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Power Struggle in the Things They Carried

*The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien shed light on the experiences of the soldiers taking part in the Vietnam War. The author has shed light on the fact that they were fighting for the sake of their homeland, however, they had to face a great burden on their hearts and souls, which created a power struggle in their minds. In Tim O'Brian's book *The Things They Carried*, the power struggle between the characters is based on their guilt, sense of responsibility and longing.

The author has included a number of characters in his war memoir, which sheds light on their struggle with internal conflicts. While moving to the battlefield, the soldiers were leaving their families behind. They were also saying goodbye to better and happy days of life, which had the chance of making them cheerful and progressive. They were moving towards a zone which was holding the only destruction for them, as they had to destroy the enemy forces, in order to be not get destroyed. One of the greatest power struggles among the characters was their sense of responsibility and guilt, which they took with them. They had a sense of responsibility towards their country. They did not want to be called traitors or bring dishonor to their country, which was their main motive of taking part in the war, which actually led to their power struggle and internal conflict. The author has mentioned it in the following words,

“They carried the soldier's greatest fear, which was the fear of blushing. Men killed and died because they were embarrassed not to. It was what had brought them to the war in the first place, nothing positive, no dreams of glory or honor, just to avoid the blush of dishonor. They died so as not to die of embarrassment (O'Brien, 14).”

One of the most important aspects of the power struggle of the characters with their internal conflicts was their longing towards their families and loved ones. They had left their families behind to take part in the war and serve their country. While they would have enjoyed that most important part of their life cherishing and making happy memories with their loved ones. On the other hand, the characters kept cherishing the memories of the past in which, they were with their loved one, as it was their only escape and they could not expect love from each other. Shedding light on a character, the author mentioned that “Among the men there would be grumbling, of course, and maybe worse, because their days would seem longer and their loads heavier, but Lieutenant Jimmy Cross reminded himself that his obligation was not to be loved but to lead (O'Brien, 18).”

One of the most important causes of the power struggle was the sense of responsibility towards the country, which did not let them get exempted from taking part in the war. They did not want to go there, yet they could not afford to do so, as they had to keep their honors high and sacrificing was the only way. The duration of the power struggle is the period of war, as it apparently ended with the end of the war. The ultimate effect of the power struggle was the lack of peace and satisfaction among the soldiers (North et al., 439).

*The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien has explained the power struggle of other characters with their internal conflicts, due to their sense of responsibility, guilt, and longing. The struggle continued until the war and resolved by the end of the war. The characters wanted to achieve happiness and satisfaction. Although the conflict was resolved and they returned to their families. However, the carried the burden of destruction and war trauma with them.

Works Cited

North, Rebecca J., et al. "The things they carry: Characterizing the biggest problems in the lives of emerging adults." *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 35.6 (2016): 437-454.

O'Brien, Tim. *The things they carried*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.