Essay 2  
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*The Wars* has been written by Timothy Findley in 1977. The author uses the plural of war that suggests that characters are fighting multiple wars at the same time. Characters are undergoing changes in their personality that they never desired for and on the other hand, they had to fight for their country and themselves. This essay will explore the ways in which World War 1 affected the public in terms of violence and how society and people’s individual lives conform during the wartime.

The novel follows a nineteen-year-old Canadian boy Robert Ross who participated in World War 1 in order to escape from grief of his elder sister’s death and oppressive social norms of the Victorian society. As a work of postmodern literature, The Wars is disorienting. The novel examines the war from both the European and the Canadian battlefront causing visceral pain of war in the minds and bodies of soldiers. The war, affected Robert’s fellows into self-destructive madness and similarly affected Robert’s family in Canada.

In the novel, the foremost victims are Robert’s friends Levitt and captain Taffler, who directly experienced the war’s violence. Their minds and spirits were traumatized by the horrors of war. Robert loses countless men throughout the war. Millions died a torturous death like drowning in the muddy trenches. This mass destruction of human life shows the violence of war. Robert used to look at captain Taffler as a role model and hero. But as soon as he lost both arms in the war and becomes mentally ill, he falls from glory in the eyes of Robert. Taffler tried to commit suicide by unwrapping his wounds and rubbing them against a wall to make them bleed. This shows the war’s ability to irreparably shatter a soldier’s body and mind.

Ross’s mother also suffers due to internal guilt and she blamed herself for the death of her daughter, Rowena. Once Ross left for war, his guilt continued to parallel with his mother’s as they both try and fail to gain the sense of justice for the traumatic violence of world war I. Along with guilt, Mrs. Ross experiences a crisis of faith and demands to know the answers to her questions. She said what does this\_\_ mean to kill your children by sending them to war?

As a result of violence that is caused by war, soldiers show their capability of being extremely violent and show their savage behavior that is generally prohibited in society. In the novel, soldiers act in violent ways even when they were not engaged in battle. The violent nature of man becomes evident when Robert Ross kills a German soldier after the gas attack. Some soldiers also raped Robert in the baths and to take out his brunt, he killed another soldier. These events showed the violent and destructive effects of war on man and society (Rhodes, 2012).

Timothy creates and atmosphere by displaying the horrors and unpredictable realities of war. The events of war changed the characters evidently and the characters endured irreparable damages to their personality and mind. Society before war constraints people from revealing their emotions and obliges them to communicate through established forums. For instance, the narrator of the story observes that before the war, people disliked when someone to took their photographs or they might turn around to being captured when they saw any camera focusing them. It was considered an invasion of privacy. Ross himself wishes to keep himself away from the public eye. Boys and men were standing and peering into the camera to take notice of what is happening (Reza, 2015). But the war is national and not a private affair. People who used to avoid cameras, are now been recorded and forced to accept this changing norm as they had no other option. So, the former social norms are conformed into display of patriotism. The world is upside down due to war. The things which were considered wrong, are now considered to be right. Reticence was considered a virtue before the war but during the war, these elements faded away from society. For instance, when Ross was beaten up by Teddy Budge, Ross went to the washroom and sat in the bathing tub. His mother came in and silently sat on the seat nearby. She watched his wounds bleeding and said that it is always easy to bruise him. She narrates a few past events of his childhood as well. She begins laughing and that made him uncomfortable. All these were the effects of war because, before the war, no one can even imagine to enter a bathroom in the presence of another person. There is no room for privacy during wartime. Joy and grief become national instead of private and secrets are uncovered. People were subjected to do what they never wanted to do. The innocence of children was snatched from them and especially from young boys who were enlisted in the war and it is evident when Robert visited a brothel in Louse town.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that war does unimaginable damage to man. At the end of the novel, Robert takes justice in his own hands. By going against the prescribed duty of obeying orders, he brands himself as a dishonorable man in the public eyes as he was more focused on his family and fellow soldiers, this proves to be self-destructive for him. His downfall shows the danger of trying to achieve glory through violent means.

# References

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