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## THE PHENOMENON OF WAR AND ROLE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOOKS OF NOBEL LAUREATES

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### Abstract

This article explores the phenomenon of war and its role in human spiritual development as reflected in the works of Nobel Prize laureates. It analyzes war not merely as a symbol of destruction or violence, but as a profound **moral and philosophical experience** that tests human conscience, values, and inner strength. Through examples from Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and Svetlana Alexievich's *The Unwomanly Face of War*, the study examines how war exposes the moral dilemmas, emotional trauma, and psychological transformation of individuals. The article emphasizes that these literary works transform war from a historical event into a **metaphysical category**—a means of understanding the human condition, ethical responsibility, and the process of spiritual formation. Ultimately, war in Nobel literature is seen as a **catalyst for self-realization and moral renewal**, where the human spirit confronts and transcends suffering to attain inner harmony.

**Keywords:** Nobel Prize laureates, war and literature, human spiritual development, moral consciousness, philosophical interpretation of war, Ernest Hemingway, Svetlana Alexievich, human dignity, ethical transformation, moral experience.

### Introduction

The Nobel Prize is the most prestigious literary award. Every country has dozens of national and international awards, but the Nobel Prize is considered the most distinguished. "My wish is that the prize should be awarded to the most deserving,



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regardless of nationality or origin,” said Alfred Nobel [1]. According to his will, the prize financially supported was established in 1895 and is awarded in the following five categories: physics, chemistry, physiology and medicine, literature, and efforts toward establishing world peace. Before the prize is awarded, major organizations around the world nominate candidates for consideration. In October, the nominees are announced in their respective countries. The final selection is carried out by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the Nobel Assembly at the Karolinska Institute, and the Norwegian Nobel Committee. The Nobel Prize award ceremony takes place on December 10 the anniversary of Alfred Nobel’s death in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, and Oslo, the capital of Norway. In Stockholm, the King of Sweden presents prizes in the fields of physics, chemistry, physiology and medicine, literature, and economics. The Nobel Prize was awarded for the first time in 1901 [2].

Since 1901, the Nobel Prize has not been awarded 50 times. The longest interruptions, of course, correspond to the years of the First (1914–1918) and Second (1939–1945) World Wars. From that time until today, the majority of laureates have been men their number exceeds one hundred. Between 1901 and 2024, more than 60 women have received the Nobel Prize across various categories (Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, Literature, Economics, and Peace). This means that women make up less than ten percent of all Nobel laureates. The proportion of female Nobel Prize winners remains relatively low. However, in recent decades, this figure has been gradually increasing. In the Uzbek-language book *“Nobel mukofoti olgan adiblar”* (“Writers Who Won the Nobel Prize”), Qudrat Do’stmuhammad offers the following reflections about this award:

“If we look closely at the geography of the writers who have received the Nobel Prize, we can notice certain traditions or unwritten rules. When the Russian writer Ivan Bunin went into emigration, he was not yet a particularly famous author, yet thirteen years later he received the Nobel Prize. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Joseph Brodsky, and the Polish writer Czesław Miłosz were all exiled from their homelands; Boris Pasternak was heavily persecuted and forced to decline the award. From the socialist bloc, only two writers Mikhail Sholokhov from Russia and Jaroslav Seifert from Czechoslovakia became Nobel laureates and managed to live peacefully in their own countries. Another interesting fact is that the



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American writers Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair, though recognized as major literary figures, never received the Nobel Prize. Both were sympathetic to the former Soviet Union and promoted its ideas. As for Leo Tolstoy, he was considered one of the most deserving candidates in 1901 and 1902, but the prize was not given to him. The reason was that some of Tolstoy's philosophical views did not align with the principles of the Nobel Prize. Consequently, the Nobel Committee decided to expand the scope of its criteria, and from then on began to consider not only literary works but also historical writings.[3]"

In the works of many writers, war is portrayed not only as a process aimed at reconciliation and the restoration of balance, nor merely as a manifestation of violence, but also as a profound **spiritual trial** that plays a significant role in human development. Through depictions of war, themes such as human dignity, conscience, and their corruption are deeply analyzed. In the creative works of Nobel Prize laureates, war occupies an essential place in the process of human moral evolution, serving as a central means to explore its ethical and spiritual impact. War is not limited to violence and destruction it tests a person's inner strength and moral integrity. These literary works reveal the **psychological and social effects** of war on both individuals and society. During wartime, the notion of human worth is reevaluated; through spiritual crises, achievements, and losses, the individual undergoes a process of **self-discovery**. Such works inspire readers to examine human development from a new philosophical perspective, unveiling both the bright and dark sides of war. Novels about war exert a strong influence on the **formation of the human spirit**, as they reflect the inner struggles and tragedies people experience during and after war. These works highlight several key factors that directly shape an individual's moral growth. The circumstances of war often force people to make **ethical choices**, and these decisions become crucial in the moral formation of character.

The work of American writer and journalist **Ernest Hemingway** represents a new stage in the development of both American and world realistic art. The theme of the **tragic fate of the ordinary American** remained central throughout Hemingway's creative career. His novels are imbued with the spirit of **movement, struggle, and courage**. The author portrays proud, strong, and humane characters who are capable of preserving their dignity even in the most



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difficult circumstances. However, many of Hemingway's heroes are doomed to **loneliness and despair**, reflecting the existential challenges of the modern individual. Hemingway's **literary style** occupies a unique place in twentieth-century prose. Writers from many countries attempted to imitate him, yet few succeeded in capturing the precision, restraint, and emotional depth of his art. Hemingway's style was inseparable from his personality and life experience. As a journalist, he worked meticulously on the form and structure of his writing. Journalism helped him to develop one of his core creative principles: *never write about what you do not know*. He preferred to depict simple, physical actions while leaving space for emotions to emerge implicitly in the **subtext**. Hemingway believed there was no need to describe feelings directly portraying the actions that give rise to those emotions was enough. His concise, disciplined, and emotionally charged prose not only revolutionized American literature but also shaped the literary consciousness of an entire era, making Hemingway one of the most influential voices of modern realism.

Ernest Hemingway was born in **Oak Park**, a suburb of Chicago, into the family of a physician. Throughout his youth, he repeatedly ran away from home and worked various jobs as a **farm laborer**, **waiter**, and **boxing coach** before eventually gaining recognition as a **journalist**. During the **First World War**, he volunteered to serve at the front as a medical orderly, since he had been declared unfit for combat due to an eye injury sustained during boxing lessons. In **July 1918**, Hemingway was severely wounded; doctors counted **237 wounds** on his body. From **1921 to 1928**, he lived in **Paris**, working as the European correspondent for several Canadian newspapers. There, he wrote his first war stories and his debut novel, *The Sun Also Rises (Fiesta)*. His wartime experiences profoundly shaped his worldview. In his early works, Hemingway spoke as a representative of the "**Lost Generation**" a generation that had sacrificed its health, peace of mind, and ideals for the interests of others, and in return received only physical and spiritual scars. The **post-war Western world**, shaken by inflation and economic crisis, deepened this sense of spiritual emptiness and disillusionment. Hemingway wrote about the pain of returning from war, the restless lives of front-line soldiers and their friends, and the loneliness of fiancées who waited in vain for their beloveds to return. According to Hemingway, people



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saw **neither hope nor purpose** in the future; they were condemned to carry the trauma of war for the rest of their lives. They were alienated from family, from homes they could never return to, and from the patterns of their former existence. Nearly all of Hemingway's protagonists share a destiny marked by **spiritual depression and loneliness**. His characters embody the tragic consciousness of an era that had lost faith in progress but continued to struggle to preserve dignity and humanity amid the ruins of modern civilization. [4] In Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, for example, the protagonists face moral dilemmas born of war. The main character, disillusioned by its futility, decides to escape from the battlefield one of the most significant stages in his path toward personal and moral maturity. His choice shapes the ethical dimensions of his character.

The works of **Svetlana Alexievich**, published not only in Russia but also in the United States, Germany, England, Japan, Sweden, France, China, Vietnam, Bulgaria, India, and altogether in 19 countries, stand as a remarkable contribution to both **artistic and documentary prose**. She is recognized as a master of blending factual testimony with deep emotional insight. However, some critics have described her writing as **speculative or tendentious journalism**, arguing that she interprets rather than merely records. During the Great Patriotic War, more than one million women served in the Soviet Army aged between 15 and 30, performing not only as nurses and doctors but also as **combatants and snipers**. After the war, they faced another kind of battle: concealing their military past, hiding their service records and scars, as they struggled to return to ordinary life to smile again, wear high heels, and start families. Alexievich continually revised and expanded her monumental book *The Unwomanly Face of War*, adding new episodes and voices. The work is not built around a single plot; rather, it unfolds through **interviews and dialogues**, in which the author conveys the emotional truth of over **500 women veterans** from ordinary soldiers to high-ranking officers—who shared their memories and inner pain.

In the works of both **Ernest Hemingway** and **Svetlana Alexievich**, war is not depicted merely as violence or destruction, nor simply as an attempt to restore balance and peace. Instead, it is presented as a **moral and spiritual ordeal** that plays a crucial role in human growth and consciousness. Through war, the concepts of **human dignity, conscience, and moral corruption** are profoundly



examined. In their writings, the phenomenon of war serves as one of the central means of exploring the **moral and ethical dimensions of humanity**. War tests not only the physical endurance of individuals but also their inner strength, faith, and ethical values. These works reveal the **psychological and social consequences** of war how it transforms human relationships, challenges personal identity, and reshapes the understanding of good and evil. War becomes a moment of **spiritual reevaluation**, in which human worth is rediscovered through moral crises, victories, and losses. Ultimately, such literature offers a **philosophical lens** through which human development is reexamined. By exposing both the light and dark sides of war, the writings of Nobel laureates illuminate how the experience of conflict becomes a crucible for the evolution of the human spirit and moral awareness.[5] Similarly, in Svetlana Alexievich's *The Unwomanly Face of War*, the author reveals how war devastates human relationships and transforms the lives and moral outlooks of women. Their humanity and inner growth evolve under the shadow of war, showing how its impact on human relationships and the inner world is both profound and enduring. War leaves deep scars on the human mind and soul, reshaping one's moral identity and transforming the system of values. The **ethics of war** cannot be separated from its moral experience: a soldier returns from the battlefield not only with physical wounds, but also with a changed understanding of duty, courage, and moral responsibility. Therefore, literary works on the theme of war are not merely artistic representations of historical events they are powerful **philosophical sources** for studying the process of spiritual formation. They reveal how, amid the destruction of war, humanity's deepest moral and existential dimensions are tested, refined, and, ultimately, reborn.

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