

Compare and contrast

Literature



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Comparison of *Soldiers Home* by Ernest Hemingway and *Ind Aff* by Fay Weldon Each short story is trying to convey a particular author's intent, which has cultural, religious, social, or psychological significance. Of interest is the fact that a variety of short stories, despite their differences in plot, can be dedicated, for instance, to the same social and psychological issue. In particular, *Soldiers Home* by Ernest Hemingway and *Ind Aff* by Fay Weldon despite the specific differences between their main characters, storylines, settings and other elements of a literary work, are similar in that they deal with the problem of consciousness. Completely different situations force the protagonists of these short stories to think about their future lives and their desires, and a symbol of war allows the heroes to make this excursion into the depths of their consciousness.

Plot and setting. The protagonist of the *Soldiers Home* Harold Krebs after the First World returns to his hometown of Oklahoma. Despite the fact that he has returned to his family, he does not feel like a member of their society. Nothing has a value for him anymore and he is not a participant, but an unwitting observer of all that is happening in the city. The conflict between him and society is performed against the background of Krebs' desire "to live along without consequences" as well as without lies and pretense (Hemingway 89). The result of the history is Krebs' idea to leave his hometown and seek his place in the sun in a different city. In turn, the second story takes place in Sarajevo, Bosnia, where a 25-year-old graduate student (the narrator) and her professor Peter Piper explore the historic past of the city. In particular, in the field of their study is the story of how a man named Princip killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand, which marked the beginning

of the First World War. In fact, the plot involves self-examination of the protagonist, who is trying to understand whether it makes sense to continue her romantic relationship with the married professor. Similar to the previous story, the heroine comes to a conclusion about the need to break the shackles of the existing reality and start a new life without her professor. In fact, “ it was a silly sad thing to do... to confuse mere passing academic ambition with love” (Weldon n. p.).

Character and point of view. Each of the main characters is characterized by a desire for self-knowledge and self-awareness. Returning home after the war, Krebs feels that even though “ nothing was changed in the town except that the young girls had grown up,” he does not have inner psychological comfort (Hemingway 88). Everybody wants him to live and work like all the other men who have returned home after the war, but no one tries to understand what is happening within Krebs soul, even his own mother.

Experience of the war, in which “ he lost everything” (Hemingway 88), has clearly changed the main character, though he cannot become aware of these changes. Help comes from reading a book on a military subject, when Harold finally “ learns about the war” (Hemingway 90). In turn, a joint visit with the professor makes the main character of Ind Aff think about whether they should continue their relationship, if it is about to destroy professor’s family and bring suffering to his wife and children. Over time, the narrator concludes that she was selfish. Though the girl likes “ to be seen with him,” the idea that she can perform the same negative role in someones fate as Princip did many decades ago and thus face with the need to accept the fact of own cruelty and immorality does not give her a rest (Weldon n. p.).

Constant reflection on her responsibility become one of the main reasons for parting of the two lovers. As one can see, both stories are told by the narrator. On the other hand, the story of Soldiers Home is told on behalf of the third-person narrator, while Ind Aff - the first-person narrator. The first method of narration gives the opportunity to become an external observer in relation to the main character, and the second allows one to find him/herself on the girl's place and understand her inner feelings and experience at the time of staying in Sarajevo.

Thus, what unites the two stories is the main characters' attempts to analyze themselves and their actions. Different situations (participation in the war for Harold Krebs and romantic relationship with a married professor for the girl) have given them impetus to rethink their lives and life values. Hemingway's hero because of the war lost primarily himself. In turn, the admiration for the beauty and respectability of the professor caused the narrator to enter the close relationship with him. Only constant reflection on their own lives and how they should go further help the heroes answer the question about who they are and what they want in their lives.

Works Cited

Hemingway, Ernest. "Soldiers Home." *The Collected Stories*. Ed. James Fenton. New York: Everyman's Library, 1995. 87-93. Print.

Weldon, Fay. Ind Aff. n. d. Web. 14 Oct. 2014.