



## Genre Attribution Of The Novel "Death Of A Hero"

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the genre of novel "Death of a Hero" which was written by Richard Aldington. The writer called his book as a "jazz novel", and "threnody". The novel "Death of a Hero" can also be called a tragedy novel, which has become a tragic, satirical, lyric book about war, society and human.

### KEYWORDS

Genre, "jazz novel", a threnody, pathos, irony, narrator, tragedy, Prologue, Epilogue, "lost generation".

### INTRODUCTION

Richard Aldington (1892-1962) belonged to the post-war or "lost generation" writers, as he flourished in the 1920s and 1930s. Most (but not all) combatant

writers decided to put their thoughts into print. Some of them chose write memoirs, others opted to the form of a novel. The writers such as R. Aldington, F. Manning and the German writer E. Remarque wrote novels

– chiefly as they needed to kill off their protagonists. However, their narratives maintain a great degree of fidelity to their own war experience.

Aldington's debut novel *Death of a Hero* first published in 1929, and was described by its author as both a "jazz novel" and a memorial to a generation.

The genre of Aldington's first novel is rather ambiguous. In a prefatory letter to Halcott Glover, Aldington refers to the work as a "jazz novel". "This book," he also wrote in a letter to him, "is not the work of a professional novelist. It is, apparently, not a novel at all. Certain conventions of form and method in the novel have been erected, I gather, into immutable laws, and are looked upon with quite superstitious reverence. They are entirely disregarded here". In the same place, he called his book "a threnody, a memorial in its ineffective way to a generation".

According to the plot, the novel fits into the framework of a biographical novel (this is the story of the life of an individual from birth to death), and in terms of its problems it refers to an anti-war novel. At the same time, the novel breaks the framework of all the usual genre definitions. So, considering the problem of a military catastrophe, getting to the bottom of its causes, one can notice that less than half of the space is allotted to the actual front-line scenes. The author disassembles the story of his hero's life in fragments, groping his way through disparate influences, but traces it from beginning to end, warning in advance of the tragic outcome. However, the individual story appears as a typical story, as the fate of a generation. The main stages of this development, the complex process of character formation, the path of individual destiny, taken in interconnections, are presented as an example of a by no means a

special case. In the personality of the hero and other characters, typical features are set off.

M. Urnov classifies Aldington's novel as a kind of "intellectual subjective-psychological novel associated with the school of the stream of consciousness. This is one of the twentieth century shoots that grew on a branch of the literary tree planted by Lawrence Stern" [1, 32].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Indeed, the plot structure, narrative manner, tone and style of the author's commentary are very unusual. "No, - writes M. Urnov, - in " *Death of a Hero* "the narrative thoroughness and depth, completeness of the disclosure of ideological and thematic content, which the great epic form suggests. Aldington's novel is unlike the books-memories of peer writers - Graves, Sassoon, Herbert Read devoted to the same military theme. The plot and style of the narrative in it break down and crumble; the grotesque character-label acts along with the character of ordinary proportions, a strictly objective description is adjacent to the emphatically subjective, a touching lyrical outpouring is cut off by a rude cry, areal abuse "[1, 29-30].

Aldington includes, for example, the following passage:

"Rummy old England. Pox on you, you old bitch, you've made worms' meat of us (We've made worms' meat of ourselves). But still, let me look back upon thee." [2, 28]

Or - a combination of lofty bookish pathos with colloquial style, vernacular:

"Mother of the race of Aeneas, voluptuous delight of gods and men. Sacred Aphrodite, who from the recesses of Thy divine abode ..." [2, 129]

The comparison of the novel with the "jazz novel" is not without grounds. As M. Urnov notes, "Syncope rhythm, impetuous expression is a characteristic feature of the style of "Death of a Hero." This expression arises on the basis of a sharp combination of contrasts, their rapid change and transitions: contrasting forms of expression - passionate journalism and restrained description, accusatory pathos and caustic irony; contrasting moods - melancholic, enthusiastic, full of despair; impulsive articulation of the text, etc." [1, c.31]

The following passages can be cited as examples of such expression:

"Mother of the race of Aeneas, voluptuous delight of gods and men. Sacred Aphrodite, who from the recesses of Thy divine abode lookest in pity upon the sorrowing generations of men and women, and sheddest upon us rose-petals ..." [136].

"Whatever is done for the Empire is right. Not Truth and Justice, but British Truth and British Justice. Odious profanation! You are the servant of the Empire; never mind whether you are rich or poor, do what the Empire tells you, and so long as the Empire is rich and powerful you ought to be happy. Woman? A rag, a bone, and a hank of a hair. Get rid of the sexual problem by teaching men to despise women, either by open scorn or ... Of course, they're valuable as possessions. Oh, quite! There can be no world peace because the man who has the most money gets the best woman, as the German Kaiser said at the gathering of the nations. As if the nations were a set of Kiplingesque characters bidding against each other for an expensive tart! How despicable, how odious!" [2, 148]

And here is the "jazz", sound description of the battle:

"CRASH! Like an orchestra at the signal of a baton the thousands of guns north and south opened up. The night sprang to flickering daylight with the gun-flashes, the earth trembled with the shock, the air roared and screamed with shells. Lights rushed up from German line, and their artillery in turn flamed into action" [2, 339-340].

In all the examples given, we observe similar narrative techniques: alternating short stressed phrases, changing pathos and irony, the presence of oppositions, antitheses, the predominance of dynamics, exclamations, rhetorical questions, stylistic (and sometimes visual) breaks, dots.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A special role in the novel is assigned to the narrator who has seen a lot in life. Acting as a narrator, the writer is essentially telling about himself and his thoughts. Often the details of the biography of the author and the hero coincide. So, Aldington also volunteered for the front, served as a private, and commanded a company. The author needed the figure of the narrator first of all in order to give the hero's fate a generalizing meaning. Thanks to this technique, the image of George Winterbourne takes on a symbolic meaning. His tragedy is the tragedy of an entire generation, broken by war. The author also needed a narrator in order to use him to draw the line between himself and the hero, especially clear between himself at the end of the 20s, his "I" of the pre-war and war years. No matter how close the narrator is to George Winterbourne, he does not merge with him in a single person. The author-storyteller looks at everything wider and much more independently. The author's gaze not only plays the role of a hidden camera lens, stating those sometimes unsightly situations in which the hero finds himself, he sometimes plays an

active role, intervening in events. The author sympathizes with his hero, supports his dissatisfaction and the desire for independence, to assert his own dignity. However, the main function of the author's comments is irony - bitter, sad, caustic and evil. The author sees many of George's weaknesses, mistakes and delusions - isolation in a narrow environment, illusions and prejudices, excessive arrogance of youth and carelessness in solving complex issues of life, which is the reason for irony. Its basis is the knowledge of what happened later, the so-called temporary view.

The irony lies in the title of the novel itself: "Death of a Hero", in which the author emphasizes both his closeness and sympathy to the main character, and irony towards him. The pathos of this irony is directed against war, chauvinism, hurray-patriotic slogans. Irony can be traced in the tone of the narrative, permeating the entire book. It is especially clear in the Prologue.

The novel "Death of a Hero" can also be called a tragedy novel. Aldington, in a letter to the American critic Gorham Munson, explained: 'I kept a rough concept of the Euripidean tragedy in mind, which is why I give the whole plot of the story in the Prologue—the intention there being to avoid false surprise.' The Prologue therefore concerns the reception of the news of the hero's death in battle, George Winterbourne, by his parents, wife and mistress, and ends with the narrator's interpretation of his need to tell George's story:

"The death of a hero! What mockery, what bloody cant! What sickening putrid cant! George's death is a symbol to me of the whole sickening bloody waste of it, the damnable stupid waste and torture of it. ... That is why I am writing the life of George Winterbourne, a

unit, one human body murdered, but to me a symbol. It is an atonement, a desperate effort to wipe off the blood-guiltiness".

The novel proceeds to three major episodes like a Greek tragedy, in the drama of protagonist's life that's George Winterbourne's: Part One covers his family life and upbringing and Part Two covers his pre-war and early wartime life as a young painter in London and, particularly, his relationships with two young women; Part Three covers George's wartime service until his death on 4 November 1918, however actually ends with Field Marshall Foch's Armistice letter to the troops of the Allied Armies. As a Greek model, the novel concludes with an epilogue, an elegiac poem which begins:

Eleven years after the fall of Troy,  
We, the old men—some of us nearly forty—  
Met and talked on the sunny rampart  
Over our wine.

## CONCLUSION

The novel "Death of a Hero" can be called a tragedy novel, which has become a tragic, brilliantly satirical, lyric book about war, society and humanbeing. The Prologue therefore concerns the reception of the news of the death in a battle of the hero and ends with the Epilogue "Troy". The author of the novel mentioned about it in his letter to Gorham Munson.

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