-Sham (a region which includes Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine) to invite people to embrace the new religion. Ikhnaton’s messengers began building places of worship but the Hitties killed them and demolished the places of worship. This happened because Ikhnaton refused to use the sword against them in the beginning. Because of his passivity the Hitties took over the states in Al-Sham and erased the religion of Atun (Atun’s shape is similar to the Sun) which Ikhnaton calls for.

Ikhnaton’s mother and his military leader, Muhib, attempted to convince him to use the sword. Because of the repeated defeats, he got angry with his god and
called upon his leader, Muhib to use the sword. We notice how intelligent Muhib is in convincing the king with the argument and logic that the use of sword does not object to the call of God for peace. He further tells him that he will destroy the swords of injustice and tyranny with the sword of justice and righteousness as stated above in the exchange between Muhib and Ikhnaton.

Ikhnaton’s speech above ‘no peace nor love ...’ is a reminiscent of a story took place in the life of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) during the conquest of Makkah. Saad Ibn Ubada said something similar to that of Ikhnaton “Today is the day of fierce war, a day in which inviolable rules will become violable, and a day to let Quraiash taste humiliation” (Amin “A Human Being Before a Prophet”) to which the Prophet (pbuh) responded – “Today is a day of mercy and forgiveness when Allah will exalt the Quraysh and raise honour for the Ka‘bah” (“The Conquest of Makkah”). After that the Prophet (pbuh) stopped Saad from leading an army regiment. Saad misunderstood that the purpose of war is to deeply establish mercy and mutual love which the prophet (pbuh) insisted on. This is what Muhib did with Ikhnaton confirming that war is to establish peace and justice. Muhib does not intend to spread religion with sword. He intends to spread the religion of God after he eliminates the obstacles in the form of priests and pagans who stop people from accepting the new religion. Here are his words to Ikhnaton: “order me to go with my army to Syria. I shall teach the tyrants a lesson, save the rulers, reform the matters, defend it against the Hitties, and build up a solid barrier to stop their attacks ... then you send your messengers after me to spread your lofty teachings. They will embrace your religion in throngs of people” (Ikhnaton 110-111). Ikhnaton in many ways has the traits that the prophets have. His forgiveness to the man who tried to kill him is similar to a story happened to the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) when a Jewish lady put poison in a cooked female sheep presented to the prophet. She said when she was asked why she did that: if he is a prophet, Allah will inform him and will be saved. Bishr, his companion, had a bite and immediately died and the prophet threw the bite from his mouth after the bone informed him that it is poisoned. The Prophet (pbuh) forgave her and did not punish her (Shusteff “Muhammad And The Jews”). Ikhnaton’s decision to seek for another city to escape the harm of the people is also similar to the story of the Prophet when he left Makkah for Al-Madinah. His people were getting more hostile.
to him and caused him a lot of trouble. But later he came and conquered Makkah and saved it from the worshippers of idols.

**Oak Leaves and Lavender (1946)**

Sean O’Casey’s anti-war view in *The Plough* was based on his socialist ideology which informed and organised his late writings, *Oak Leaves* in particular. In *Oak Leaves*, he became a pro-war activist supporting England and the Soviet Union in their war against the Nazi Germany. The reason behind his pro-war attitude in this play was also based on his socialist principles. These two plays basically centred on war and violence – *The Plough* dramatises the violence of the Easter Rising of 1916 whereas *Oak Leaves* deals with the Second World War, particularly the Battle of Britain. In *The Plough* O’Casey opposed the war and violence because he thought that the war was not in favour of the working class and that it served the goals of a group of politicians who exploited the working class ignoring their basic needs for living. In *Oak Leaves*, O’Casey believed war and violence was just and necessary to protect the people against the destructive evil of the fascist Nazism.

The ideology behind O’Casey’s attitude towards war and violence is constant though it varies in degrees. *The Plough* expresses his doubts about the benefits of the Easter Rising for the poor Dubliners. He rejected the Easter violence because it did not lead to any social change. In *Oak Leaves*, his attitude became pro-war but the motive was the same as in *The Plough*. His concern with the poor included the Soviet Union. He accepted war and violence and encouraged the people of England to unite with the Soviet Union and fight the fascist expansion, which threatened Europe and the humanity. His socialist attitude became prominent in *Oak Leaves* where his socialist voices increased and became stronger and more effective than those in *The Plough*. Feelim, Drishogue, Edgar, Monica and Dame Hatherleigh were all admirable in their stance and reaction against the threats posed by Germany. But *The Plough* included only one socialist character who was concerned with the working class and who seemed passive and handicapped against the violence of the Easter Rising. This transition in the character development reflected the progression of O’Casey’s own socialist ideology. His socialist concerns became deeper by the passage of time and his socialist characters became dominant preferring war for a necessary social transformation. The Covey in *The Plough* is an ancestor of Feelim and his son Drishogue in *Oak Leaves*, who carry the message of their forefather (the Covey).
forward to the younger generation. The message that O’Casey conveys through these socialist characters is that violence is everywhere in the universe and it is necessary in some cases for a better social change. The Covey was perhaps unable to spread the message due to lack of proper understanding of socialism. But his grandchildren in Oak Leaves are optimistic and confident in achieving their goals and are able to make themselves heard. They believe that socialism is strong enough to destroy any evil threatening the society. O’Casey’s attitude towards war and violence can be summed up in Bernice Shrank’s words:

In my reading of O’Casey’s dramatic work, and, for that matter, his other writings, O’Casey’s attitude towards violence and war is pragmatic. When O’Casey judges that a particular act of violence or war undermines the class interests of his characters, he opposes it; when he regards it as advancing their interests, he supports it. (75)

Oak Leaves is set in a rural Cornish manor house with its inhabitants coping with the demands of war. Characters are busy and deeply involved in the preparations for the expected attacks which the German pilots may direct against them. The house functions as a military camp and prepares all kinds of arms and distributes them among people. It also makes aids ready and available for the wounded and provides shelter for the homeless. O’Casey uses lights and audio panel to transmit the whizzes of planes and to voice the warnings against expected attacks. He uses these audio-visual devices to intensify the feelings of his characters to face the war with courage and strong determination. The panel changes to suit the existing situation. Here is an example at the end of Act II, “the cloth panel in the wireless cabinet shows the swastika” (Oak Leaves 82). When the two pilots were bidding farewell to their families, the panel voiced threateningly: “Germany calling, Germany calling, immediately followed by the wail of the air-raid warning” (Oak Leaves 83). Despite the rush of the German planes, the crowd grew fervent and enthusiastic when they watched the pilots going out and were emboldened by the bravery of their pilots. Undoubtedly, one would agree with Shrank that O’Casey is “aggressively pro-war” (75) and that Oak Leaves, as Vivian Mercier remarks, is “surely the most blood-thirsty play ever written by a congenital pacifist” (qtd. in Barfoot 75).

Drishogue, the author’s spokesman, is a strong pro-war communist advocating active participation to defend England against the attacks of Germany. Despite his
Irish origin, he gets enlisted as an RAF (Royal Air Forces) pilot. He does not think of the past history of Ireland when it was under the British colonisation. His lofty dream is to fight the Nazis. He states that he is not fighting for England but for the people no matter where they may belong to. He calls upon young men to follow suit:

> Go forth to fight, perchance to die, for the great human soul of England. Go forth to fight and to destroy, not the enemies of this or that belief, but the enemies of mankind. In this fight, Edgar, righteousness and war have kissed each other: Christ, Mahomet, Confucius, and Buddha are one. (Oak Leaves 29)

O’Casey justifies war because it defends the civilised values of humanity against the ruthlessness of Fascism. Drishogue’s provocative words urge people to destroy ‘the enemies of mankind’. Drishogue claims that spiritual leaders like Christ, Mahomet (Mohammed pbuh), and Confucius and Buddha would justify and approve this war. Drishogue falls back on various religious beliefs to justify the cause he is fighting for and to confirm that this particular war is not evil but righteous. People of different beliefs would not condemn waging war against Germany because it was not only a threat to England or Europe but to the world. Drishogue distinguishes himself as a Communist, a brave RAF pilot and eager lover (Benstock 43) who balances between his love for his beloved and his love for his country. He is only not afraid to die but he also accepts that death is a passage to another place where gay crowd is waiting for them. His sense about the notion of death is that it is a part of life and those who die defending their land will remain young. Here are his words to his young friend, Edgar, who is still reluctant to join war:

> And death is but a part of life my friend. Dying, we shall not feel lonely, for the great cloud of witnesses who die will all be young. If death be the end, then there is nothing; if it be but a passage from one place to another, then we shall mingle with a great, gay crowd! (Oak leaves 29)

These are the qualities which characterise Drishogue from others who later emulate him. He managed to convince Edgar. Even Feelim is proud of his son and declares himself a successor to him: “from now on to fight ... an’ rend th’ Germans till they’re glad to go goose-steppin’ into th’ grave! Here on this spot, at this moment. Feelim
O’Morrigun takes up th’ fight where Drishogue laid it down” (Oak Leaves 107). Drishogue is devoted to his career and nothing discourages him from doing his duty for the sake of humanity.

O’Casey uses these two Irish characters – Feelim and his son Drishogue who play significant roles in the Battle of Britain which also explains the message of the play that the Irish people had already forgotten the past history of enmity between Britain and Ireland and distinguished themselves as strong opponents of the enemy of England. Moreover, these two characters convey O’Casey’s insistence on the importance of the common concern between people who should unite with each other during evil times. He felt that the Irish and the British should be one in their just war against Germany, and that they should unite with the Red Army of the Soviet Union, which Drishogue is proud of. Drishogue is a brave pilot and his father is a stubborn soldier who never fears the German bombs falling round him – “… As the German bombs fall around him, Feelim refuses either to return to neutral Ireland or to lose heart, but emerges as that rare individual who rises above his environment and circumvents unusual hardships” (Benstock 66).

Through Drishogue and his father, O’Casey stresses that it is important to fight the fascist Nazis defending England and the Soviet Union and that pacifism is negative. Mrs Deeda Tutting, the advocate of fascism, attempts to dissuade Drishogue from going to war. Drishogue appears defiant and refutes her argument. This is how O’Casey puts it:

**DRISHOGUE [to Deeda].** There must be something great in what the rank and gaudy privilege of the world’s power, secular and clerical, is afraid of: but this great people know only a rational fear, for at the top of their resolution is spearhead of their Red Army.

**DEEEDA [wheeling round to face the crowd].** Are you listening to His miserable, besotted, and belated nonsense! [She wheels round to face Drishogue again.] Don’t be a fool, man! I’ve seen them, and I know – a deformed, ill-nourished, tatter-clad crowd! Their rifles are soft-tube toys: the wings of their warplanes fall off in sturdy wind; their big guns melt away after
a few shots; and their tanks crumple into scrap when then strike a stone in the roadway.

DRISHOGUE [sarcastically]. They do, do they? What a pity!
...

DEEDA [carried away – almost screaming] Behind your boasting façade of Soviet achievement lies a chaos of ignorance; a mass of sullen terror, a swamp of ignorance: at war, your Red Army will be so stupidly led and so wretchedly supplied that it will scatter from the field in utter rout before a month of war has passed. [she bends down till her face is close to that of Dishogue.] And I will be glad, delighted, over-joyed at its overthrow! If there is any honesty or truth left in us, we’ll be at war with them soon to sweep away the horrid falsity of them and their master!

DRISHOGUE [springing to his feet – fiercely and loudly]. Woe unto any nation making war on the Soviet Union! She will slash open the snout, and tear out the guts of any power crossing her borders! (Oak Leaves 50-51)

O’Casey criticises pacifism through Feelim who becomes more violent after the death of his son. He accepts the death of his son with a heart of steel and does not accept the idea of pacifism proposed by Pobjoy who appears passive and does not want to involve himself in the events around – “let them who take the sword perish by it – that is their funeral” (Oak Leaves 96). But Feelim corrects him stating that “thousands of children who never took the sword perished by it … because we took it into our hands a little late” (Oak Leaves 96). This strong statement made by Feelim is to demotivate the pacifist feelings that some people like Pobjoy might have. He declares that one should hold the sword quickly in his hand when the danger is imminent so to save the lives of children, because any delay would aggravate the human misery further. Feelim attempts to motivate Pobjoy who appears scornful:

FEELIM. … Haven’t you got anything in your country you admire, love, and would defend your churches; the graves in which your
great men and women lie; the places where they lives; your folk-song and your music?

POBJOY [scornfully]. No, thanks. I’ve no wish to dash round with the smoothing iron.

FEELIM. Come now, you do honour Stratford-on-Avon, an’ the fella who wrote *Paradise Lost*?

FEELIM. … And Nelson – come now, the greatest sailor, maybe, that ever lived: what about him, eh? He’s an inspiration to Englishmen, isn’t he? [He stands up to sing:] Too well the gallant hero fought for England, home an’ beauty. He cried, as ‘midst th’ fire he ran.

*Nelson confides that every man this day will do this duty!*  
Come, you take pride in Nelson; and remember his courage an’ glory to give you resolution an’ – an’ fortitude in the day o’ testin’, don’t you? (Oak Leaves 94-96)

Feelim’s philosophy of violence, which is O’Casey’s, is that he does not believe in violence himself but it is necessary in some cases to preserve mankind. And in a reaction to the pacifist Pobjoy, Feelim states that life itself “is full of violence, and we’re in the middle of life. Birth is noisy, and death isn’t quite a quiet thing. [Getting eloquent.] There’s violence in fire, wind, and water: in th’ blast that brings a well to being …” (Oak Leaves 94).

Contrary to Pobjoy’s passivity, Dame Hatherleigh is sure that England will win the war against Germany. She believes that God is with them and that the British Israel can never fail because they are “soul of the soul of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and are being held firm in the hands of Deity for a special purpose” (Oak Leaves 37)! She falls back on the past history of her ancestors whom she believes ‘have a great destiny’. Here O’Casey blends history, religion and superstition. He makes references to religion and history through Hatherleigh who states that the Ark of the Covenant lies under the Hill of Tara. These Biblical references to the ten commandants, the story of Daneil, God’s messenger to Israel, are meant to provoke all the people who are believed to be the descendants of Noah whose story is known to Muslims, Christians and Jews. He gives a particular emphasis on the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and affirms that they are the descendant of Noah and that means they belonged to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. O’Casey’s Biblical references in this play are perhaps
because the Jews were in plight during the Second World War. And the connection he makes between the Lost Ten Tribes and Noah is to remind the people of their common ancestor since it is believed that Noah was the 9th or 10th generation after Adam. O’Casey wants to provoke the mankind, the descendants of Noah to wage war against their enemy, the Nazis. The reference to the Ark of Noah is also significant since it rescued humanity from extinction – “a vessel built at the God’s command to save Noah, his family, and a core stock of the world’s animals from the Great Flood. The story is contained in the book of Genesis and in the Qur'an” (“Noah’s Ark” para. 1). This symbol was used in the play to reflect the danger which the world and England, in particular, might face if not confronted firmly. The ‘Great Flood’ which Germany posed would have taken place if it had not been overcome in time. The whole nation of Noah would have perished and their Ark would have sunk, if the RAF pilots would not have come to rescue their nation and the world from this disaster.

“Lebensraum” according to Encarta Dictionary is the additional territory claimed by the Nazis and also meant the space for growth. It was one of the major political ideas of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi ideology. The main ideology behind this word is that the German population has the right to expand over Europe and kill and starve other nations to death because others are inferior. Mrs Deeda Tutting representing this notion states: “the National Socialism of Germany, in many respects, is far superior to Soviet Rule: and if it only gives up its racial animosity, and its spirit of conquest, it’s Germany will become more cultured than even Britain’s or France’s pompous and hypocritical imperialism” (Oak Leaves 49-50)! She also adds that “Germany has much right to Lebensraum” (Oak Leaves 50). She was disillusioned about the reality of the German state. She narrated a story that her husband was arrested by Ogpu (early security and political police in the Soviet Union), but did not know that Gestapo (secret police in Nazi Germany) could have done worse.

Feelim and Drishogue are against the fascist propaganda and Lebensraum advocated by Mrs Deeda. Feelim ironically stops Michael who asks for “a little Lebensraum for the decent people’s hens! (Oak Leaves 50) and stating that “… everyone’s hens an’ cocks are insignificant things to compare to the tremendous truths this lady is enunciatin’” (Oak Leaves 50). Moreover, this lady belittles the military equipment of the Soviet Union and stresses their efficiency, and that the Red Army would collapse soon. Drishogue springs to his feet, fiercely shouting:
Woe unto any nation making war on the Soviet Union! She will slash open the snout, and tear out the guts of any power crossing her borders! (Oak Leaves 51)

This speech reflects O’Casey’s resentment against the Nazis regime and its policy of expansion at the expense of other nations. He becomes a strong supporter of the Soviet Union and its socialism. Like Brecht, O’Casey had a strong admiration for the Soviet Union and he thought that it should be given every support to lift up the cause of the working class. His concern with violence against Germany emanates from his deep concern with socialist principles that appeared early during the violence of the Easter Rising. In this regard, he becomes like Brecht who, in Mother Courage, anticipated the danger which Germany posed to Europe during the 1930s. These two socialist writers devoted their writings to address the common concern of the working class in their countries and in the world.

Women play an important role in O’Casey’s dramatisation of the social and political issues in his community and those related to working class. Nora, in The Plough, attempted to hold back her husband, Clitheroe, from taking part in the violence during the Easter Rising. Out of her love, she hid a promotion letter so that Clitheroe would not get a chance to be a commandant. Unfortunately, she went mad after she got the news of her husband’s death. O’Casey is on her side and likes Nora to hold her husband back because the war which the rebels were waging against the British forces did not serve the cause of the poor working Dubliners. Monica, in Oak Leaves, also loved Drishogue but she did not hold him back from fighting the Nazis. O’Casey is on her side as well because that war served the cause of the working class in England and in the Soviet Union. She knew that Drishogue was fighting for a fair cause and that she should not be selfish. She had to sacrifice her love for a greater cause – love for England. Drishogue liked her positive note and urged her to be “as the Irish lass of twice a hundred years ago, who sold her rock and sold her reel and her only spinning-wheel, to buy her love a sword of steel to fix him fitly in the fight for the rights of man” (Oak Leaves 59-60). She agreed to be the lass of Ireland though she knew what it meant to be a pilot fighting the German air forces. Drishogue was happy with his beloved for he could ‘fight for the rights of man’ not only in England but all over the world. That was the common right to which Drishogue devoted his
life and urged other young men to follow his example. He was determined to pull the Heinkels and Droniers (German aircrafts) out of the sky.

I am fighting for the people. I am fighting against the stormy pillagers who blackened the time-old walls of Guernica, and tore them down; who loaded their cannon in th’ name of Christ to kill the best men Spain could boast of; who stripped the olive groves and tore up orange trees to make deep graves for men, heaping the women on the men, and the children on the women. I was too young then to go out armed for battle, but time has lengthened an arm long enough to pull the Heinkels and the Dorniers out of the sky, and send them tumbling down to hell. (Oak Leaves 61)

Drishogue and his friend gained respect and reverence in comparison to Clitheroe and his companions who were an object for O’Casey’s criticism. The death of Clitheroe was not celebrated by the writer and was portrayed with complete contempt. People are not moved by his death except his wife. He was left bleeding to death in the battle field. But the death of Drishogue and his friend had moved all. They were paid due respect at their funeral. Here is O’Casey’s description of those grave moments:

[The trumpets and drums outside, just below the window, play the melody going with the first verse of lament “Oh, Bend Low the Head”.
... The coffin – half covered with Union Jack, and half by a vivid strip of green silk - ... those in the room and outside sing the words of the lament:

Oh! Bend low the head to this casket of clay.
Where young life lies darken’d while yet it is day.
• • •
Th’ lark’s song is gone; and they’ll ne’er stir to see
A sky bravely blue o’er an autumn-bronz’d tree! (Oak Leaves 108)

Towards the end of Act II people are in full swing to take part in the war. Even the crowd who were seeking shelter are now turned into armed soldiers after they have received arms from America. They are enthusiastic to wage war against the German forces. They sing Feelim’s song outside waiting for the arms to be distributed:

To arms, your ranks advance!
Give death a passing glance!
March on, march on, serfdom is past,
Set free th’ world at last. (Oak Leaves 80)

The crowd followed Drishogue’s example and fulfilled his wish. They are now ready to go to the war instead of shelters. Going to shelter is not a good choice for O’Casey. People have to face war bravely. O’Casey succeeded in transforming those passive crowds who used to prefer shelters into active warriors who can now stand and fight for their own rights. Now, the crowd has become positive chanting the bravery of the pilots, who are ready to depart for the war front.

These moments of departure are hard especially when thoughts of death haunt the mind. Here Drishogue is departing from his family, his love and the people around. He is bidding farewell to his love, and not thrusting her away as Clitheroe did Nora, before he left for his duty. O’Casey shows moments of deep emotion between Drishogue and his relatives. He knows that he may not come back; therefore, he pays his due respect to all as they do to him. He is not arrogant or selfish as Clitheroe who joined the violence of the Easter Rising just to achieve his own goals and interests. His promotion as a military commandant increased his ambition till he was finally butchered and hence ended his life vainly. But Drishogue distinguishes himself as a hero who curves to “whiz through the sky, and turn every pouncing enemy plane into vanishing wisp o’ smoke” (Oak Leaves 71). This strong determination to fight the enemy forces springs from his firm belief that the interest of his own people is far superior to his own interest

O’Casey’s support for the pilots also appears in the last lines of Act II where Mark and the crowd chant praises and encouraging words for the pilots who are about to embark on their aircrafts. He is optimistic that those pilots will win the war as noticed in the repetition of ‘V’ sign on the panel. Sound of the Swastika is heard and followed by a “threatening voice proclaims, ‘Germany calling, Germany calling [then] the crowd, led by Mark, chant encouragement to the flyers and themselves” (Oak Leaves 83):

MARK [chanting]:

Young, lusty lads in Air Force blue,
Go forth wearing red rose and rue;
Our life, our dreams, depend on you,
Sons of England!

CROWD [chanting]
The mothers, wives, and children here,
Are nursing thoughts that death is near;
Show them the way to cast fear,
Shield of England!

MARK [chanting]
When German proud planes zoom on high,
Teach them in th’ tormented sky,
Who come to kill, remain to die.
Sword of England!

CROWD [chanting]
Time shall be dead, and England, too,
Ere we forget red rose and rue.
So bravely, blithely worn by you.
Sons of England! (Oak Leaves 83-84)

Through these chants one easily gets to know that O’Casey has reached a greater level of enthusiasm supporting the war against Germany. This support is natural from a socialist writer because he writes for the people’s cause whose dreams and life depend on the RAF pilots – the sons, shield and swords of England as called by O’Casey.

Courage and sacrifice distinguished Act III where people face the death of their loved ones with hearts of steel. These hearts are filled with strong desire to die for England and to drive the Germans away. The pilots did a great job and achieved their objective. Their bravery and sacrifice are narrated by the Foreman: “They were unrecognisable. They’re searching for identity discs among the pile of German burnt-out planes around them. All they found so far is a little image of an angel with outspread wings on th’ body of one of them – musta been a Catholic” (Oak Leaves 90). This was Edgar but Drishogue was blown away and people could not locate him easily among the pile of the German planes. O’Casey here makes clear their indescribable courage and the destruction they caused to the German air forces which turned into a pile of burnt planes. A few moments after recovering the body of Edgar, Drishogue was confirmed as the “other flyer who fell aflame from the sky” (Oak
Leaves 105). Just a moment before confirming the death of Drishogue, a voice was heard through the cloth panel of the wireless cabinet:

We wage a desperate war till death seizes the evil thing born from Germany’s belly, and trained to destroy the world! British people, the Red Army’s with us now! To work! Tanks for us and for them; planes for them and for us; guns for us and for them! To arms! To work!

[Voices heard singing:]

Heart of oak are our ships,
Heart of oak are our men:
We always are ready;
Steady, boys, steady!
We’ll fight and we’ll conquer again and again! (Oak Leaves 104)

Just before these words were heard, the Union Jack and the Soviet Union flag were displayed crossed and flattering together indicating the unity of the two nations – Britain and Soviet Union and that they appear victorious. This pro-war attitude is confirmed again and again throughout the play. Those words mentioned above seem to be Drishogue’s because he has been admiring the Red Army and the Soviet Union. These words appear as if Drishogue is declaring his own death sending a message to other people and young generation to complete the mission he started. Just a few moments later Drishogue was declared that he was the other victim. His death led to strong determination among others to take his mission on their shoulders. This distinguishable act of courage on the part of Drishogue made his father more determined and rigid to face the light – “Hearts of steel, well tempered with hate, is what we are today – hearts of steel! Hearts of oak don’t last; so hearts of steel we are” (Oak Leaves 106-07)! The end of these pilots is a beginning for others. There is a great transformation on the part of the people. They are no longer ‘hearts of oak’. They have become ‘hearts of steel’ which are permanent and durable. ‘Hearts of oak’ are temporary and do not last for long. People have been transformed from shelter seekers to brave fighters. This is the desirable kind of transformation which O’Casey intended to bring to the society.

O’Casey’s Feelim and Drishogue are anti-pacifists like Bakatheer’s Muhib. Both characters in the two plays encourage and justify the use of sword against their enemies. They are enthusiastic to wage war to eliminate evil and restore peace to
There are common traits between Feelim and Muhib in the way they stand against the pacifist ideas proposed to them. Feelim objects to Pobjoy’s statement “Let them who take the sword perish by it” (Oak Leaves 96) and responds that “thousands of children who never took the sword perished by it; because we took it into our hands a little late” (Oak Leaves 96). The Christian religion justifies war in certain situations but also orders its followers to lead a peaceful life. Pobjoy’s statement mentioned above exists in Matthew 26:52 “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword”. But the situation for Feelim is different. He cannot wait till people are destroyed by war. People interpret the religious teachings differently. Pobjoy understands that the sentence above teaches pacifism. But, it could mean to others to counterattack the enemies with the sword and make them perish by it. Feelim did not tell Pobjoy whether he was wrong or right but tried to convince him with logical argument that many people who never held swords perished by it. Muhib, who represents Bakatheer’s Islamic view towards war and peace, rejects his king’s pacifist approach and states that sword has to be used to get rid of the imbalance in the society caused by the rebellions. He also confirms that the ultimate goal of war ‘is to live in peace’. Thus O’Casey and Bakatheer propagated war for a just cause regardless of their ideological background. The just cause in O’Casey’s point of view is to stop the Nazi Germany from causing havoc in Europe and the world. The just cause in Bakatheer’s point of view is to wage Jihad when the situation requires so. These two writers justified the use of sword to confront their enemy forces.

There are two important things which Ikhnaton wa Nefertiti and Oak Leaves share in common. The first one is that O’Casey, in his propaganda for a just war against Germany, made a reference to the prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and the Christ. He believed that they would support the war against Germany. Bakatheer also made a reference to those spiritual leaders emphasising that Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was carrying a sword in his left hand beside the Sun being in the right hand. This indicates the importance of using the sword to ‘put a wrong right’. The second thing that these two plays share in common is the reference to the sword. Sword is an ancient weapon used in fighting face to face with one’s enemy. It seems that the two writers, O’Casey and Bakatheer, wanted to remind people of their past history which glorified the sword. O’Casey confirms that people whether they are Muslims, Christians, or Jews belong to the Prophet Noah. He wanted them to unite together to stand against society.
Germany and ‘let those who take the sword perish by it’. Bakatheer’s reference to the sword is an attempt to bring home to the Muslims the decisive role it played throughout their glorious history and wage a just war against the transgressors.

Oak Leaves and Ikhnaton are different from Henry V and Andha Yug in their treatment of war. Oak Leaves and Ikhnaton are explicitly pro-war but do not dwell on the negative aspect of war as the other plays discussed. These two plays do not make references to the destruction and victimisation that war may lead to. They only look at war from one angle – war is necessary and constructive to drive away evil and to establish peace. In Oak Leaves, there is an image of destruction and victimisation when the pilots were found in a heap of burned planes but this image is celebrated and glamorised by the writer. In Henry V, the author glorifies war and patriotism of King Henry V, but at the same time he makes his audience aware of the futility of the war and its negative impact on people. He dramatises how war destroys cities and massacres young men, women and children. There seems a balanced view between the justness of war and the huge destruction that war causes which is absent in Oak Leaves and Ikhnaton. Similar to Henry V, Andha Yug presents the destructive force of war and justifies it when the means to negotiate peace are exhausted. In Andha Yug, Bharati tells his audience that war is unavoidable to drive the evil posed by some people who refuse to accept peace and dharma but it brings havoc and annihilation to society and individuals. The dominant view in this play is that war is an evil and brings society to the brink of extinction.