

Seminar Self-Reflection AQotWF  
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When the question was asked about whether AQotWF was an anti-war novel, I remember Jonny saying that he thought that the book was an anti-war novel but also expressed that the book shows how much soldiers go through in war; living through horrific violence, seeing your friends get blown to bits, knowing at any second that they could die. And no one truly understands a soldier unless you go through the same type of things. Jonny's point really made clear that AQotWF was a book to educate people about the horrors of war, and create a respect for soldiers. Also in the discussion Justin made a very good point about why soldiers are soldiers. Justin's comment was a question I asked about what makes a soldier proud to be a soldier. Justin said that not all soldiers enlist into the military because they are proud to fight for their country, others might join because they have nothing else, or because they have to. Heidi's grandpa joined the army to pay for college. Justin's point made me realize that not all soldier is the same. A lot of my views are very anti-war, but whenever I can I'm super interested to hear the other side of the argument. Jonny and Justin was an absolute pleasure to have in the seminar because they brought very different interesting perspectives to group.

Do you think you can understand war if you haven't experienced it?

It seems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century violence and death seems to be immune to this new generation. Could movies, TV, video games, and even books be blamed for this? I say

yes, this generation is desensitized to horrible violent things, but how do people react when a fight breaks out at school? We are more affected by that real violence than video games, movies, etc. When such things like a school fight breaks out no one is smiling and laughing at it. The two kids usually get sent to the principals office and get in trouble for what they did. I feel the reason why we aren't affected by violence and death in the forms of entertainment because it lacks that emotion. You're not really thinking and feeling the things that a protagonist in middle of a battle is feeling and thinking.

On a bigger note no one can truly understand war unless you experience it your self. If you think about it, everything I'm saying is pretty much rubbish. I never been through war, so what can I say about it? Really nothing very accurate, but I could have a guess. War changes people, like it changed Paul in AQotWF. You can't truly describe the fear that you feel in a bombing unless you went through a bombing. A bad event in people lives changes who they truly are. In AQotWF Paul goes on leave and describes his experiences, "I realize he does not know that a man cannot talk of such things; I would do it willingly, but it is so dangerous for me to put these things into words. I am afraid they might then become gigantic and I be no longer able to master them." My grandpa is a veteran from the Vietnam War and you can tell that it affected him. I wouldn't dare asking him about it because I could not imagine what horrible things he is trying to forget. We are in a way separated, not able to understand each other. So yes, I do think that you can't truly understand war until you have experienced it.

One book I read this year that relates to our war project is the book *Unbroken*. It's about Louis Zamperini a famous Olympic distance runner who enlists as a bombardier in the US Air Force flying in a B-24. On a routine flight over the west Pacific his plane crashes and him and two others afloat on a life raft survive forty-seven days at sea. Then finally getting rescued by the Japanese. For the remainder of the war he is held prisoner of war going through countless brutal struggles but yet still surviving. This man's story is said to be the greatest act of survival feat in our known history. This book also gave me a perspective similar the what *AQotWF* did; that war is a thing that brings the best of us and the worst, war is destruction of the physical world and the mental. In *Unbroken* there is a part after the war where it sums up the rest Louis's and some of the other POWs lives. In *AQotWF* it expresses that no one can truly understand a soldier other than soldiers like them. It seems that horrible things never leaves someone's life, for example some of the POWs could stand the sight of a rice because it reminded them when they were being beaten, starved, and depressed in Japan. What came home to me was what ever kind of war it is, it always seem to change who someone is, haunts them till the day they die. It's sad.

Page 223 paragraph two, it says, "The silence spreads. I talk and must talk. So I speak to him and say to him: 'Comrade, I did not want to kill you. If you jumped in here again, I would not do it, if you would be sensible too. But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response. It was that abstraction I stabbed. But now, for the first time, I see you are a man like me. I thought of your hand-grenades, of your bayonet, of your rifle; now I

see your wife and your face of fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the same agony. Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy? If we threw away these rifles and this uniform you could be my brother just like Kat and Albert. Take twenty years of my life, comrade, and stand up-take more, for I do not know what I can even attempt to do with it now.”

I think this paragraph from AQtWF really shows the truth of war really well because it shows war is two sided. Going into battle knowing that the people your killing are feeling and coming from similar settings. They both have a family; people the love. They have the same furious fear as bullets fly passed their faces, and they both feel the hatred to each other, which I think their country inflicted. In a way this is beautiful, that soldiers could share the same feelings no matter what side they are on. But its really not, the pain the mothers and wives go through when they receive news that their son or husband is dead. Loosing your best friend, seeing him get blown to bits right in front of you. Are these things really worth fighting for? I think that war brings the best of us; bravery, honor, and respect. Also it brings the worst of us; murder, survival, starvation, hatred, and etc.

