

Editha

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel "Editha", Howells portrays false morals and values influenced by war and idea of courage. Hometown idealism is influenced by war heroism associated with a battlefied and military operations. Through the character of Editha, Howells portrays that society encourages young men enlist in the army and go to war. Editha writes in the letter to George: "I shall never marry any one else. But the man I marry must love his country first of all" (p. 1352). The theme of heroism is expressed through the idea of fighting and maturing. For Editha, war symbolizes maturing a man and physical strengths.

Like other townpeople, Editha approaches the war with loyalty, teamwork, and missionary zeal. Hometown idealism 'ruins' life of many young men forced to go to war. Hometown idealizes sufferings and struggle, fight and killing. The heroism exists in ironic excess of, or contradistinction to, heroic conventions. George's mother says to Editha: "You just expected him to kill some one else, some of those foreigners, ... because they had to be there, poor wretches--conscripts, or whatever they call 'em" (p. 1358). The theme of heroism examines questions of self-knowledge, illusions, and inner character.

Townpeople do not recognize dark side of the war: physical and darkness: violence, hatred, vengeance, power and chaos. Editha supposes that war tests beliefs and courage. Editha's romance of war is nurtured by dreams of adventure, heroism, struggles and glorious moments. "They think they'll come marching back, somehow, just as gay as they went, or if it's an empty sleeve, or even an empty pantaloon, it's all the more glory" (p. 1358).

Hometown idealism shows that a real hero should coin his personality during the war time. Idealism is expressed in false ideals of peace and courage.