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Giménez Baraldés, Eva; Springer, Bernd , dir. Pacifist Narratives in Times of War : a Study of Bertha von Suttner's Lay Down Your Arms and Rose Macaulay's Non-Combatants and Others. 2021. 39 pag. (836 Grau en Estudis d'Anglès i Espanyol)

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**Pacifist Narratives in Times of War: a Study of Bertha
von Suttner's *Lay Down Your Arms* and Rose
Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others***

Treball de Fi de Grau/ BA dissertation

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June 2021

CONTENTS

0. Introduction.....	1
1. The authors.....	2
1.1. Bertha von Suttner.....	2
1.2. Rose Macaulay.....	3
2. Summaries.....	4
2.1. <i>Lay Down Your Arms</i>	4
2.2. <i>Non-Combatants and Others</i>	4
3. Analysis: the prevailing values of society.....	5
3.1. Education: <i>dulce et decorum est pro patria mori</i>	5
3.2. Religion : the will of the Almighty.....	9
3.3. Patriarchy: gender roles and motherhood.....	12
3.4. Enemy: the responsible for war.....	18
4. Analysis: the detrimental effects of war.....	19
4.1. Soldiers.....	19
4.2. Civilians.....	22
5. Analysis: the pathway to peace.....	25
6. Conclusions.....	28
Works Cited.....	30

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my tutor for helping me choose the topic and for always offering me his help. I would also like to thank my parents for supporting me every time I needed it and for always being there for me, especially my mother, who has listened to me without ever complaining. Finally, I would like to thank my friends for listening to me every time I talked about my TFG, especially Lorena Escudero, with whom I have shared many hours at the library.

Abstract

Bertha von Suttner's *Lay Down Your Arms* (1889) and Rose Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others* (1916) were written in times of war, even though the message they deliver is pacifist. As critics have pointed out, these novels deliver a different speech from the prevalent one at that time and dismantle the prevailing image of war by exposing that there is nothing glorious about it and that it is in fact futile bloodshed. In order to do that, these novels depict how the idea that war is necessary is pointless and the brutal effects it causes.

The present paper analyses how similar are the messages they both deliver and which arguments they use in order to denounce war and to demand the end of it. Both authors put the focus on education and religion, which not only help the perpetuation of armed conflict but also the genre myth that men have to be brave and manly and women have to either stay at home or become nurses so as to help the country in need. Besides, these narratives portray the suffering that war causes on combatants but also on non-combatants. The protagonists that Suttner and Macaulay created are depicted as human beings that have expanded their knowledge through self-education and therefore, they can see beyond what they were originally taught, and it is precisely this modification of education that leads to peace.

Key Words: *Lay Down Your Arms*, *Non-Combatants and Others*, Bertha von Suttner, Rose Macaulay, war, peace.

0. Introduction

The nationalistic spirit increased throughout the 19th Century in Europe. Therefore, many wars were constantly decreed on that ground and as a consequence, the tensions between nations grew and were always present. The premise *si vis pacem, para bellum* reigned and thus, even in periods between wars there was what is called armed peace, which was the embodiment of these constant tensions. Even though during the last decade of the century many peace societies were created and several conferences for disarmament were held, this did not prevent the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Although the prevalent feeling of the society of those times was patriotic and people were in favour of armed conflicts, there were some voices like Bertha von Suttner and Rose Macaulay that went against the tide and advocated for peace. Suttner's *Lay Down Your Arms* was written at the end of the 19th Century and Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others* was written in 1916, in the middle of the First World War. These pacifist novels show the prevalent values of society and criticize them by exposing how senseless they are. Furthermore, both authors expose the detrimental effects of war and destroy its glorifying myth. The protagonists of these stories and their actions and well-constructed opinions show the pathway to peace.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the above stated in both novels and compare them in order to see, even though they are separated by twenty-seven years, if their message is the same, if they criticize the same aspects and if the arguments they use are similar. To do so, I aim to use previous research done on the historical context of both authors and to analyse some characters and their function in the writings.

1. The authors

1.1. Bertha von Suttner

The Austrian writer and pacifist Bertha von Suttner was born in Prague in 1843 and died in Vienna in 1914, just two months before the First World War started. She was a noblewoman who “was born into a Bohemian family with a long military tradition” (Holt, 2002:118). In spite of this, Bertha was a fervent advocate of peace who devoted her life to waging war on war.

Bertha went against the “normative model of femininity that marginalises women from socio-political alliances to place them in the supposedly apolitical domestic sphere” (Ramos, 2015:28)¹ and placed herself outside this sphere. She moved to Paris to work as Alfred Nobel’s private secretary, but only for a week, for she and Alfred von Suttner decided to get married. The fact that she was married did not prevent her from working and writing.

In 1889, von Suttner wrote *Lay Down Your Arms*, which has been regarded as “the first German-language novel to contradict the norms of nineteenth-century war-literature” (Morris-Keitel, 2014, 34). According to Ramos (2015:34), it became an international best-seller as shortly after being published thirty-one editions in Germany and translations in many countries followed.

Although the predominant point of view was still militaristic and nationalistic and she was “sometimes ridiculed as ‘peace Bertha’” (Holt, 2002:117), the peace movement was growing stronger at the end of the 19th Century. As Gerhard Senft has mentioned, “by the early 1890’s, there were supraregionally active peace societies” and “world peace conferences were regular events” (2014:189). Von Suttner, besides

¹ Translations from Spanish to English have been done by Eva Giménez.

attending many of these conferences and writing pro-peace articles and books, founded the Austrian peace society called the Österreichische Friedensgesellschaft in 1891.

1.2. Rose Macaulay

Rose Macaulay, who lived between 1881 and 1958, was a British writer and columnist. Even though she did not enjoy the same success as Bertha von Suttner, her novel *Non-Combatants and Others* published in 1916 was the first anti-war novel to be published in Britain during World War I, as Kate Macdonald, who has recently edited the book, has stated.

That she wrote a pacifist novel in the middle of the Great War shows that she did not support the armed conflict. However, as Ha-Birdsong (1995:140) has mentioned, Macaulay took part in the governmental patriotic activities and volunteered as a V.A.D. nurse. What is more, she even worked at the Exemptions Bureau of the Ministry of War in London. Critics cannot explain why she did this, but they do agree that it was not because of patriotism.

During the First World War Macaulay did not participate in any peace movements and it was not until the 1930's that she became politically active. Until then, she "avoided directly voicing her opinion on peace" (Ha-Birdsong, 1995:1) in her novels. Instead, they "deal with diverse voices of and responses to war" (Ha-Birdsong, 1995:8). Her books, unlike von Suttner's, are not "designed to move the reader to assume a certain point of view or to take direct action on a moral or political issue" (Ha-Birdsong, 1995:94) and therefore, they are not didactic or propagandistic.

According to Senft (2014:193, 194), the peace movement was largely weakened during the First World War and known peace activists were monitored and even ran the risk of being apprehended. Boxwell has attributed Macaulay's way of writing her pacifist novels as "a strategic effort to avoid prosecution under the Defense of the Realm Act, Regulation 21, which expressly prohibited criticism of the war" (1993:100).

2. Summaries

2.1. *Lay Down Your Arms*

This novel focuses on the life of the Austrian countess Martha Althaus, who tells us her story by using her old diaries. Her biography is marked by four wars: the Italian War of 1859, the Second Schleswig War (1864), the Austro-Prussian War (1866) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). This autobiography is divided into six books and an epilogue, which takes place in the present, that is, 1889.

Martha recollects all her life and how it has been influenced by these four armed conflicts. The reader can observe her evolution regarding peace along the years, for she had been strongly patriotic during her youthful years. The countess tells the horrors she has lived because of war, but also describes some happy moments, such as her second marriage or the birth of her two children. She loses her first husband, Arno Dotzky, her piece of mind, almost all her family and her second husband, Friedrich Tilling, with whom she will devote her life to follow a pathway to peace.

2.2. *Non-Combatants and Others*

This story, as Ha-Birdsong has pointed out, concentrates on Alix's "development into a peace activist" (1995:19). Alix is a twenty-five year old crippled girl whose greatest passion during the pre-war days was painting. She tries to focus on this when the war breaks out, but it is impossible, for she lives with her mother's family, the Ormes, at Wood End and they lead busy lives full of war activities.

War is unbearable for her and she tries to escape it, and in order to do so moves to Violette with Mrs Frampton and her two daughters, Evie and Kate, who are her distant family. They are only related to domestic activities and Alix is comfortable, but she soon realises that war cannot be escaped. In the last part of the story, her mother Daphne comes back from her pro-peace activities around the world and Alix decides to join her in order to fight war.

3. Analysis: the prevailing values of society

3.1. Education: *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*

In *Lay Down Your Arms*, Martha Althaus argues that one of the main problems that leads society into thinking that war is a necessary evil in order to defend the fatherland from the enemy is the patriotic education that both boys and girls receive. Martha identifies two sources that increased her enthusiasm for war and heroism since she was a little girl: "I was of course passionately enthusiastic for that which was most highly accounted of by my school-books and my *entourage*" (Suttner, 2019:24).

This patriotic system of education raises the youth to believe that war is admirable and "an inevitable law of nature and must always occur from time to time" (Suttner, 2019:25), for "the Lord of armies is constantly decreeing battles" (Suttner, 2019:25). This is not only taught with history, which "is the chief source of the

admiration of war” (Suttner, 2019:25), but also with tales and poems, which increase the viewpoint that there is nothing nobler than to die in the battlefield defending the nation like a hero.

These teachings are accepted as the most natural thing by many characters in the book. The one that has influenced Martha the most during her youthful years is her father, the general Althaus, who has raised his children with the same values as he was raised, and therefore, has given them a militaristic and nationalistic view of the world. He has imposed the military career on his son Otto, who has willingly accepted it, and in the same way he wants to impose this on his grandson Rudolf.

In the second book, there is a scene in which Althaus visits her daughter to ask her to accompany him to a dinner and, as a compensation for the favour, he has brought a box of lead soldiers for the little Rudi, who is only four years old. Of course, Martha is against this, but he objects that “I used to play at soldiers when I was only three years old. You can’t begin too early: [...] that’s the way to awaken the love for the trade, that’s the way” (Suttner, 2019:68), and, in addition, he refers to him as “the future commander-in-chief of the Imperial and Royal Army” (Suttner, 2019:69). In the same way, at the beginning of the novel, when the little one is born, his parents decide his future profession: “What will he be? [...] A soldier” (Suttner, 2019:30), and so, he is called lance-corporal and is even promoted to corporal.

Another scene in which Suttner depicts the influence of the *entourage* on a young mind can be found in the third book, when all the family is at Grumitz after Friedrich’s return from the front. Here, Rudolf is not only educated by Martha and Friedrich but also by his grandfather and his uncle Otto. These two have such a great influence on the little one that “the idea of the ‘enemy’ and ‘cutting down’ were thus

instilled into him” (Suttner, 2019:146) and he beats two dogs calling them “lying Italian” and “impudent Dane” (Suttner, 2019:146).

Another example of how the education plays an important role when it comes to choose the soldier profession is baron Tilling, even though he overcomes this belief in time. When Martha asks him why he became a soldier, for she has seen that his speech is different than her father’s, he admits that “it was not I, nor Frederick Tilling, thirty-nine years old, who had seen three campaigns, who chose the profession, but little Freddy, ten or twelve years old, who had grown up among wooden war-horses and regiments of leaden soldiers” (Suttner, 2019:75). Moreover, his family also influenced him since his father was a decorated general and his uncle a lieutenant.

As it has already been pointed out, women also had a patriotic education and therefore, they share the same viewpoint as men. The story begins with Martha’s recollection of her youthful years full of heroic thoughts and feelings. Thus, she reveals that at a young age she wanted to be like Joan of Arc in order to die for the fatherland and that she wished desperately to have been born a man so as to feel “this most magnificent display of the manly feeling of honour and duty!” (Suttner, 2019:24). However, Martha is not the only woman that manifests these feelings. Lori Griesbach, Martha’s childhood friend, refers to the soldier’s death as a noble and enviable end and even over the years, in the christening of Rudolf’s first-born, she tells Martha that when her husband fell in the Bosnian expedition “he died a glorious death; that is one comfort” (Suttner, 2019:339).

One of the key elements of this patriotic education was the idea of self-sacrifice, that is, the individual was regarded as less important than the nation, and if the soldiers had to die in order to gain power and glory for the country, so be it. As Vincent Sherry

has pointed out, during the First World War, the official letter that was sent “notifying a family of their loss included ‘sacrifice’ as its tonic” (2018:74). The note went as follows: “The King commands me to assure you of the true sympathy of His Majesty and the Queen in your sorrow. He whose loss you mourn died in the noblest of causes. His country will be ever grateful to him for the sacrifice he has made for Freedom and Justice” (Sherry, 2018:74).

The figure of the sacrificial soldier, however, is not exclusive of the World War I, as it was present long before this time. In Suttner’s book, we can see this idea throughout the plot. Since the very beginning, before his husband Arno Dotzky is sent to the front, Martha talks about “the eternal appeal to virtue, honour, duty, courage, self-sacrifice” (Suttner, 2019:40). The character that represents this value the most is the general Althaus, who maintains this belief until the very last days of his existence. The general argues that the country’s needs take precedence over the needs of the individual. For instance, when Friedrich is in the front to fight in the Second Schleswig War and Martha has got no news from him, his father reproaches her for her anguished thoughts and tells her that “if I had never come back, but had got smashed to bits, you would have had enough for your country to allow that so small a thing as the life of an individual soldier quite vanishes in the great cause for which he has spared it” (Suttner, 2019:138).

Not only a sacrifice from the soldier is required, but also that of the whole population. Even though this sacrifice is less named, there are two episodes in which it is demanded. The first one is when the cholera takes the Grumitz Schloss as a consequence of the Austrian-Prussian War and Martha’s sisters, Lilly and Rosa, and several servants die. Here, Althaus reassures himself and his daughter by saying that “this misfortune shall be borne with a soldier’s courage. It is not I alone, the whole

country has to offer its sacrifice of blood and tears” (Suttner, 2019:257). The second one is when Paris is turned into a fortress during the Franco-Prussian War and a it “is done by these people, *de gaieté de Coeur*, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, with joyous emulation, as if it was a question of carrying out the most useful, the most noble work!” (Suttner, 2019:317).

In *Non-Combatants and Others*, the idea that the root of militarist thinking lies in education is also present. Nevertheless, it is not as developed as in Suttner’s novel. The only sentence in which this can be seen is when Daphne, who does not believe “that young men are good and intelligent and pacifist [...] and elderly men bad, stupid and militarist” (Macaulay, 2020:177), makes the statement that “it’s not a question of age; it’s temperament and training” (Macaulay, 2020:176). This can also be inferred from Daphne’s repeated argument that education has to be solid in order to stop war and that children have to be educated “in sound international ideals” (Macaulay, 2020:182): if education has to change, that means that the current one is not leading humanity to peace but to war.

The concept of sacrifice for the fatherland is materialised when Alix comes back to Violette after her visit to the hospital and there, Mrs Frampton gives her the terrible news that his brother Paul is dead: “The poor dear boy has died doing his duty and serving his country... a noble end, dearie... not a wasted life... [...] He died a noble death [...] serving his country in her need” (Macaulay, 2020:77).

3.2. Religion: the will of the Almighty

In both novels, the Church is depicted as a fundamental institution in order to preserve the patriotic teachings and in order to justify the existence and the “necessity”

of war. Both official Church representatives and fervently devout civilians are represented in the two stories and both share the same discourse.

In Suttner's book, Aunt Mary is the character whose speech is always marked by piety and who always justifies what happens because it "is the will of God" (Suttner, 2019:37) and that "everyone's death hour is fixed" (Suttner, 2019:37), even though she prays to keep their beloved ones safe. Lori Griesbach, while discussing war with Martha, says that "it may be God's will after all that one of my dear ones should meet with a soldier's death" (Suttner, 2019:50). Even her own father, when his daughters Rosa and Lilly die as a result of the destruction that brings war, justifies that because "God has willed so" (Suttner, 2019:257).

The official Church representative is the military chaplain Herr Molster, who is comforting Aunt Cornelia after her only son's death in battle. When Friedrich and Martha talk to him and Martha expresses that it is a contradiction that they are preaching that one must love his enemies and praising battle at the same time, he talks about the glorification of sacrificing oneself for the country. What is more, Molster says that they are fighting "for the highest ideal objects of mankind – for freedom, independence, nationality; for justice, faith, honour, purity and morality" (Suttner, 2019:273).

In Macaulay's story, Mrs Frampton can be considered the equivalent to Aunt Mary on the grounds that she also believes that everything happens because it is the Almighty's will. It can be seen in several instances that she lacks commitment to everything that happens because the God she worships is "an omnipotent Being who governed all things in gross and in detail" (Macaulay, 2020:115) and thus, she as an individual cannot do anything to change what has already been written.

In this way, when she reads in the news that a German has killed himself she says “Well, who can blame him? We must leave that to his Maker” (Macaulay, 2020:39). Another example is when she is reading the latest news while she waits for the Vinneys to arrive and she says about the war that “it’s all very dreadful to think of. But I suppose we must leave it in the hands of the Almighty, who always moves in a mysterious way” (Macaulay, 2020:60). However, the most important example is when she tells Alix about her brother’s death and she claims that “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away... It’s the Almighty’s will...” (Macaulay, 2020:77).

If Mrs Frampton believes that all that happens is predestined, Kate’s God has sent the war as a test for humanity, for he “is little concerned with the ordering of the world at all, but only with individual souls” (Macaulay, 2020:117). Mr Alison, who is the parson of Kate’s Church, preaches that “all this luxury and intemperance is quite shameful. [...] The war was sent to us as a judgement, for all our wicked luxury and vice, and it will never cease till we are converted. [...] The only way to stop the war is a change of life” (Macaulay, 2020:93). This can be read as that war is necessary in order to live a decent life.

The other representative of the Church in the novel who shares this point of view is Mr Daintree, who also preaches in Kate’s Church. He does not state clearly that war is a necessary evil. Instead, he uses a metaphor that, if read carefully, has got the same meaning. This speech takes place in the scene in which Alix goes with Kate and attends a religious meeting for the first time. Here, Mr Daintree tells the parishioners that there are two ways that lead to the strong city, which is the “refuge for which we all crave” (Macaulay, 2020, 122): the church or the “road steep and black; we take it unawares, forced along it (many boys are taking it this moment, devoted and unafraid [...]); and suddenly we are at the city gates” (Macaulay, 2020:122). Therefore, this road steep and

black is war, and it is a necessary sacrifice that must be paid in order to leave “the chaos of our lives behind us, to be redeemed by firm walking on whatever new roads may be shown us” (Macaulay, 2020:123).

3.3. Patriarchy: gender and motherhood

The gender roles established by the patriarchy are depicted in both novels, even though those concerned with women are more present. As María Dolores Ramos has stated,

the conceptualisation of war and peace, as well as the study of female and male practices associated with it, have, among other things, shaped gender patterns throughout history. They have also given rise to a hegemonic, but not unique, interpretation [...] of the life-giving and life-prolonging activities attributed to women and the life-destroying activities associated to men. (2015:24)

Therefore, both stories portray not only the exclusion of women from the public, political and military spheres but also the occupation of these by men, the defenders of the nation. Furthermore, some of the male characters depict how masculinity was measured in terms of honour and heroism, as happened repeatedly during the last third of the 19th Century” (Ramos, 2015:32).

That women were left out of the public sphere meant that they only could live in the domestic one, a concept which would be named after Coventry Patmore’s Victorian poem “Angel in the House”. As Boxwell has mentioned, this vision of the idealised woman and wife was reinforced by the prevalent image of motherhood, which “has always been seen in patriarchy as a ‘test’ for women’s willingness to suffer nobly, stoically, and uncomplainingly as their sons, husbands, and lovers slaughter each other on the fields of battle” (1993:85).

Besides suffering nobly, a mother's duty was to encourage her sons to go to war, as men had to defend the fatherland in order to keep them safe. During the First World War, a militaristic cult of motherhood could be found in popular poems and in war propaganda, as can be seen in the recruitment poster below:



Figure1. Recruitment poster, London 1915

In *Lay Down Your Arms*, Martha describes how the desire for battles awakens in girls admiration for war, envy and the wish that they had been born men, a feeling that even her had experienced during her youthful years. Moreover, she had complained many times about the little attention that history pays to female heroism: “but when one is a man, then one need only gird on the sword and start off to win fame and laurels” (Suttner, 2019:24).

When Arno and she are discussing about the possible war, Martha expresses that she can also be brave and cries out: “If I only might fight, fall, or conquer at your side!” (Suttner, 2019:32). Her husband, who embodies the heroic masculinity, reinforces the idea that women have to stay at home, out of the public sphere, to raise the children to defend the fatherland and that men go to battle in order to protect them:

Bravely spoken, little wife, but nonsense! Your place is here, by the cradle of the little one, who also is to become a defender of his country when he is grown up. Your place is at our household hearth. It is to protect this, and guard it from any hostile attack, to preserve peace for our homes and our wives, that we men have to go to battle. (Suttner, 2019:32)

The notion of the mother's sacrifice is also expressed by the general Althaus, who wants his grandson Rudolf to take the military career too. In several moments he tells his daughter that she has to let go his son, for the country needs him more than she does, and he ridicules her by saying "do you want to tie him to his mother's apron-strings?" (Suttner, 2019:164). We see that this ideal is also imposed to Friedrich's aunt, Cornelia von Tessow, who must endure the suffering of seeing her only son, Gottfried, go to the front and who at the day of his departure took it "in the mother's way, with tears [...] with blessings, with grief, and with pride" (Suttner, 2019:136).

The reader is constantly reminded that the role of women was to live in the domestic sphere because Martha is always scorned by men when she gives her opinion on issues related to politics. There are many instances in which they exclude her from the conversation because "politics is, as is well known, far 'too high a thing' for ladies" (Suttner, 2019:147). Even her own father looks down on her several times because she is a woman, and of course, inferior to him, the brave and heroic soldier, and whenever Martha refutes his beliefs with well-constructed arguments, "the conclusion was, [...] a compassionate shrug of the shoulders on his part, with the words: 'You do not understand that'" (Suttner, 2019:166).

As it has been mentioned before, men were also bound to behave in a particular way due to their gender role, as they had "to conform to the ideals of heroism and masculinity" (Morris-Keitel, 2014:44). At the beginning, Arno tells Martha that he has to go to the battlefield because "I must experience the baptism of fire some time, and

till that has happened I do not feel myself truly a man or a soldier” (Suttner, 2019:36). Tilling is also aware of the socially imposed differences between men and women and knows that “we men have to repress the instinct of self-preservation. Soldiers have also to repress the compassion, the sympathy for the gigantic trouble which invades both friend and foe; for, next to cowardice, what is most disgraceful to us is all sentimentality, all that is emotional” (Suttner, 2019:95).

In *Non-Combatants and Others* the same ideas regarding gender are depicted. One of the key scenes in which these topics are discussed is the evening meeting at Violette, when the Vinneys and Miss Simon go there and the latter has to defend herself from the opinions the others have regarding women. Mrs Vinney and Mrs Frampton uphold the principle that men are defending the country in order to protect women: “the way I see it is, the men are fighting for us women” (Macaulay, 2020:61). Mrs Frampton even claims that a proper woman only cares about her house, her husband and her children. Miss Simon, who is the only one to actively defend women’s rights in the conversation and believes that women can also take part in public affairs, is regarded as “quite hysterical” (Macaulay, 2020:65) by Mrs. Frampton.

Every time that new male non-combatant characters are introduced, the narrator excuses them by offering solid reasons for them not to have gone, which strengthens the conception that if men are not fighting they are cowards. An example is when Alix goes to an exhibition of pictures with three friends, and two of them are boys: “it may be here mentioned, lest readers should be unfairly prejudiced against Mr Ashe and Mr Banister, that one of them had a frozen lung and the other a distended aorta. They were quite good young men really, and would have preferred to go” (Macaulay, 2020:44). Even Basil, who is waiting to return to the front because he has lost his middle finger, tells

Alix that a woman told him “that I wouldn’t like to be fetched, because then I would have to wear a C for Coward on my tunic” (Macaulay, 2020:83).

However, the figure of the mother was not the only one to be idealised in times of war, for the figure of the nurse was also worshipped in maternal terms. The only option for women to place themselves outside the domestic sphere was to become nurses, which was a way to help their country in need. Even though this idealisation existed before World War I, it was during this time when it became more intense. We can see in the poster below how the nurse holds the fallen soldier like Mary held Christ when he was born:



Figure 2. World War I propaganda poster

It is not surprising, according to the above stated information, that the only woman that appears out of domesticity in *Lay Down Your Arms* is the nurse Frau Simon. Martha meets her when she goes to Königgrätz to find her husband, who is fighting in the Austro-Prussian War, and she is presented to the reader as a busy and determined woman who gives orders and who “day and night [...] worked, provided, directed” (Suttner, 2019:224). Besides, when Dr Bresser tells her that she must prepare for the worst, for they are going to witness a terrible scene in Horonewos, she states that “I have the experience of many years and courage. The greater the misery, the higher rises my determination” (Suttner, 2019:217).

Frau Simon fits within the values of society, for she is a devoted woman who is helping her country in need. When Dr Bresser talks about a dying soldier who died blaspheming, she exclaims: “How unchristian! [...] The Christian’s God is not so unjust as that, and assuredly will take every fallen warrior into His grace” (Suttner, 2019:218). What is more, she represents the Patriotic Aid Society on Bohemia and she is depicted as a heroine and, according to the maternal vision of the nurse, “she was called the Mother of the Lazarettos” (Suttner, 2019:224).

In *Non-Combatants and Others*, the women we see outside the domestic sphere, aside from Daphne, are Eleanor Orme and their daughters Dorothy and Margot. They spend the day doing war activities that help the country. For instance, Mrs Orme is the secretary local of the Belgian Committee, Dorothy works in a V.A.D. hospital and Margot is in the Women’s Volunteer Reserve. For them, this means that they are “leading busy and useful lives” (Macaulay, 2020:11) while helping their country. Otherwise, they would not have any other choice but to stay at home and being “Angels in the House”.

In this novel, however, the figure of the nurse is not idealised, perhaps because Macaulay had been a V.A.D. nurse and knew that the reality was far from the prevailing glorification. Nonie's sister, who is volunteering at the hospital, has told her that "half the nurses in the hospital have foot and leg diseases" (Macaulay, 2020:68) because they must stand all day. Besides, "some nurses have nervous breakdowns from their work at the hospitals" (Ha-Birdsong, 1995:118), as we see in the scene in which one of the Red Cross girls has to be moved away from an operation because she cannot stand the horrible surgery.

3.4.Enemy: the responsible for war

The concept that the enemy is always the responsible for starting a war is present in both novels. In *Lay Down Your Arms*, we see that this feeling keeps being alive over the years. The existence of war is justified by a necessity of defence, because "war is in reality only necessary defence on a large scale" (Suttner, 2019:271), and therefore, if it was not for the enemy, there should never be an armed conflict. Martha realises that the bad qualities she sees in her own country are always attributed to the enemy, and this national feeling leads the population to hate other nations. What is more, it is because the "other" that even between wars there is armed peace, for *si vis pacem, para bellum*.

In *Non-Combatants and Others* this idea is also present but less articulated. The idea that the enemy is guilty of all the tragedies is communicated through newspapers, which only show the atrocities committed by the other. Mrs Frampton and her daughters, who exclusively read the news, have got a horrible image of the Germans as a nation and think that "they're just inhuman murderers" (Macaulay, 2020:37). Alix realises this hypocrisy and says ironically: "my cousin Emily says it's a righteous war,

though of course war is very wicked. Righteous of us and wicked of the Germans, I suppose she means” (Macaulay, 2020:82).

4. Analysis: the detrimental effects of war

Against the predominant literature of their times, Macaulay and Suttner show in their novels the destructive effects that war has got not only on soldiers but also on civilians. Moreover, they did not only focus on the physical suffering but also on the psychological one.

4.1. Soldiers:

In *Lay Down Your Arms*, the reader knows about the soldiers’ suffering by means of three sources, which depict the harsh reality that soldiers lived. The first one is Friedrich’s letters from the front, the second one is the physician’s account in the train and lastly, what Martha herself witnesses when she goes to the front to find her husband and nurse him. It has to be said that these passages are extremely graphic and that it is because Suttner wanted to give an “alternative narrative of war, [...] one that does not glorify battle for the sake of the nation” (Morris-Keitel, 2014:44).

The letters that Tilling sends to Martha when he is fighting in the Second Schleswig War and in the Austro-Prussian War have a similar message. In both cases, he describes the horrors of the battle, which he calls “butchery”, and the aftermath of it. Tilling depicts the state in which many soldiers are left after the fighting: “if wounded, bleed slowly to death; if unwounded, die slowly of famine” (Suttner, 2019:134). He also shares with Martha the disturbing image of a breastwork made of corpses in which a

man “among the other corpse-bricks, was still alive, and was moving his arm” (Suttner, 2019:195).

What the physician tells in the train to Königgrätz is similar to what Friedrich has written and to what Martha herself will see when she gets there. He also talks about the horrors that men live in the battlefield, how many have to be left behind and how everywhere one can hear “shrieks of woe and cries for help” (Suttner, 2019:207). In addition, he includes a new element that was unknown to Martha: the hyenas of the battlefield, who steal any object of value from the corpses and who make atrocities to the dead bodies.

The last detailed account is the one in which Martha explains the horrors she saw in Horonewos along with Dr Bresser and Frau Simon. On their way there, they witness a horrible scene: “heaped up, lay numerous corpses. It was the smell of putrefaction, which rose up from their dead bodies, that had broken my sleep” (Suttner, 2019:219). Once they get there, they have to experience another scene of woe, for the chateau has to be filled from top to bottom with all the wounded soldiers: “there more than a hundred men were lying on the hard stone pavement, severely wounded, crippled. With feverish, wandering eyes they shrieked and cried for water” (Suttner, 2019:222).

In *Non-Combatants and Others*, Alix witnesses the physical and mental scars of several combatants. The first one is his cousin John, who has come back home on a month’s sick leave and whom Alix sees through the window. Even though she is shocked by the “red scar from his square jaw to his square forehead” (Macaulay, 2020:9) and the strange movements of his face and the stammering as a result of the wound, what deeply affects her is to see how war has psychologically affected him. She sees his nervous and watchful eyes during dinner, but what makes her anxious is what

she sees at night: John sleepwalks and unconsciously tells the horrors that he has seen while he is

crying, sobbing, moaning, like a little child, like a man on the rack. He was saying things from time to time... muttering them... Alix heard. Things quite different from the things he had said at dinner. [...] His eyes were now wide and wet, and full of a horror beyond speech. (Macaulay, 2020:24)

Another soldier's experience that affects Alix directly is Paul's. Alix's little brother used to be brilliant, but since he went to the front "his letters [...] had been increasingly poor in quality and quantity" (Macaulay, 2020:15) because of his nerves. He dies in the front, which is already a tragedy, but what Alix will discover later adds more misfortune to his death: he had shot himself. During the trip to the countryside, Ingram reveals this to Alix, even though he does not know that he was her brother, and describes his death: "he simply couldn't stand the noise and the horror and the wounds and the men getting smashed around him [...] and one night he let off his revolver into his own shoulder" (Macaulay, 2020:109).

Basil Doye, Alix's friend and romantic interest before the war, also gets wounded in a battle and has to come home for a period of time. During his hospital stay, Alix and Nonie visit him and they realise that he is "all on edge", for he kept "fidgeting, with restless eyes" (Macaulay, 2020:73, 70). War takes the most important thing that Basil had, which was the ability to paint, because he loses his middle finger, and it also changes him deeply: he does not look at Alix with the same eyes because he now wants wholesomeness and she is lame and the "trench life, with its battery on the brains of sounds and sights, had made him stupid" (Macaulay, 2020:82).

During their visit at the hospital, Alix and Nonie witness a nightmarish scene in which they see the reality of how many soldiers return from the front. For instance, one

of the soldiers had been taken prisoner and now he was out of his mind and sang German songs all day and another “wept, and wailed at intervals, ‘want to do ‘ome. Want to do ‘ome”, to which statement another one answers that all of them want.

4.2. Civilians:

In Suttner’s book, Martha realises that war has got economic consequences already during the first armed conflict she lives as a grown-up, that is, the Italian War of 1859. When she goes into a book and print shop to buy a new map of Italy, she hears a conversation between the bookseller and a professor in which they comment on the economic decline for those who write or sell books because everybody is only interested in war. Martha becomes aware that “everything is at a standstill; [...] men without number are without places and without bread; [...] in short, it is a misery! A misery!” (Suttner, 2019:48). However, it is not until the Second Schleswig War that she suffers the consequences first-hand since she loses all her fortune: “the house of Schmidt&Sons failed, and my whole private fortune was gone” (Suttner, 2019:150). As a result of this bankruptcy, Friedrich is forced to hold onto his profession.

There are a few episodes in which whole villages and cities are directly impacted by war-misery. In Friedrich’s letters he gives an account of how the inhabitants have to leave their homes because the battle is taking place near their villages and they are forced to flee from there full of fear. In addition, Martha herself is a witness to the destruction of entire villages when she goes to Horonewos and everything is in ruins. However, the destruction is not the only misfortune that a population can live, for bombardments and sieges can also happen, as they experience in Paris during the

Franco-Prussian War. There, a married couple loses both their children and the whole city undergoes starvation as a result of the siege.

The psychological effects on civilians can be observed not only in Martha, but also in Frau Ullmann, an acquaintance of the family, who as a consequence of losing his only son has to be taken to a lunatic asylum. Even though Martha does not end up in an asylum, her nerves are affected along the years, an affection which begins the day she knows that Arno has to go to war, a day in which she wishes for piece for the first time. From this moment on, she suffers from anxiety, a feeling that is intensified at night, for she has got nightmares and horrible visions. At some moments, her suffering is so intense that it has got physical consequences. For example, she falls unconsciously on the floor when she finds out she is a widow

However, her anxiety increases even more when her second husband has to go to the battlefield. During the first campaign in which Friedrich has to take part, Martha's sorrow is so deep that she has a miscarriage and lies unconscious in bed for several weeks. There are many scenes in which Martha depicts her suffering, but when Friedrich is accused of espionage and shot to death is the epitome of her distress. Even though Martha omits this disturbing episode, she lets the reader know that after that she was ill in bed for a month after that, unconscious, and that she "fell into intellectual darkness. [...] For the space of years, at ever-increasing intervals, I remained subject to recurring attacks of abstraction" (Suttner, 2019:333).

In *Lay Down Your Arms*, another tragic sequel of war is shown: epidemics and plagues. During the Austro-Prussian War there is the threat that the cattle plague will emerge and also Dr Bresser foresees the arrival of an epidemic: "the overcrowding of these places is such as to threaten the outbreak of dangerous epidemics" (Suttner,

2019:217). Count Althaus does not want to pay attention to that, but tragedy will seize him in his own house in Grumitz. Cholera will cause the death of her daughters Rosa and Lilly and finally, it will take Otto's life, his most beloved child. It is in this precise moment that he, before dying, curses war by telling Martha: "your wish, [...] may be fulfilled. I curse – I cur –" (Suttner, 2019:259).

In Macaulay's novel, the plot focuses on Alix and her inner evolution and therefore, the narrator focuses on the pain she endures. Since the beginning, Alix is described by other characters as lazy or indifferent for not getting involved in war activities. Even her own mother thinks she is "narrow-hearted, selfish and indolent" and "she accused her of shrinking from the world's griefs" (Macaulay, 2020:20). Nevertheless, Alix wants to run away from war and does not want to hear anything about it because it causes her anxiety and a deep suffering, and, as Ha-Birdsong has pointed out, "Alix's aloofness in fact disguises her sensitivity to war" (1995:110). After the dinner at Wood End she cannot take any more war stories and she "was shivering, as if she was cold, or very tired, or frightened..." (Macaulay, 2020:22).

Furthermore, after she has seen John's nervous shock, she feels suddenly sick and she starts stammering like John. As Andree has mentioned, "as she is confronted with the realities of the war, and sees how her loved ones have been transformed in the trenches, Alix begins to experience a similar decline in her own psychological state – a state that some critics have likened to shellshock" (2014). After this, she decides to leave Wood End, but no matter how much she tries to escape war she sees that it is impossible, for tragedy and anxiety follow her wherever she goes.

Alix not only loses her ability to paint and her piece of mind but also her little brother Paul. When she finds out, she stammers and feels such an intense sorrow that

she cannot do anything except lying on the floor and calling his name again and again. From now on, the nights are harder for her, as it happened to Martha Althaus. Not only in this scene she stammers, but also when she finds out how he died. Then, she starts crying and vomiting, and the pain she had tried to cover, is unveiled. She regrets: “Oh, Paul, Paul – to have minded as much as all that before you died... to have been hurt like that for weeks and weeks...” (Macaulay, 2020:111). After this, she starts considering the fact that something has to be done in order to end with all this suffering: “what – what on earth are we going to *do* about it all? It – it’s going on now – this moment... I’ve tried so hard not to let it come near... and now... now...” (Macaulay, 2020: 113).

As it has been said before, Basil also changes after his experience in the trenches and this affects Alix directly, for Doye now wants wholesomeness and vividness and Alix is lame and frail-nerved. “As she watches Basil’s affections shift to a woman who is healthy and strong, Alix comes to realize that the war has taken away even more from her than she had imagined it could” (Andree, 2014), and she even starts acting a little mischievously when she interferes in Basil and Evie’s relationship, something she would have never done in her pre-war life.

Even though Daphne has lost her little son, her suffering is not depicted as deeply as Alix’s. It is true that she laments that “Paul’s gone under – a sacrifice to the Brute” and that on New Year’s Eve she cries “because it was a year which Paul would never see, Paul having been tipped out by the last year in its crazy career and left behind by the wayside” (Macaulay, 2020:197), but she does not allow herself to break down, for she has so much to do in order to promote peace.

5. Analysis: the pathway to peace

In both writings the authors destruct the gender roles established by the society of their times by showing women who step outside domesticity and men that do not adapt to the stereotyped masculinity. Besides, they make their characters expand their knowledge horizons by means of self-education and inquiry.

Even though at the beginning Martha Althaus is patriotic and wants to comply with her role as a woman, when her first husband dies she starts studying on her own to become a good teacher for her son when he grows up. In order to do so, during her first four years as a widow, among other works, she learns history from a completely different point of view thanks to Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England* and gets acquainted with the natural sciences by reading Darwin's *Origin of Species*. This expands her knowledge and at the same time, sets some distance between her and the established society values.

What is more, she and Friedrich start a book called *Protocol of Peace*, in which they trace back the history of peace. In other words, Martha is not only concerned about the domestic sphere; she gets out of it in order to show the world that war is savagery and the destruction of culture. Besides, she also defies the idealised figure of the mother, for she chooses not to offer her son as a sacrifice for the country, and along Friedrich, she decides that "in our scheme of education there would be no drilling him into a love for military glory" (Suttner, 2019:111).

Another character that shatters the gender preconception is Friedrich Tilling. Although he is a soldier, he "revises his views after his own participation in combat" (Morris-Keitel, 2014:46). From the beginning, he does not agree with some prevalent conceptions and does not want to say that Arno "'died like a hero', for I do not quite know what that means" (Suttner, 2019:64), and even though he maintains that armies

are necessary because they have to defend the country in case of an attack, he changes his views after the revolting scenes he witnesses as a soldier and after Martha has shown him Buckle's work "about the diminution of the war-spirit with the advance of civilisation" (Suttner, 2019:76).

"Suttner's work is predicated on a "Fortschrittsideologie" of positive change leading to a world defined by humanity" that "would end a dichotomy that allowed individuals to have one way of thinking as members of a nation and another as human beings" (Morris-Keitel, 2014:34,35). In order to do this, she depicts Martha's and Friedrich's evolution into what she called "Edelmenschen" (noble human beings). They get to that state because they have distanced themselves from their *entourage* and have followed the path that Buckle established as a way to get to social progress, which is divided into three steps: scepticism, inquiry and knowledge.

Morris-Keitel sees Friedrich's death as a way to say that the world is not ready for this transformation because he has been killed as a result of the terrible hatred between nations. However, while Rudolf makes a toast at the christening of his son, he says that "we have placed our feet already on the threshold of an age in which manhood is to raise into humanity – to the nobility of humanity, as Friedrich Tilling used to say" (Suttner, 2019:343) and Martha sees her dream-picture of an old Friedrich with garden-shears, which is a message that humanity may not be ready for the change right now, but some day will.

In Macaulay's novel, we also see the destruction of gender roles and the focus on education. Daphne does not comply with the vision of the "perfect" mother and the "Angel in the House", for she is always outside the domestic sphere in order to promote peace. Besides, in this novel there are male characters who abhor war. For instance, the

reverend West, who does not agree with the role of the Church during war times and thinks that “it’s been largely a failure so far, [...] it hasn’t so far succeeded in preventing [...] any of the things it’s out to prevent – [...] lies and hate and war” (Macaulay, 2020:56).

West wants to do everything he can as a non-combatant in order to fight war. However, Alix’s brother and West’s friend, Nicholas, also sees the brutal effects that war has got on humanity and literature but he does not want to do anything about it. The type of pacifism that his mother promotes is exactly the opposite of his attitude: “the world’s peace must be made, built up, stone on stone. Peace must be alive” (Macaulay, 2020:193). For her, as well as for Martha Althaus, a strong education is essential in order to get there. As the countess, she is also contributing her bit to create a book that deals with war and peace called *Is Permanent Peace Possible?*

Daphne inspires her daughter Alix into seeing that humanity wants peace, even though there is something at this moment that prevents mankind from stopping war: “Alix saw humanity as a great mass-meeting [...] crying for peace” (Macaulay, 2020:180). Her mother, like Friedrich and Martha, draws no distinction between men and women and even between young people and old people. It could be said that Daphne has reached the social progress because she has gone through Buckle’s steps but Alix has not got there yet. At the end of the novel, Alix has decided to step out of scepticism to go to inquiry, which brings her closer to progress.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, both writings have got essentially the same message, even though it is delivered in a different way as a result of the context the authors were living at the

time they wrote the novels. These stories show a different image of war and both authors focused on showing the values of society, exposing the destruction that war causes and showing a way to reach peace.

Both *Lay Down Your Arms* and *Non-Combatants and Others* attribute the perpetuation of patriotic and nationalistic feelings to two institutions controlled by the State: education and the Church. These two institutions convince the population of the necessity of war and glorify it besides helping to preserve the belief that men have to prove their masculinity by going to the battlefield and that women have to raise their sons to be soldiers.

Martha, Friedrich, Daphne and Alix show that these long-held assumptions are pointless and allow the reader to understand that armed conflict brings nothing but physical and psychological destruction not only to soldiers but to the whole population. By exposing the constant suffering and anxiety that Martha and Alix experience throughout the novels, the authors gave attention to an overlooked aspect at those times.

Even though both novels are embroiled in times full of uncertainty, which is depicted in the plots, they both deliver a message of hope. Although Friedrich, who is the embodiment of progress and noble humanity, dies and humanity slips into darkness to the New Year 1916 in *Non-Combatants and Others*, Martha and Daphne have got an optimistic viewpoint that humanity will eventually leave behind conflicts and morally ascend.

These protagonists show that in order to do that, mankind needs to step aside the dominant believes and carry out a self-education that allows them to expand their horizons. What is more, these two women promote an active pacifism that reaches as many people as possible.

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