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Kamala Wijratne's To a Student: A Reappraisal

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Abstract

The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting. The researcher would like to research on war poetry from the perspectives of the globe. The necessity which made the researcher to write on war is the impact of Bio-War Covid 19. This article is going to focus on various war poems from Greek Mythology's *Iliad* to present day war poem. The themes of war poetry are Guilt, Identity, Innocence, Loyalty, Courage, Compassion, Humanity, Duty, Desire, and Death. A common assumption is that war brings peace to a country not peace alone it has high impact of loss and energy of society. In this article, the researcher concentrates on one of the famous poems of Kamala Wijeratne is *To a Student*. The poetess has vividly pointed out the distraction, horror and terrific portrayal of human flesh shattered on the road and green trees. The cruelty of war exploits and haunts in the minds of school going students. The poetess carefully chosen the image, milieu and picture of the poem because she conveys to the world that education alone will eradicate this kind of cruelty in the world. Education teaches morality to the students.

Key Words: Kamala Wijratne, Innocence, Courage, Compassion, Cruelty and Violence.

Kamala Wijratne's To a Student: A Reappraisal

Kamala Wijratne is a prolific poet, Short story writer, Educationist, and Creative writer. She has won great literary prize for poetry in 2004. She is working as a visiting lecturer in the department of Humanities Education, the University of Colombo. Poetry which deals or addresses war is called war poem. Its inception one can see from *Iliad* to II World War. Some of the Great War poets are, Homer's *Iliad*, Wilfred Owen's *Dulce et Decorum est* and *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, Robert Brooke's *The Soldier*, Homer's *Iliad* encompasses war between the Troy and Greeks. Achilles is the great warrior in the world according to Greek mythology. So Achilles has had great effort to release Helen from troy, the loss was immense. The two places might have spent lot of expenditures and have damaged or polluted nature to the core in ten years. A woman is the cause for the war in *Iliad*. In Wilfred Owen war poetryhe delineates from his direct involvement as a warrior. He has got psychologically affected in the First World War until his death. Owen has portrayed that how soldiers become hopeless, helpless, exhausted and repressed by the war and have lost the meaning and joy of life. In the two World Wars the entire globe has been shaken because many lost their lives, many sons and daughters. They have destroyed the nature too. We the human beings tend to disturb nature always. But nature never thinks to damage the earth. What we sow, that shall be reaped or yielded. In India we have conflicts among religions, in the states between White and Black, in Canada between English and French whereas in Sri Lanka Conflict between two different races Singhalese and Tamils. What the researcher has finalized from the poem is problem is everywhere. There is no place in the world without problem. War alone is not at all a solution to a problem. As poet has said Education alone will make us to come out of our problem therefore, we need to educate first ourselves and then others to lead a peaceful life. *To a Student* is a wonderful poem by Kamala Wijeratne. This poem aims to plea for peace and harmony. The island Nation Sri Lanka is terribly turn to business because of the racial war between the two ethnic groups, they are Singhalese and Tamil. Kamala Wijratne minutely listens all her students that they do not listen to her teaching because they are being disturbed by the harshness and Cruelness of war, therefore their eyes leap away and stray away against their teacher's contact. I know why your eyes leap away. According to the English proverb as "If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people". Therefore, the poetess carefully has titled the poem as addressing to a student. Whosoever reads *To a Student*, he or she will be educated. She strongly believes that education alone can stop this ethnic war, hence it is a conflict between two races Singhalese and Tamils that riot started when the British freed Sri Lanka from their clutches in 1948. The cruelty of war has been vividly pictured that as follows, "I do know your ears are stopped against my voice. The echoes of gun-shots have blocked All extraneous sound, Blasts of grenades have cracked the drums,(you fear for brother, friend and lover.)"Blasts of grenades have cracked the ear drums of students, and students have witnessed torn pieces of human flesh, suspended from bushed and trees and fragments of splintered bones. The students in her class room are worried of their brother, friend and lover. Therefore she has taken up education as a weapon to eradicate the war that kills children, Students, men and women of the nation without their involvement. In the second part, the poet cum teacher suggests that to have a positive outlook towards life by not merely concentrating violence and unkind sound. Then she requests to avoid using brand names, as the line follows, "My eyes as they see yours See torn pieces of human flesh, Suspended from bushes and trees; Fragments of splintered bones,

Shreds of olive green;” The students are the eye witness of the bloodshed. It is a right age to educate them therefore she has addressed to the students directly. Those lines express the imagery or of portrait of a war field in the poem. In the final line of the poem she requests the students to find out a methodology to stop the war. She has finally vibrated the students to act against the war. Through this poem what poet tries to say is all must get education in a country. She intentionally addresses to poem to the students, youngsters or future generation. Through the cruelty of war the students witnessed the war will definitely have the bad impression of the country as well as waging war with the same people of the country. Those who read this poem are called students according to Kamala Wijratne. War alone is not the solution to the problem, rather comprehending others’ notions and believes and their ideology. The poet teaches a lesson to teachers too. That is, when students stop listening to her classes and then she identifies what students feel. Here the role of a teacher has been excellently described by the poet. If the students are the weapons of the nation, the teachers are the sharpeners of the weapons. It is very important that how far a weapon is sharpened. So the complete responsibility of the nation relays of falls on good teachers. As we all are teachers the nation is in our hand.

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