

Critical analysis on "the wars" by timothy findley essay sample

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The Wars, written by Timothy Findley, is a story about World War I, and consists of many shocking images passed over to the reader. Findley accomplishes to pull the reader into the narrative itself, so that the reader manages to feel an impact upon him/her-self about what is read. If it was not for this specific skill, or can also be seen as a specific genre, the novel would not have been as successful as it is now. Also, something that helps the book be so triumphant, there is the fact that Findley never overwhelms the reader with too many gruesome details about the World War I. Instead, he breaks the book down to help the reader calm down from everything that is happening. Throughout the essay, there is going to be some commenting on a text titled “ The Literature of World War One for Young Adults”, by Dana McFarland, B. A., M. A., M. L. I. S. This text is going to be supported by and partly criticized by with the help of many examples from The Wars, some examples from All Quiet On The Western Front and by using my own knowledge.

There have been many, many books written about World War I which have become quite successful. There have also been a number of books, which were not of the standard need to become printed out. Just by using that statement, would actually rule out the fact that “ The literature that has emerged as a consequence of World War One makes a strong case for historical fiction both as good and as a means of investigating the historical period.” (McFarland) Although, it can be argued that the books that did not

make it to the publishing company are ruled out of this section. If so, then by using knowledge gained by reading *All Quiet On The Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque and *The Wars* by Timothy Findley, that statement is true. "It's unendurable. It is the moaning of the world, it is the martyred creation, wild with anguish, filled with terror, and groaning." (Remarque, P62)

"The ammonia in their urine would turn the chlorine into harmless crystals that could not be breathed." (Findley, P, 141) These help support the fact that novels about World War I can not only be well in detail and good literature, but they are also used "as means of investigating the historical period" (McFarland) The first quote shows great description within the text. This is good enough that the reader can also hear what it could sound like. This is great, because it also helps the reader understand what was actually going on at that time. The second quote gives the reader a picture of chlorine turning into crystals right in front of their eyes, and also gives that the horrific information about the gas being used throughout the war.

There is a great deal that can be used within a war novel to help understand what war was really like and to help younger students with some historical content, but I do not completely agree that it is better. "An effective narrative, which captures and holds one's interest, conveys powerfully the life and society of another time. The reader encounters a believable world with which to contrast her/his own. For a younger reader, this serves the useful purpose of introducing historical perspective." (McFarland) A novel like *The Wars* can be very helpful in certain terms to do with historical content. This is seen by the fact that although Findley did not take part of

the World War I, the content is quite straight to the point and gives the reader its message. " And he said that after a while you saw them everywhere [dead bodies] and you sort of accepted it. But the acceptance made him mad and he said this marvelous thing: I still maintain that an ordinary human being has a right to be horrified by a mangled body seen on an afternoon walk." (Findley, P 114)

This gives the reader one idea about what it was like to be stood there on the battlefield. The reader realizes, if that has not yet happened at this point, what kind of impact war had upon the people who fought. The part on which I do not agree that war novels are good for young adults is because they often tend to play with the readers emotions and also usually give only one perspective of the war. " His assailants, who he'd thought were crazies, had been his fellow soldiers. Maybe even his brother officers. He'd never know. He never saw their faces." (Findley, P 193) This is just one of the many examples which make the reader feel sorry for Robert Ross. Because the reader feels sorrow, there is more chance that the reader believes everything that is being said by or about him, although there is more than one perspective to the whole of World War I.

Throughout the world, there have been a number of war novels that have been written. But, even if many war novels are about the same thing, they would mostly differ from each other. One difference is that there can be " War Novels" and there can be " Good War Novels." What exactly is the difference? To help understand, the following quote will be partly supported. " If a novel is poor history, it will not be a good novel. Good history, however,

will not necessarily produce good art...Every work of history, including every historical novel, has an ideological message. But the novel is above all else an art form concerned with people as they interact with each other and as they develop and change." (McFarland) The quote basically means that a "poor war novel" has a message behind it, but every "good war novel" has a message behind it, and also shows how people "interact with each other". I agree to a certain extent. That can be accepted as a meaning of a "poor war novel", but I do not agree completely about the "good war novel".

A "good war novel" must have one or multiple internal messages, the impact upon the characters must be shown how they interact to one another, but also the novel must appeal to the reader. Without those three characteristics, then the book cannot be called a "good war novel". This passage from *The Wars* is a great example of a "good war novel". "I am alive in everything I touch. Touch these pages and you have me in your fingertips. We survive in one another. Everything lives forever. Believe it. Nothing dies." (Findley, P 151) This section a part of the letter Rodwell had written for his daughter. The section can be connected to all three meanings. It has reference to an internal message given to the reader. That would be that no matter what happens throughout the war, many things can happen, but one would never forget about ones family. There is a mentioning upon the interacting of the character with another character. This interaction is significant, because he talks about life, although he ended up killing himself. The connection with the reader also occurs at this point. Because of the

carefully chosen words used, the reader gets a feeling that there is life within the very paper that he/she is holding within his/her hands.

A good novel would in many times tries to pull the reader within the book, so that the reader can indirectly become involved within the novel itself. This idea has also been touched upon within the article. " When the reader becomes lost in a book it seems as id the characters are in the room with him. It is at this point that the reader feels as if he is on the scene while history is being made." (McFarland) I believe that this is accomplished with two novels that I have read. " All quiet on the Western Front." (Remarque, P 291)

This passage, although short, is full of information. It puts the reader in such a position, that everything that has been read up until that point is now placed around the reader as he/she tries to feel what the atmosphere was like when everything was quiet. " The dark was pitted with holes and he kept falling down. He fell down once and put his hand in someone's face. He apologized - even though he knew the man was dead."(Findley, P 127) This part of the text puts the reader into a weird situation. The scene is shocking, so shocking that the reader imagines it happening. He/She sees him/her-self with Robert falling into the hole and seeing him go through all of this.

The article mentions The Wars by Timothy Findley, and gives a very brief summary of what the book is about. That summary is to every extent true, and it also indirectly states as to why the book is called The Wars and not The War. " When we see Robert at home, we realize that his family life is a

microscopic war." (McFarland) This statement is true, and would be enough for any reader to understand why the title of the book is plural. There are also many different passages from *The Wars* that support it. " He hated the way she used his childhood - everyone's childhood as a weapon." (Findley, P22) This section gives the reader a good understanding of what the mother of Robert Ross is really like towards him and others. She does not respect him or his feelings, and she never shows any nice feelings towards Robert. " Robert?" " Yes, Rowena?" " Will you stay with me forever?" " Yes Rowena." " Can the rabbits stay forever, too?" " Yes Rowena." (Findley, P 21) Robert promised to Rowena that the rabbits would stay in the hutches forever.

Robert was not able to keep his promise because his mother demands for them to be killed. Although Rowena wished for them to stay, her mother disobeys what she wanted. This shows great disrespect to not only again Robert, but also to her dead daughter Rowena. Robert also promised that he would protect Rowena, which he was not able to accomplish in doing because she dies at an early age. This is yet another section within the story that shows the reader that Robert is not only fighting against his mother but also against himself.