NARRATING THE WAR:

JACOB'S ROOM, *THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER*,

AND *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*

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ABSTRACT

Narrating The War:

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This M.A. thesis examines Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* in relation to the possibilities of narrating personal accounts war, with special attention to, trauma, death and drastic change succeeding the Great War. It aims to analyse the effects of the Great War on gender roles and personal relations. All three novels featured in this study revolve around the war yet they refrain from narrating explicit fighting scenes and focus on the psychology of multiple individuals influenced by the sorrowful atmosphere surrounding them. Each novel employs its unique pattern to reflect the overwhelming consequences of the war: *Jacob's Room* and *The Return of the Soldier* omit soldiers' voices whereas *A Farewell to Arms* appoints a soldier as the narrator. This study argues that regardless of their different methods all three novels find a common ground on the horror caused by the war and show how the Great War led to a fracture in masculine world order instead of securing men's reputation as glorious and victorious heroes.

ÖZET

Savaşı Anlatmak:

Jacob'un Odası, *Askerin Dönüşü*, ve *Silahlara Veda*

Bu yüksek lisans tezi Virginia Woolf'un *Jacob'un Odası*, Rebecca West'in *Askerin Dönüşü* ve Ernest Hemingway'in *Silahlara Veda* romanlarında I. Dünya Savaşı'nın sonrasında ortaya çıkan kayıp, travma, ölüm ve büyük değişimlerden etkilenen insanların hikayelerinin anlatılmasının ihtimallerini inceler. I. Dünya Savaşı'nın cinsiyet rolleri ve kişisel ilişkiler üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmeyi amaçlar. Bu çalışmada kullanılan üç roman da savaş etrafında şekillenir ancak grafik dövüş sahneleri anlatmaktan imtina ederler ve çevrelerindeki hüzünlü atmosferden etkilenen birkaç bireyin psikolojisine odaklanırlar. Üç roman da savaşın ezici sonuçlarını yansıtmak için farklı yöntemler kullanır: *Jacob'un Odası* ve *Askerin Dönüşü* askerlerin sesini silerken *Silahlara Veda* bir askeri anlatıcısı olarak görevlendirir. Bu çalışma farklı metotlarına rağmen üç romanın da savaşın sebep olduğu dehşette bir ortak payda bulduğunu ve I. Dünya Savaşı'nın erkeklerin itibarını şanlı ve muzaffer kahramanlar olarak güvence altına almak yerine maskülen dünya düzeninde bir kırılmaya sebep olduğunu gösterdiğini iddia eder.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century brought along many changes in social life, gender roles and literature. The turn of the century accommodated The Great War, which was not limited to the trench experience. Its consequences were felt everywhere. Wars evoke mass death. Therefore, loss became a huge part of the society. Both soldiers and civilians experienced some sort of loss. Everyone was affected directly or indirectly. Consequently, many writers produced war poetry, novels and memoirs. However, the main focus of war literature was on the hardship of writing the war and representing the horrors of the frontline. Words did not suffice. Silence took over. The present study aims to investigate the effects of the Great War in literature both in the domestic sphere and in the war zone. It intends to analyse war's influence on social life through the perspectives' of multiple characters who find themselves in distinct situations yet end up with similar conclusions. This thesis features Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room,* Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. All three novels are about the Great War, even though their methods are quite different. Virginia Woolf's and Rebecca West's novels offer a glimpse of domestic life. Both novels employ female narrators to tell the story. On the other hand, Ernest Hemingway's novel narrates the experience of a deserter. Unlike Woolf and West, Hemingway appoints a soldier to recite his novel. Although some parts of the novel take place in the war zone among soldiers, it does not directly describe the trench experience. The novel does not portray personal combat scenes. Regardless of their diverse approaches, all three novels show that the war instead of enhancing the notion of victorious hero contradicted the myth of heroic

soldier concept by depicting the fracture of the concept of masculinity succeeding the war. These novels reflect the deteriorated conditions of their male protagonists instead of celebrating them as heroes. The origins of war writing can be traced back to epic poetry. Classical works such as *The Illiad* and *Beowulf,* as earlier examples, praise the courage of soldiers and their heroism. These heroes were men of action, who aided their people and contributed to their society. Moreover, the heroic acts of these early texts' characters' set the basis for future heroes in literary tradition. A glimpse at the Great War novels may reveal the divergence from this tradition.

The Great War, as the main event of the turn of the century, produced its own literature. Especially, many combatant writers took inspiration from their own experiences and observations to create war literature. One of the greatest representatives of the Great War literature is Wilfred Owen, who produced his war literature in 15 months. Owen joined the army in 1916. Shortly after his enlistment, he suffered from shell shock and was sent to Edinburgh. He returned to active service in 1918. Owen died fighting in 1918, exactly one week before the end of the war. Some of his poems were published following his death. Owen did not glorify war in his poetry. Instead, he focused on the horrors of the war and the cruelty the soldiers faced. Owen's famous poem "Dulce et Decorum Est" describes a soldier suffocating from the point of his comrade in detail. The witness cannot get this horrid image out of his head. This remembrance highlights the essence of the war which led the survivors to endure the curse of their memory. Unlike Owen, Siegfried Sassoon survived the war; however, his war poems marked his career. Sassoon also touched on the dark side of the war in his poems. Sassoon was hospitalized during the war. He was diagnosed with shell-shock. Nonetheless, suggested cures for his condition were remarkably different than those suggested for the women of his class. He was

"encouraged to take up a vigorous program of sports, was provided with a room of his own so that he could write undisturbed, and even had a hospital newspaper" (Showalter, 1997, p. 66). His poetry was exposed to harsh criticism due to its anti-war stance. Sassoon's famous poem "Does it Matter?" describes war injuries. It questions the possibility of pursuing a normal life following such unfortunate wounds. The poem shows how war interferes with the course of life and damages it. Another acclaimed war poet was Robert Graves, whose memoir *Goodbye to All That* threw light on trench experience. Graves also suffered from shell-shock, and his experiences haunted him even after the war.

The Great War left its print on the novels as well as poems. Many renowned writers including Virginia Woolf and Earnest Hemingway, who are featured in this thesis, became a part of the canon through their multiple war novels. Hemingway volunteered for the army, and joined Red Cross Ambulance. His experience of the military service affected his literary career as well as his life. Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* shows the catastrophic impact of the war on different individuals in its aftermath. The protagonist of the novel Jake Barnes, who is the most symbolic character, is impotent due to a war injury. Every character in the novel is in search of stability in a chaotic world. They are desperately wandering. Virginia Woolf's renowned novel *Mrs. Dalloway* focuses on the psychological effect of war through Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith. Clarissa is a housewife, and Septimus is a shell-shocked veteran who is haunted by the image of a soldier friend who died just before the war ended. Septimus and his friend Evans were quite close. Therefore, Septimus feels the guilt of survival mixed with grief. Woolf illustrates their trauma in a post-war setting. Erich Maria Remarque also fought and witnessed the war in the trenches. His novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* presents more

physically brutal side of the war in the front. The novel takes place in the German side. There are vivid depictions of combat scenes. In the novel, soldiers were persuaded that fighting was glorious so that they would enlist voluntarily. However, expectations do not meet reality. The pages are reigned by terror and death. Remarque mentions loss, death, and changing attitudes of young soldiers after witnessing the harsh reality of the war. He also describes a soldier on leave, who cannot find common grounds with people who did not fight. Another striking anti-war novel is Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun.* Trumbo features a wounded American soldier whose arms are amputated, legs are cut off, and face is full of holes. He lost his ability to speak as well as his ability to hear. All his senses are gone. Not only his body but also his soul has been mutilated. He is trapped in a hospital unable to communicate or share his circumstance with the others. As shown by the examples, the majority of the Great War literature focuses on horror and the disillusionment the war brought upon people. The novels featured in this thesis also take an anti-war stance. However, instead of directly portraying the violent actions committed during the war, these novels generate an atmosphere of negativity in the absence of striking and detailed descriptions of violence. They do not openly publicize the failure of the war. They do not have a didactic tendency nor conduct any explicit propaganda against the war. Instead, they show it through the vulnerability of the characters who are emotionally unstable. They create an environment that evokes empathy by manipulating the reader into feeling for characters and sensing the psychological torment they have been through. Even a reader who did not experience the Great War may sense the fragile condition of the society without seeing the physical and material dimensions of the damage through the helpless situations each character find themselves in.

All three novels included in this thesis are about the personal accounts of the war. They do not tell the stark details of battles or war strategies. They reflect various aspects of the war through three soldiers and their acquaintances. It was hard to describe the trench experience and battles in detail even for combatant writers. The omission of combating scenes reinforces the fragility of individuals and the hardship they endured. These novels take their strength from the feeling of loss they are able to disperse by depicting the helplessness of the characters. Almost everyone featured in the novels experience diverse types of loss resulting from the war. Woolf and West as non-combatants did not attempt to represent the trenches. Instead, they fed on their own experiences and what they saw in the newspapers. Their novels highlight the struggle of passing on what soldiers went through. The loss of Jacob rules *Jacob's Room* from the beginning until the end. In *Jacob's Room* post-war conditions are given in a mainly pre-war setting. The novel is narrated by a female narrator; however, events revolve around Jacob Flanders, who stays as a grey area to be explored. An invisible wall guards Jacob's thoughts and identity from curious beholders. On the other hand, Chris Baldry and Frederic Henry, who are represented as masculine characters prior to the war, lose their heroic approach and sense of responsibility during the war. Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* focuses on a soldier, Chris Baldry. The novel is narrated by Chris's cousin Jenny. Chris, who returns from the war with amnesia, is unable to recall the last 15 years of his life. His condition removes the adult part of his life from his memory. He is left with the breeze of his youth. Chris cannot remember his marriage and his deceased child. Instead, he falls in love with his first love, Margaret. His rekindled love for Margaret manifests his longing for the carefree days of youth untouched by obligations. Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* narrates the story of Frederic and Catherine, who

fall in love in the midst of the war. They attempt to overcome numerous obstacles to have a peaceful life together. Frederic is an American citizen, who attends the war as an ambulance driver for Italy. The beginning of the novel introduces Frederic's daily life among his Italian soldier friends. Frederic gets wounded as a result of an explosion and ends up in a hospital where his relationship with a British nurse flourishes. After his time in the hospital, he ends up back in the army. Later on, he needs to desert his duty to save his life. After that he flees to Switzerland to found a new life with his lover and their future child.

Regardless of their different takes on war, none of the novels celebrate battles, heroism and the glory of fighting. All three novels reflect war without presenting explicit scenes. They are able to portray the brutality of the situation without showing the enemy in flesh. The bitter feeling of characters and their psychological state create the atmosphere of terror. *Jacob's Room* features war through the loss of Jacob. His unattainability evokes the loss of a generation of young men who died fighting through the bereavement of characters who mourn their loss. Critical studies on *Jacob's Room* focus on different aspects of the novel as the novel's silence and ambiguity pave the way for various interpretations. Alex Oxner and Alex Zwerdling deal with the notions of loss and absence. Oxner refers to Woolf's style as "modern elegy" and Zwerdling calls it "satiric elegy". Oxner claims that Woolf's modern elegy departs from classical elegy through Jacob's impersonality which erases Jacob's feelings. Zwerdling regards Jacob's death as a consolation rather than a source of grief and relates his travels from one setting to another to his missed opportunities. Their arguments contribute to my approach in analysing Jacob's absence/presence in the novel. However, I relate his absence to the melancholy of characters who mix up timelines. *The Return of the Soldier* features

war through Chris's traumatic amnesia rather than illustrating the scenes leading to his condition. West does not demonstrate warfare or trench experience. She portrays the domestic environment following Chris's return. Laura Cowan focuses on the condition of domestic spaces during the wars through the example of *The Return of the Soldier* as she believes that the experience of non-combatants were neglected. She argues that men mark domestic environments even in their absence. I refer to Cowan's work while examining the effect of Chris on Oliver's room which is a strong source of emotion for both Kitty and Chris. Christina Pividori and Steve Pinkerton focus on Kitty's and Margaret's conditions as well as focusing on Chris's trauma. Pividori regards the novel as a story of survival and bearing witness to trauma and examines it in relation to truth telling. Majority of the literary scholarship on *The Return of the Soldier* do not attempt to question the sources of Chris's amnesia whereas my main investigation revolves around the hidden reasons for Chris's case. I use Pividori's and Pinkerton's claims to examine Chris's case. However, I analyse his condition in connection with his responsibilities and his discontent with life. Unlike *Jacob's Room* and *The Return of the Soldier*, *A Farewell to Arms* consists of soldiers, war camps, and physical wounds. However, the reader does not meet the enemy or personal encounters with the enemy. Nonetheless, Frederic's declining belief in the war following his confrontation with death is gradually given by Hemingway. *A Farewell to Arms* has inspired many critical studies which focus on the theme of war, trauma and masculinity; therefore, I aim to pay attention to a disregarded aspect of the novel by analysing Frederic's relationship with death. Charles Hatten explores Frederic's masculinity through his relationship with women and his sexual desire. I use Hatten's analysis to evaluate Frederic's transformation during the war. Bernard Oldsey observes multiple endings

Hemingway designed for the novel and discusses their prominence. Oldsey's study influenced me to question the importance of Catherine's death in the end and reflect on Frederic's survival embedded with loneliness. I attempt to depict Frederic's reaction to Catherine's death to mark his altered personality.

All three novels end on a negative note instead of hope for better days or belief in fighting for a political agenda. Jacob dies in *Jacob's Room*. However, the text does not confirm his death directly. The death of Jacob is hidden and implied until the end of the novel. His departure is conveyed with his unoccupied room, empty shoes and the screams of his mother, who does not know how to deal with her pain. Chris is healed in *The Return of the Soldier*; he recovers his memory. However, the novel posits that in the context of the war cure means going back to fighting and approaching death. People search for a remedy for Chris's condition throughout the novel. Eventually, the treatment comes from Chris's past, which represents his unfulfilled desires. Chris left his dreams behind when he took over the Baldry Court. Rebecca West shows that his devotion to duty triumphs when she employs Margaret—the symbol of Chris's past—to discover the cure, which sends him back to front. The fate of Chris is not specified; however, Margaret and Jenny expect him to die. There are no scraps of positive feelings when he is cured. His healing leaves everyone with bittersweet emotions. On the other hand, *A Farewell to Arms* does not present the death of the central soldier figure unlike previous novels included in this study. Hemingway's protagonist does not physically die. On the contrary, he deserts the army to survive. He takes a risk and escapes the boundaries of the political formations. He challenges national and political systems unlike Jacob and Chris. Nonetheless, he cannot get over other harms of the war. His soul is wounded as well as his body. He loses his lover and his child who stand for his hopes for a better

future. *Jacob's Room* and *The Return of the Soldier* do not offer any redemption for Jacob and Chris since their voices are erased by the narrative. Other characters deal with pain caused by their absences. Their deaths highlight the impossibility of a happy, normal, restored life following the war. On the other hand, *A Farewell to Arms* offers Frederic a chance to confront with his actions by narrating his story. He comes to terms with his loss. Frederic's tale also suggests that a soldier can escape from the war; however, he cannot escape from its effects.

The characters cannot find rest in any of the novels regardless of their diverse approaches. First two novels show the painful outcome of the war whereas Hemingway's novel exposes the process as well. Jacob and Chris are denied the chance of narrating their truth, the fracture in their lives is conveyed through silence. However, Frederic gets to expose his truth and his depiction unveils a similar rupture. Jacob and Chris are not even given any opportunity to declare their true feelings verbally. Their behaviours speak for them. People around them try to analyse their moves. On the other hand, Frederic has to tell his own story once everything finalises since he is the only one left behind. In *Jacob's Room*, Jacob is not even presented thinking or speaking. Chris in *The Return of the Soldier* acts like a child who has no idea of his condition. He is in a total state of ignorance. Other people make crucial decisions sealing his fate. Jenny and Margaret are the ones who choose whether Chris should remember or not. Frederic, on the other hand, is in charge of his own journey. The hope to found his own family provides an outlet for Frederic whereas the loss of his son leads to Chris's trauma when combined with the horror of the war. He confronts with the brutality of his experience. Jacob and Chris do not survive to narrate their stories. I claim that they cannot establish functioning communicative channels to convey their experience, which leads the narrators of

Jacob's Room and *The Return of the Soldier* to efface their protagonists' inner worlds. In contrast, Chris makes it his mission to narrate his story to deal with survivor's guilt. He erases the meaninglessness of his life and the futility of the death of his beloved ones by featuring them in his memoir. The female narrators of *Jacob's Room* and *The Return of the Soldier* also represent the increasing role of women in the society and the fracture of patriarchy caused by the war along with the crisis of masculinity men encountered. The rupture depicted in the novels reinforces the fragility of the "masculinity" concept which was not profoundly constructed in the pre-war world. The notion of "masculinity" was used to create a base for men's identity. However, the ambiguity of the perception itself surfaces with the war which leads people to question this unexplored area. It can be argued that Jacob's obscurity and Chris's clueless behaviours throughout the novels create a parallel with the vagueness of the concept itself. Jacob, Chris and Frederic appear as the face of the empty signifiers of masculinity whose identity is as fractured and damaged as theirs. Therefore, when the uncertain limits of masculinity are challenged, the Great War emerges "emasculating" consequences by bringing out some features labelled as "feminine" by the society. Hemingway narrates the story of a soldier; however, he also shows the active role of women by employing nurses. He reveals the decline in masculinity when he portrays Frederic's diminishing belief in warfare resulting in deserting the army. It can be concluded that the diversity of the experiences which construct these narratives and how they are disclosed do not alter their similar message. They imply the inception of change the society is to witness. Moreover, they locate the Great War as the threshold since it leads to doubts and a process of questioning by creating an alternative environment where the rules of the ordinary life do not apply.

The first chapter of this thesis explores Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, which offers a look at the domestic side of the war story through the perspective of a female narrator, and multiple minor characters. The novel engages with a deceased soldier, Jacob Flanders. It offers people's views of Jacob from his childhood until his immature death in Flanders. Jacob is seen as a child, as a young college student, and as a young traveller. Nonetheless, opinions regarding him do not alter through the years. His awkwardness does not fade. Different people make similar remarks regarding Jacob. He emerges as a confused and mystical character whose obscurity keeps him as the object of attention. He appears displaced at any given location. He cannot fit in any scene. People get obsessed with his looks and inaccessibility. These attributes of Jacob reinforce his loss, and ultimate death from the beginning. Even in the pre-war setting, the novel makes clear references to war times. *Jacob's Room* can be regarded as a mock coming of age novel since it does not present Jacob as a transformed character. Traditionally, a coming of age novel features both the physical and the psychological growth of its protagonist. However, Jacob does not change mentally. His ideas and actions are presented to be static. Jacob's transformation is blocked by the war. His responses do not change. If Woolf offered an altered version of Jacob in his older age, this novel would be a coming of age novel since it narrates Jacob's life from childhood to adulthood. On the contrary, Woolf keeps Jacob stabile to show how the war interfered with young men's lives and did not leave any room for them to actualise their potential. Jacob's loss dominates the novel; therefore, the concepts of death, mourning, melancholy, and time are mainly examined through critical works of Sigmund Freud, Julia Kristeva and Mark Currie. The chosen theoretical works examine loss and reactions to loss. Sigmund Freud makes a distinction between mourning and melancholy in his

Mourning and Melancholia. Freud claims that mourning and melancholy are both reactions to loss and carry similar traits. However, mourning is a condensed process. Mourning helps people to get over loss. On the other hand, melancholia is a disorder which leads to a process of prolonged loss. Freud's theory is used to detect the inclination of *Jacob's Room*'s characters after Jacob's death. Julia Kristeva's work, *The Black Sun*, draws attention to features of melancholy which include having an obsession and fascination with the lost object. The melancholic person cannot get away from the lost person. Kristeva's claims are consulted to examine the extent of melancholy in *Jacob's Room*. Freud and Kristeva's arguments are used in analysing how the characters of *Jacob's Room* cling to the loss of Jacob instead of letting it go, which results in an obsession with him. As a consequence, characters cannot sustain a healthy life and keep returning to Jacob at any given moment. I argue that Jacob's final room also exemplifies and materialises how people stick to the idea of his presence as the room is filled with his existence following his departure. Besides, Woolf uses narrative structure to reflect melancholy. She uses interrupted and repetitive sentences when other characters talk about Jacob. Woolf also gives this melancholy by blurring the pre-war and war timelines. I claim that Woolf utilises melancholy to reflect on the chaotic atmosphere of the society following the loss of hundreds of thousands of young men. Her use of melancholy which manipulates the notion of time also shows the desire for peaceful times. Mark Currie's concept of prolepsis is used to analyse the temporality of *Jacob's Room*. Currie claims that excursions supply information about the future events in a fictional narrative. Through the use of prolepsis, Woolf makes excursions to the novel's own future. *Jacob's Room* sustains war period in the pre-war setting through prolepsis, and brings news from the future of the novel. Moreover, I propose that Woolf presents

Jacob as most soldiers who survived the war behaved. Jacob's intentional absence implies his inability to communicate with people surrounding him. Jacob, presented as a traumatic character, cannot establish communication channels with other characters ultimately resulting in his quietness. Therefore, the narrative appoints female characters to disclose their perspective on Jacob's condition. The voice of women in the narrative goes hand in hand with the growing role they undertake in the society.

The second chapter of this thesis focuses on Rebecca West's novel *The Return of the Soldier* with regard to the concepts of memory, responsibility and trauma. The novel provides the reader with the story of an amnesiac soldier, Chris Baldry. The story is narrated by Chris's cousin Jenny, who has been in love with him since childhood. Therefore, she idealizes Chris in the narrative. The novel concentrates on issues of trauma and the possibilities of a potential cure. Due to an unspecified injury, Chris cannot remember the last 15 years of his adult life and he returns to his youth. Chris's traumatic amnesia is analysed through Richard McNally's explanations regarding classic psychogenic amnesia. Chris's case can be diagnosed as classic psychogenic amnesia, which emerges as a response to being exposed to a traumatic incident. It leads to loss of identity and retrograde amnesia. I argue that the excessive burden of patriarchal responsibilities on Chris's shoulders makes him forget about his accountabilities subsequent to the traumatic accident. The origin of the incident is not clarified in the novel. Only what Chris forgets and remembers are given. He forgets about his duties as the head of the Baldry Court, his marriage, his wife, his late son, and most importantly the war all of which lay in the foundation of masculinity. I claim that war, as a masculine trait, makes Chris disregard his responsibilities as a patriarch. Moreover, it takes him back to his youth

without marital or national obligations. I assert that Rebecca West constructed Chris's case to comment on the emasculating consequences of the Great War, which did not enhance the concept of masculinity as well as leading to disintegration in the traditional associations of that notion. Shell-shock emerged as a result of the Great War. Its extents were unknown. Elaine Showalter traces the similarities between hysteria and shell-shock to present the emasculating manifestations of modern warfare. Showalter's study is used to accentuate the decline of the myth of capable, rational men following the Great War. It is referred in this chapter to show this paradoxical impact of warfare on soldiers. Psychological and mental cases were previously associated with women. They were considered to be signs of weakness. However, the Great War disproved this perception showing that men could also suffer from similar things. Chris, as a strong, masculine figure, experiences a problematic condition with an unconscious desire to renounce his obligations. Chris cannot even recognise his wife Kitty or remember having been married. On the contrary, he thinks that he is in a relationship with his first true love, Margaret. Chris's amnesia also eliminates his war memories. Therefore, he cannot reveal them. This saves him from the challenge of trying to talk about the war with civilians. West uses amnesia and trauma to highlight the unspeakable conditions of modern warfare and the trench experience. Moreover, West draws attention to the significance of psychological conditions emerging from the war and their effects on civilians. The novel shows how people could not comprehend the importance of trauma and shell-shock. Especially, during the Great War many doctors could not cure trauma or shell-shock. Physical wounds were prioritised in the front since they are easier to be cared and to be cured. Similarly, the characters in the novel cannot understand Chris's circumstance. Chris is used as a symbol to show the situation of discharged soldiers

due to psychological symptoms. Throughout the novel, people search a remedy for his condition. Even multiple doctors examine him, yet they cannot come up with a cure for him. The solution comes in the end; however, West does not offer a medical explanation. Chris's treatment turns out to be a symbolic one. Chris's youth love, Margaret, makes him remember by reminding him of his deceased son. I propose that Chris associates his son with his patriarchal responsibilities and it becomes a source of immense emotional burden for him during the battle. Therefore, he shuts down his memory to survive. Eventually, he recovers his memory when he is reminded of him away from the complexity of the war. Nonetheless, the narrative does not let the readers know cured Chris since his cure does not release him from obligations. It means that Chris will go back to war, probably to his death.

The third chapter of this thesis analyses Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. Unlike previous novels featured in this thesis, Hemingway's novel is narrated by a soldier protagonist, Frederic Henry. However, it can be deduced that the gender and the duty of the narrator does not alter the approach towards warfare. Frederic's narrative does not contradict the sorrow dispersed by the other novels. It is significant to observe a soldier's perspective on war to find out the process leading to shell-shock, trauma, and silence in men. The first two novels supply us with the end results whereas Frederic's testament illuminates the process of destruction. Frederic recounts his story of survival long after events take place. The protagonist of the novel falls in love with a British nurse in the midst of the war, which designates the course of his actions. In the beginning, Frederic appears to be the embodied version of masculinity with his willingness to fight, his relationship with girls and drinking heavily. He appears as a figure who is devoted to fighting. Frederic is not obliged to fight as an American citizen; however, he volunteers eagerly. At one moment, he is

entitled to get a silver medal for his courage. However, after a short while he deserts the army to form a peaceful family. The contrasts between these two actions highlight the striking transformation of Frederic. Even such a masculine figure as Frederic cannot handle the conditions the trench following his time in the hospital. Once he tastes freedom and normal life again, he cannot embrace the circumstances of the war. The third chapter analyses the disillusionment of Frederic through the crucial moments leading to his desertion in relation to Jean Baudrillard's *Symbolic Exchange and Death.* Baudrillard's ideas regarding the banishment of death from social life in modern societies are used to examine Frederic's changing approach towards warfare. Hemingway, in *A Farewell to Arms,* claims that glory and honour are mere abstract concepts. They find no matches in the trenches whereas they were meaningful in the static pre-war world as reliable words (Fussell, 1975, p. 21). I propose that Frederic gradually comprehends the futility of these notions through his confrontations with death on multiple occasions during the war. I claim that his close interactions with death change his ideas regarding warfare leading to a decline in his belief in the system, warfare and heroism which makes him risk his reputation by deserting the army. He survives the war having lost all the people who actually matter for him, which becomes his curse. I argue that narrating his story becomes a therapeutic act which helps him heal his psychological wounds by making him confront with painful memories. The novel serves to be the testimony of Frederic.

CHAPTER 2

JACOB'S EMPTY ROOMS: MELANCHOLY AND LOSS

Virginia Woolf's third novel *Jacob's Room* (1922) is an experimental war novel even though it takes place primarily in a pre-war setting. It echoes memories and impressions regarding Jacob, who was killed during World War I at a very young age. It is narrated from the point of view of a mysterious female narrator who reveals her gender only once. She recounts different characters' impressions concerning Jacob throughout the novel. Jacob stays as a potential yet to transform into a man.

The horrors of the Great War and the advanced weapon technology shattered previous perceptions regarding warfare. The ideal war hero concept collapsed following World War I. Instead there remained ruins of heroic myths. Soldiers did not feel glorious, victorious and capable anymore. Men encountered hollowed ideals and machine guns as opposed to one on one old school combat. They felt the burden of the war and guilt over their deceased comrades. Woolf does not portray the horrors of a battle scene, which would be hard to describe from the point view of narrators who did not take part in active warfare. It was even challenging for combatants to express their experience of the war, let alone non-combatants, who got their knowledge of combat through media, memoirs and stories. After the war, discharged soldiers found it difficult to communicate with people when they returned. They couldn't recount their experience since they found it problematic to narrate the reality of the war. They felt incapable of talking about their feelings. In most cases, their silence spoke for them. Especially, shell-shocked soldiers brought back the atmosphere of the war to the domestic space. However, *Jacob's Room* does not directly depict a discharged soldier's experience. I claim that Woolf conveys the

catastrophe of the war through the absence of Jacob, who is supposed to be the central character of the novel. She creates a new approach towards war narratives by erasing her male protagonist to reflect on the silence which took over the world around her. She does not produce an ambiance of sympathy or pity, instead there lays endless sorrow. Woolf shows the images of a dead soldier in the minds of those who were left behind to deal with their prolonged grief. I claim that Woolf generates an environment of melancholy as the basis of her novel. In this chapter, I will analyse the melancholy in *Jacob's Room* which shapes Jacob's portrayal and I will trace how his absence and representation contribute to the melancholy of the novel. I propose that female characters are given a voice in the novel to highlight their rising status in the society following the war. Moreover, I argue that instead of employing mourning female figures, Woolf creates melancholic characters who cannot get over Jacob's loss. They become obsessed with Jacob which explains their fascination with him. Sigmund Freud (2001) explains mourning as "regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person" (p. 243). However, Freud states that "In some people the same influences produce melancholia" (p. 243). He claims that mourning can be overcome after some time whereas melancholy lingers. Therefore, it is a pathological case (p. 244). In the novel, people cannot cope with their losses. Healthy mourning process cannot be completed as the society is consumed by loss. Therefore, they produce an obsession with Jacob, whose absence drags them into this melancholy in the first place. They hold onto their grief instead of trying to get over it. Furthermore, I assert that in addition to her characters, Woolf reflects melancholic features in her formal preferences. Woolf's narrative imitates melancholy, which is reproduced on stylistic features as well as being the major theme. She uses repetition, interrupted sentences, and blurred timelines to reinforce the melancholic tone of the novel.

Woolf manipulates the notion of time in *Jacob's Room* through prolepsis to imitate the blurry time concept of melancholic individuals whose memory mix up timelines. I will discuss the proleptic structure of the novel in relation to the melancholic characters whose fascination of Jacob becomes a character trait. Woolf employs narratological prolepsis to reveal the novel's own future before events take place. Even though events mainly occur in pre-war setting, Woolf alludes to the inter-war years and post-war years in the pre-war setting. Considering that the novel is narrated after Jacob's death and the war's end, it can be suggested that there is a desire to go back to peaceful times before death took control. His death and the condition of discharged soldiers taint their memories. Therefore, these characters talk about Jacob's youth in the pre-war world although they point at the marks of the war through his awkwardness which is infused in their pre-war narrative. They are not able to distinguish between the two timelines. Mark Currie (2011) explains narratological prolepsis as "a form of anticipation which takes place within the locus of the narrated. It is the anticipation of, or flashforward to, future events within the universe of narrated events" (p. 31). Especially, the intentional absence of Jacob and his ghostlike presence contribute to the excursions into the future. Jacob's taciturn persona foreshadows his death in the war. Moreover, I assert that Jacob is presented as a shell-shocked, an already traumatised, figure even in the pre-war setting, which explains his absence and lack of participation in the novel. I believe that Jacob's depiction accentuates the destructive effects of the war on psychology and personal relationships. Non-combatants observe the state of shell-shocked soldiers which affect their perception regarding young men. They are aware of the silence of the young men around them. Jacob, as most of the traumatised soldiers, cannot establish meaningful communication and withdraws himself from the social scenes. His

trauma manifests itself in the form of inability to communicate. Verbal communication fails, and his mother utilises letters to reach him by creating her own form of writing as Virginia Woolf creates her own form of a war novel with *Jacob's Room*.

2.1 Melancholic domestic scenes

With young male population having joined the war, women of all ages were left behind in the domestic scene during the Great War. Virginia Woolf reflects upon the traditional duty of women who had to wait patiently during wars. Nonetheless, Woolf modifies this role by giving her characters a platform which enables them to reveal their experience. Pierre Bourdieu (2007) claims that masculine world order has its certain divisions for sexes, males have outside tasks while females have interior chores:

> The social order functions as an immense symbolic machine tending to ratify the masculine domination on which it is founded: it is the sexual division of labour, a very strict distribution of activities assigned to each sex, of their place, time and instruments; it is the structure of space, with the opposition between the place of assembly or the market reserved for men, and the house, reserved for women. (pp. 9-10)

As Bourdieu describes, there is a perception of a separation between male and female places in the world. Bourdieu claims that this division is not limited with the space. This split-up is applied to "all the things of the world" (11). Social life for genders has been constructed on this basis. It can be argued that there is an exception to Bourdieu's claims, during wars women can explore their space without the influence and intervention of men. This exploration may supply them with new opportunities and revelations. Similarly, the Great War shattered the invisible line marking women's limited terrain. Women were encouraged to take active roles outside their

homes to support the economy. They were even motivated by the authorities. Some women attended war as nurses, and some women worked in the factories to fill in men's jobs for the first time. Women had to take "manly" jobs to ensure production in the absence of men. As a result, the war challenged this division assigned by the society. It erased the gendered opposition of spaces seemingly for a limited time. When the war ended, things went back to previous order for a short period. However, the long-term effects of the erasure of strict gender roles were observed later in social life when women received the vote and began getting more social rights. Woolf does not depict this limited change from business life point of view. I claim that Virginia Woolf, as a female writer trying to carve her space in writing, assigns a female narrator who is in charge of the narrative to demonstrate the increasing active role of women in the society. Her narrator reveals her gender and age only once: "Granted ten years' seniority and a difference of sex" (Woolf, 2008, p. 128). Her relation to Jacob is not specified in the novel. She hides her identity. She does not want her individuality to stand out. In a way, she avoids drawing attention to herself and creates an outlet for anonymity. In almost every page, she introduces a new middle-aged woman mostly somehow related to Jacob. She removes Jacob from his own story so that female characters can take control of the narrative. These women have their own voice. They announce their ideas and observations about Jacob. They eradicate the interiority and the voice of Jacob to show the diminishing authority of men following the war and the increasing role of women who assumed new identities. The narrative imitates the circumstance of genders after the war. Moreover, Woolf turns these women into melancholic individuals, which contradicts with the task of mourning the society designated them with. Throughout ages,

women were responsible for mourning. Especially, during the nineteenth century mourning became more important. As Philippe Ariès (1975) points out:

> In the past death in bed was a solemn event, but also an event as banal as seasonal holidays. People expected it, and when it occurred they followed the rituals laid down by customs. But in the nineteenth century, a new passion stirred those present. Emotion shook them, they cried, prayed, gesticulated. (p. 59)

The nineteenth century attributed a new meaning to death. Before that, death was considered to be a natural part of life; therefore, people approached it more maturely. However, the advances in technology and medicine led to the rationalization of death, which disregarded its ordinariness. It was no longer an organic part of life. It became more dramatized. Rituals got more elaborated and exaggerated. Strict codes and rules were founded for mourning. Everybody followed them. Particularly, women faced strict rules during the mourning process. Moreover, widows had to endure harsher instructions, they "were required to wear full black mourning for two years—non-reflective black paramatta and crape for the first deepest mourning, followed by nine months of dullish black silk, heavily trimmed with crape, and then three months when crape was discarded" (Jalland, 1999, p. 300). Their clothing choices were restricted. They were condemned to dark colours which publicised their mourning. Even the material of their clothes was limited and specified. They were directed by social rules. The nineteenth century also marked the reign of Queen Victoria, who constructed herself a new identity as a mourning widow which set an obligatory example for other widows. She decided to wear dark clothes and became the symbol of mourning around the country with her clothes and solidified the role of women as mourners. Queen Victoria's quest as a mourning widow laid the basis of how women were supposed to behave after losing a relative. Therefore, it can be assumed that Woolf crafts an ambiance which manifests how women began to break

away from tradition by attributing melancholy to them instead of making them assigned mourners.

The melancholy creates a common ground which supplies the characters with a platform to state their opinions regarding Jacob, who is kept in the spotlight. Jacques Derrida (2001b) pays tribute to famous figures in *The Work of Mourning*. Each chapter of his study is dedicated to a friend. He talks about the dynamics of their relationships, and reflects on their loss. He touches upon the challenge of writing about deceased people in the chapter devoted to Barthes:

> To write—to him, to present to the dead friend within oneself the gift of his innocence. For him, I would have wanted to avoid, and thus spare him, the double wound of speaking of him, here and now, as one speaks of one of the living or of one of the dead. (p. 44)

Derrida reveals that writing about a dead friend is double edged. The friend is absent. He is no longer in the world but survives in the memory. Therefore, he cannot represent the person correctly, and the experience of writing can be problematic. The real character of that person and his idealisation in the minds of his beloved ones may not be compatible. Derrida has second thoughts while writing about his deceased friends. He offers two solutions to this dilemma:

> Two infidelities, an impossible choice: on the one hand, not to say anything that comes back to oneself, to one's own voice, to remain silent, or at the very least to let oneself be accompanied or preceded in counterpoint by the friend's voice. (2001b, p. 45)

There are two options: to remain silent, or to utilise the friend's speech and manners both of which are challenging for Derrida. He believes that both strategies reinforce the absence of that person. Quoting them all the time creates no meaningful exchange. On the other hand, the absence of quotation "pluralizes" death (2001b, p. 45). However, Woolf's narrator develops a third strategy. She does not quote Jacob. She does not expose Jacob's character. She erases Jacob's personality to pay tribute

to him without pluralizing his death. She implies his death in the beginning of the novel. The reader is not surprised by his death in the end since his absence is revealed from the opening. She does not expose Jacob's motives for his actions: "Woolf's new elegiac mode, marked by an impersonality that is characteristic of modernism, effectively erases her protagonist's interior, creating an elegiac subject who becomes a cipher for a broader, dissociative feeling and reflection on loss" (Oxner, 2014, p. 210). Jacob is intentionally removed from the scenes, which confirms his death. He becomes the epitome of loss and war. Jacob's reluctance paves the way for Woolf's narrative strategy, as Oxner calls Woolf's "new elegiac mode" (2014, p.210). However, her narrative goes one step further than being an elegiac mode, it unfolds as melancholia. Woolf does not assign her characters to mourn for their loss. They refuse to mourn and persist in their sorrow. It can be argued that Woolf's use of melancholy also demonstrates the impossibility of mourning following the Great War. Mourning eventually means coming to terms with loss and death. As Derrida (2001b) claims:

> mourn we must. We must, but we must not like it—mourning, that is, mourning itself, if such a thing exists: not to like or love through one's own tear but only through the other, and every tear is from the other, the friend, the living, as long as we ourselves are living, reminding us, in holding life, to hold on to it. (p. 110)

Mourning must be performed to guarantee survival. It should be a tool to hold onto life. It is a necessary step to be completed after a friend's loss to get back to the flow of life. It fabricates the disposal of grief. However, it was not easy during the Great War to mourn. Loss was not personal or singular. People witnessed the loss of a young generation. They could not come to terms with it. They could not easily claim their own lives as if nothing happened. Mourning is not only about honouring the memory of a deceased person or paying homage. It is also about the survivor who

experiences loss of a friend and faces death. The survivors need to get over their acquaintance with death. The plurality of death increases the level of familiarity with death which complicates the process of mourning. Many young men died during the war, and most of the bodies were unrecognizable. Sanja Bahun (2014) claims that when the numbers increase, mourning turns out to be more complex: "Mourning becomes more problematic proportionally as we expand the notion of loss. A group, especially a group of substantial size, is much harder to mourn than an individual" (p. 17). She asserts that the notion of loss is affected by numbers. Especially, in the context of the Great War, there was ceaseless death news of young men. Therefore, the specific mourning rituals of the previous generation were inapplicable. *Jacob's Room* demonstrates this problematic aspect of mourning at the turn of the century.

Mourning period helps people to recover from grief in a compressed time and prepares them to return to the mundane of their lives. On the other hand, prolonged bereavement leads to psychological problems. Pat Jalland (1999) draws attention to the healing feature of mourning. Jalland argues that at the beginning mourners idealize the departed. However, they get over this idealization in time and become more realistic about their loss. They remember more negative qualities of the deceased. On the other hand, obscurity and unsolved issues may extend this process of idealization. Such an extension would interrupt the mourning process (p. 284). It can be argued that the extremity of the circumstances of the war led to an obscurity and chaos resulting in a tendency to hold on to lost individuals as Jalland suggests. Therefore, the effect of loss was prominent in the society. It can be inferred that Woolf feeds on this intervention of death by displaying the dominion of melancholy. Derrida (2001b) states that melancholia appears in case of the failure of the work of mourning (p.44). When the idealizations linger, they prevent the cessation of

sorrow. They hinder the process of mourning. In *Jacob's Room*, people cannot mourn due to the constant death news and guilt over deaths. This interferes with their lives, and they cannot acknowledge Jacob's negative behaviours. They associate him with perfection. Freud (2001) explains that "The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity" (p. 244). Woolf's characters lose interest in the course of their daily lives and get more interested in Jacob. Their sole agenda is limited to him. As Freud writes, "when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" (2001, p. 245). When mourning is over, people can go back to their lives and get rid of their obsession with the lost object. However, the characters in the novel cannot resume their lives. Freud (2001) compares mourning and melancholy by suggesting that mourning disregards the world whereas melancholia generates a void in one's ego (p. 246). Mourning devalues life whereas melancholia leads to the decrease of self-involvement. The characters in *Jacob's Room* cannot sustain healthy period of mourning after the loss of Jacob –ultimately loss of a generation. They flow into melancholia which results in Jacob's constant presence in the memories of other characters. This also strengthens melancholia by keeping him relevant. Since they identify themselves with Jacob, they cannot exclude him from their utterances.

Virginia Woolf shows this melancholic atmosphere in the novel through dialogues revolving around Jacob. The characters constantly state their opinions regarding him. They eliminate any other person or subject from their agenda. Their social activities revolve around Jacob. He becomes their chief occupation in life. They wish to meet him, analyse him and attire his interest. Melancholia keeps his existence lingering. They cannot detach Jacob from their memories. They try to

prolong his existence through their conversations. Remembering Jacob evokes the horrors of the war and reinforces its remembrance. They have an unconscious tendency to mention Jacob whenever possible. They find him weird, but they are also fascinated by him: "Very awkward he was… Only Fanny thought: 'What a beautiful voice!' She thought how little he said yet how firm it was" (Woolf, 2008, p. 160). Jacob conquers the memory of his acquaintances. Fanny claims that Jacob speaks very little. However, he charms everyone with his beauty and awkwardness. Julia Kristeva (1980) acknowledges that repetition and interrupted sentences are common features of depression and melancholy: "Let us keep in mind the speech of the depressed—repetitive and monotonous. Faced with the impossibility of concatenating, they utter sentences that are interrupted, exhausted, come to standstill" (p. 33). Kristeva's interpretation of melancholy throws further light on the structure of *Jacob's Room*. The novel is full of repetitive remarks and incomplete sentences. The collective melancholia of the novel does not permit any other subject to be discussed or any other person to be central. There is only room for Jacob. Therefore, sentences imitate each other, and everyone repeats the same observations over and over. Mrs. Durrant cannot stop thinking about Jacob even long after their encounter: "'Distinction'—Mrs Durrant said that Jacob Flanders was 'distinguished-looking'. 'Extremely awkward,' she said, 'but so distinguished looking.' Seeing him for the first time that no doubt is the word for him" (Woolf, 2008, p. 94). Mrs. Durrant repeats the same things. Jacob can stir any ambience by creating an imprint with his "distinction". Jacob's original characteristics attract attention. Nonetheless, nobody can explain the qualities which make him stand out. It is not possible for anyone to avoid his influence. His awkwardness marks Jacob and makes him memorable. His absence becomes a silent scream that makes him recognised. The

narrator guarantees that all readers get a grasp of Jacob's awkwardness, his distinguished looks, and his epic impact. Clara, similarly, could not escape from Jacob's influence: "'I like Jacob Flanders,' wrote Clara Durrant in her diary. 'He is so unworldly. He gives himself no airs, and one can say what one likes to him, though he's frightening because…'" (Woolf, 2008, p. 94). Clara is fascinated by Jacob, yet she cannot accredit the features which make him amiable. Clara's remark is also an instance of how Woolf integrates melancholy into the structure of the novel. The speakers, as melancholic individuals, cannot construct full meaningful sentences. Their sentences and course of thinking are interrupted as is the narrative of the novel. Clara's sentence is interrupted, she cannot complete it. She can sense the sublime in Jacob. She notices his "frightening" side, but cannot understand the reason for that. After Clara, Captain Barfoot's perception of Jacob is mentioned. However, it is also incomplete which reinforces the overall melancholy: "Captain Barfoot liked him best of the boys; but as for saying why…" (Woolf, 2008, p. 95). Captain cannot either name the feature which makes Jacob likeable. He does not explain why he likes Jacob. Following the Captain, Julia Elliot mentions Jacob out of the blue: "Then Julia Elliot said 'the silent young man', and as she dined with Prime Ministers, no doubt she meant: 'If he is going to get on in the world, he will have to find his tongue.'" (Woolf, 2008, p. 95). The narrator moves on to Miss Elliot who casually mentions Jacob in the middle of a dinner event. The narrator analyses her sentence. When narrator's analysis is taken into consideration, it can be deduced that Jacob never finds his voice. If he gets to survive the war, he will need his voice. However, his silence persists which implies how his search of identity gets interrupted by the war and his eventual death. His potential gets lost. His transformation cannot be completed. Nonetheless, his lack of voice makes him

remembered. Kristeva (1980) points out the obsessive features of melancholy: “A repetitive rhythm, a monotonous melody emerge and dominate the broken logical sequences, changing them into recurring, obsessive litanies” (p. 33). The repetitive nature of the novel results from its melancholic structure. The novel mirrors the features of melancholy to set the ambiance. Therefore, people’s perception of Jacob, his awkwardness and his looks become a recurring theme. It keeps coming back page after page. People cannot judge Jacob critically. They get stuck on the surface by appreciating his beauty. Their melancholy manipulates the judgement concerning him. They cannot make reasonable observations. Their melancholic attitude turns Jacob into a symbol of all the lost souls of the war and the lost youth. As Kristeva (1980) writes, “beauty emerges as the admirable face of loss, transforming it in order to make it live” (p. 99). She believes that melancholy results in an obsession with beauty. Kristeva’s claims throw light on why people attribute attractiveness to Jacob. Eventually, Jacob—with his good looks and weird vibes—transforms into being the face of loss and war in the novel. Even if Jacob was not a handsome guy, they remember him as the representative of beauty since their melancholy leads them to exaggerate Jacob’s physical features: “‘We think,’ said two of the dancers, breaking off from the rest, and bowing profoundly before him, ‘that you are the most beautiful man we have ever seen.’” (Woolf, 2008, p. 100). His beauty once more attracts ladies. They show him more respect. Another example of repetitiveness can be observed when Mrs. Durrant’s inner voice cannot escape from making the common judgement about Jacob: “’He is extraordinarily awkward,’ . . . ‘Yet so distinguished-looking.’” (Woolf, 2008, p. 81). Once again, Jacob affects ladies with his idiosyncratic manners and charming features. People’s desire to cope with their loss

creates a nostalgic ambiance. Their nostalgia collides with their fascination with Jacob and it manipulates their memories and impressions.

Jacob's Room does not feature too many main characters. There are not always major people around human beings who undertake significant missions. Instead, there are few notable individuals who matter, and a myriad of minor people. These minor characters devote themselves to understanding Jacob. In almost every page another new name pops up. These characters are acquaintances of Jacob or Betty. They do not have close relations with either of them. It can be argued that these characters function to accentuate the general melancholy and the rule of loss following the war as well as supporting the overall melancholic structure of the novel. These minor characters with proper names in an environment of melancholy reflect how the majority of the society was drowned by the extreme grief around them. Their collective approach also implies how Jacob represents a generation of young boys rather than an individual. Once their names are mentioned, these characters get more authentic. They have their own judgements. By mentioning these people and offering their similar take on Jacob, Woolf presents how everyone was consumed by loss in inter-war and post-war years. There was a shared feeling of sorrow. Everyone was directly or indirectly influenced by the war. Therefore, these minor characters take credit for their contribution: Betty Flanders, Mrs. Jarvis, Mrs. Pearce, Rebecca, Mrs. Cranch, Mrs. Page, Mrs. Garfit, Mrs. Floyd, Mrs. Barfoot, Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Norman, Mrs. Plumer, Miss Umphelby, Clare Bridge, Mrs. Pascoe, Clara Durrant, Mrs. Durrant, Miss Eliot, Charlotte Wilding, Elsbeth, Mrs, Lidgett, Mrs. Whitehorn, Florinda, Kitty Craster, Mrs. Temple, Mrs. Bonham etc.. By providing them with names, Woolf makes them matter. Their existence is valuable to understand the condition of the society. Mikail Bakhtin (1999) claims

that Dostoyevsky's novels have a polyphonic structure and characters are "a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but not merged in the unity of the event" (p. 6). Naming even minor characters make them more credible since it makes the reader get briefly acquainted with them. It manipulates the reader's perception by creation a sense of familiarity. Woolf creates her own polyphonic ambiance. As Hélène Cixous (2001) proposes:

> Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies—for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement. (p. 2039)

Virginia Woolf—as a female writer—constitutes her own version of a war novel. She puts her own truth into the text as Cixous suggests. Instead of offering an unemotional and rational male perspective associated with the nineteenth century, Woolf appoints rather emotional remarks of women. These women do not hold back. They reveal their emotions and ideas. Cixous (2001) states:

> It is impossible to define a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded—which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. But it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallocentric system. (p. 2046)

Jacob's Room can be taken as an example of a feminine practice of writing as it opposes the phallocentric system. Woolf employs multiple female characters to tell their truth. They do not define who Jacob is. They constitute a platform for their observations. They assume an important role to provide communication between Jacob and the reader. They get to judge others or make small remarks and create whispers: "*Jacob's Room* is largely composed of the narrator's reflections digressions, snatches of events, and what seems to be a polyphony of disembodied voices. These voices murmur and complain, question and tease; almost without

exception the dialogue is elliptical" (Kazan, 1988, p. 702). In the novel, there are sentences, dialogues, inner monologues from here and there. Most of the time these conversations do not create unity, instead they remain obscure. The obscurity and nonsensicality of the novel marks structure of the novel. Woolf does not create a linear, unified narrative. On the contrary, she jumps from character to character whose agenda solely depends on Jacob. As melancholic individuals, they cannot get Jacob out of their thoughts and conversations even though they cannot reveal any significant information regarding Jacob. Their sole mission is to assure Jacob's remembrance through their utterances. There is no trustworthy, neat source to reveal solid information as the reader is constantly bombarded with subjective thoughts. There are pieces put together from multiple times from the view of various people whose impressions are the main source. Jacob, as the central point of the novel, attracts gossipers. Julia Eliot asks, "'Did you ever hear who his father was?'" and Mr Bowley replies, "'His mother, they say, is somehow connected with the Rockbiers,'", "'He doesn't overwork himself anyhow.'" and "'His friends are very fond of him.' (Woolf, 2008, p.215). They try to analyse Jacob based on every little piece of information they can get from whatever source. Questions regarding his background, heritage, friend circle are raised but never answered since they get interrupted. Even the gossips focus on his parents, his laziness and his being liked by anyone. These rumours serve to guarantee Jacob's centrality.

2.2 War's presence: Past, present, and future blurred

The idea of time in real life and in narrative fiction is drastically different. Future is determined and definite in fiction whereas it is unknown in real life. Time concept

gets even more complicated in *Jacob's Room*. I claim that Virginia Woolf employs narratological prolepsis—prolepsis 1—to offer excursions from the future of the novel. As Mark Currie (2001) explains,

> in life we might anticipate events which are posterior to the present, these anticipated events are not yet in existence, and involve the projection forward to an entirely imagined future. This is not the case in narrative fiction, where we might view the future of a narrative as a future which is already in place. (p. 33)

In daily life, future can only be imagined and speculated. However, narrative fiction may offer past, present and future simultaneously due to its confined structure. This determined composition of novels enables excursions to future. Even though the reader may not have read the ending, this does not change the outcome. The narrator may give away details about the future since it is already written. Kristeva(1980) claims that melancholic people cannot differentiate between the past and the present. She argues that "speech of melancholy people leads them to live within a skewed time sense. It does not pass by, the before/after notion does not rule it, does not direct it from a past toward a goal" (p. 60). I suggest that these excursions occur due to the melancholic state of characters who mix up timelines in *Jacob's Room*. They do not have a goal located in the future. Their life is trapped in the past. Thus, the lines among past, present and future are distorted in the novel. News from the future is constantly given. Therefore, even in the pre-war setting, there are many references to war and war time disasters. Woolf does not leave any room for a peaceful moment. Narrators manipulate timelines and events become intricate. Future events are referenced while the past is being narrated.

The time notion of the characters is reflected through prolepsis 1 in this novel. According to Mark Currie (2011), there are three types of prolepsis: "Prolepsis 1 will project that reader forward through narrated time to a future which,

in chronological terms, is located in the distant past" (p. 32). Considering the nature of narratives, even the present of fiction was written in the past. Events are recounted long after they take place. What is presented as present in a novel takes place in the past. Therefore, even the future of fiction occurs in the past which enables references to future events in the past of the narrative. Prolepsis 2 "is a form of anticipation which takes place between the time locus of the narrated and the time locus of the narrator" (Currie, 2011, p. 39). This anticipation is created since the present of the reader is the future in relation to the narrator as the reader accesses to a book long after it is written. The narrator also narrated the events in the past which enables the viewing of the actions for the reader. Prolepsis 3 is "the anticipation of an objection to an argument" (Currie, 2011, p. 29). Currie (2011) claims that all fiction includes prolepsis 2 whereas prolepsis 1 and prolepsis 3 are "forms of experimentation" (p. 32). Mark Currie (2011) acknowledges that "Prolepsis is meaningful in its narratological sense only when there is a clear first narration in relation to which a flashforward can be seen as anachronous, when that first narrative is predominant" (p. 36). There needs to be a dominant narrative and time span for prolepsis to be effective. In *Jacob's Room* the prevailing narrative is the pre-war setting. Thus, remarks about war period and post-war period create narratological prolepsis by creating anachrony. These excursions capture the dominant pre-war narrative to disperse loss and the feeling of melancholy. Narratological prolepsis disrupts the linearity of time to show the minds of melancholic people affected by the war. Melancholic people cannot perceive time concept fully. As they are obsessed with an individual, they narrate stories about this person's past. Since their memories of the past are also affected by their sense of present, they reflect their loss into the past. Consequently, a tone of loss and grief covers their pre-war narrative. Woolf utilizes

excursions quite often to show the confusion of people. The story is being narrated after Jacob's death. Therefore, the narrator is knowledgeable regarding his fate and the outcomes of the war. While narrating, she takes a stance from the endpoint. These proleptic references do not make sense at the time of narration. They hint the importance of these issues for the future. A remark regarding a soldier and a nurse emerges out of nowhere in the pre-war setting: "life was wicked because a man called Jimmy refused to marry a woman called (if memory serves) Helen Aitken" (Woolf, 2008, p. 130). First, she casually mentions Jimmy and Helen without giving detailed information. Then, she comments on their future: "And now Jimmy feeds crows in Flanders and Helen visits hospitals. Oh, life is damnable, life is wicked, as Rose Shaw said" (Woolf, 2008, p. 131). This seemingly casual remark is an example of narratological prolepsis. Narrator makes a future reference by revealing Jimmy and Helen's destiny. Her explanations notify that Jimmy died serving during the war. Moreover, Helen serves as a nurse healing the wounds of others. Yet as Rose Shaw remarks, life is full of sorrow and unexpected turn of events. By mentioning them, narrator gives clues about the future. Even though this revelation is made in the pre-war setting which is supposed to be the present of the narrated time, the news regarding their relationship is given in the past tense. Moreover, Jimmy's death and Helen's role as a nurse are given in the present tense. Mark Currie (2011) claims that narratological prolepsis may be given in multiple tenses, "prolepsis is entirely relative to an established linear sequence, and therefore cannot be straightforwardly marked by a particular tense" (p. 34). Another example of an excursion occurs when the narrator excludes any speculations concerning the future of Jacob's college friends: "simple young men, these, who would—but there is no need to think of them grown old" (Woolf, 2008, p. 55). She intentionally cuts her statement. These young

men are sitting on the sofa. They are full of hope and potential. Nevertheless, her rejection to speculate implies that there is no use in trying to guess their future. Their lives will be interrupted or ended during the war. In a way, the narrative reports their bad fortune and potential death from the future. There is no need to think of the prospects because they will never get old. She avoids revealing their destiny implicitly. Instead, she excludes everything about their possible lifestyle. What the narrator omits become more crucial than what she includes in *Jacob's Room*.

Woolf occasionally refers to soldiers and previous wars in the pre-war setting to utilise excursions. She implies how these things will have a more essential place in the future of the novel. She foreshadows later events through small references without narrating it. Mark Currie (2011) writes that in Prolepsis 1 "the time travel takes place within the boundaries of narrated time, the future is predetermined, literally already written" (p. 49). Prolepsis 1 can be considered as a narratological journey in time. Woolf (2008) operates on that when Jacob is mistaken for a soldier: "Taking Jacob for a military gentleman, the stall-keeper told him about his boy at Gibraltar, and Jacob cursed the British army and praised the Duke of Wellington" (p. 102). This confusion indicates Jacob's forthcoming role as a soldier. It also gives away the general perception that young men should volunteer for the army. Moreover, it hints Jacob's pacifist dimension. He takes an anti-war stance by cursing the army. There are no other indications regarding Jacob's perspective on military issues. Another reference to the war time circumstances occurs when Fanny walks along the street and observes her surroundings: "The eyes of all the nurses, mothers, and wandering women are a little glazed, absorbed. They gently nod instead of answering when the little boys tug at their skirts, begging them to move on" (Woolf, 2008, p. 162-163). Her notes echo the anguish of women during the war even though

this part of the narrative takes place in the pre-war setting. Nurses, mothers and women wander in the streets. Nurses are absorbed with the idea of helping helpless men whereas mothers are left behind to soothe their children who also need attention. Nonetheless, they need to move on with their lives and continue with the flow of their mundane life as their children need them. *Jacob's Room*'s narrators should similarly move on with their lives instead of getting stuck with their pain.

2.3 The possibilities of knowing Jacob: Jacob's absence, loss, and trauma

Every beginning calls for an ultimate end as each living creature is to die one day. *Jacob's Room* confirms this idea since Jacob's absence and ghost-like presence are conveyed from the beginning of the novel. The temporality of the novel and its melancholic structure accommodates the lacking presence of Jacob from the beginning until the end. Jacob's existence is constructed as an excursion. It can be argued that he is presented as a shell-shocked character even in the pre-war setting. His behaviours resemble the manners of most soldiers when they came back from the war. The proleptic time structure of the novel translates into Jacob's presentation. His existence transcends the boundaries of the past, present, and the future. He is described in the present time of the narrators' yet he is characterized as a figure from the future. In a way, everyone describes Jacob as he would most likely act if he survived the war. Therefore, he becomes a haunting figure. He is displayed as an already traumatised, shell-shocked soldier in the memories of other characters. Cathy Caruth (1996) explains that trauma brings along silence:

> it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only

> to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language. (p. 4)

The truth of trauma can never be known. It is hidden in movements and language. In Jacob's case, the trauma is hidden in his silence and passivity. Therefore, the reality of Jacob's case cannot be explained openly. I claim that Woolf accentuates how Jacob represents all young men who attended the war by choosing to portray Jacob as a shell-shocked soldier. He becomes the symbol of all the lost souls of the Great War. Oxner (2014) points out that even Jacob's name Flanders reveals his symbolic dimension:

> Woolf posits Jacob Flanders as an emblem of the youth of the war. His surname recalls the battle at Flanders fields and John McCrae's memoriam for the men who died there. Titled "In Flanders Fields," McCrae's poem was composed in 1915, prior to the publication of Jacob's Room in 1922, and Woolf's readers would ostensibly have recognized the connection. (p. 211)

Jacob's name alludes to his sealed fate. As Oxner proposes, his surname substantiates all lost lives. His actions reinforce his emblematic dimension. He does not transform into being an exceptional example. He does not acquire a unique story transcending the effects of the war. Moreover, Woolf provides him with a loaded name which is compatible with his character traits.

Shell-shock was a common condition among soldiers. Many soldiers were discharged due to shell-shock. Its origins evoked controversy. Most of the treatments failed:

> A part of the answer to the question, "Why are they not cured?" lies in the inadequacy of shellshock treatments, and the lack of time and money available to implement them. The doctors who treated shellshock often lacked any specialist training; the most common definition of cure remained the cessation of visible symptoms. (Leese, 2001, p. 208)

There was no time to heal shell-shocked soldiers in the front. There were many wounded soldiers who required urgent treatment. Hospitals flowed with soldiers.

Therefore, physical injuries were prioritised rather than psychological cases. Doctors could not research how to deal with shell-shock since they did not have the necessary resources. Jacob's shell-shocked depiction demonstrates this problem. Shell-shocked soldiers were unable to go back to normal course of life upon their return. This projection of Jacob as a shell-shocked individual grounds his awkward existence, his inefficient communication skills and his lack of motivation. Woolf intentionally erases the motivations of Jacob. They are buried deep down due to his trauma. Jacob cannot address the horrid truth regarding the trenches. He acts out a silent manifestation. What he does not tell is manifested in his traumatic behaviours. Jacob appears to be a harbinger who marks everyone's memories. As Cathy Caruth (1996) writes, "in Freud's text, the term trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (p. 3). Jacob does not show any physical symptoms, and he doesn't have any visible scars. He has psychological indications which are manifested through his oblivious behaviour. Jacob is supposed to act according to his class and male inheritance, yet his refusal stands him out. Jacob lacks any kind of desire: "Whether in romance or politics, it is difficult to conceive of a motivation for Jacob" (Bishop, 1992, p. 149). His deficiency of skills annoys even his mother, "Betty Flanders . . . was unreasonably irritated by Jacob's clumsiness in the house" (Woolf, 2008, p. 95). Through his failures it is hinted that Jacob's attempts will fail. He will not be able to change anything for the future so he does not put any effort and ends up being clumsy. Therefore, his loss is salient throughout the novel. Woolf integrates Jacob's departure through her use of prolepsis. Jacob's absence is the most prominent example of Woolf's prolepsis. Jacob's omission from the narrative is given at the beginning of the novel when his brother Archer calls him: "'Ja—cob! Ja—cob!' Archer shouted" (Woolf, 2008, p. 4). Archer's roar reinforces the nuance

of Jacob's absence and foreshadows his consequent death. His scream functions as a messenger and becomes the forerunner of subsequent bad news. He wants to find Jacob, who is nowhere to be seen. His shout grieves Jacob's death: "The voice had an extraordinary sadness. Pure from all body, all passion, going out into the world, solitary, unanswered, breaking against rocks—so it sounded" (Woolf, 2008, p. 5). His voice carries the sadness which sets tone of the novel. Derrida (2001b) claims that when he refers to Roland Barthes, he refers to Barthes's representation in him:

> When I say Roland Barthes it is certainly him whom I name, him beyond his name. But since he himself is now inaccessible to this appellation, since this nomination cannot become a vocation, address . . . it is him in me that I name. (p. 46)

Similarly, Archer projects the version of Jacob in him when he shouts his name with extreme sadness. He becomes the first character to imply Jacob's vanishing role in the community. As Archer's voice disappears in solitary so does Jacob. He first appears in the text with Archer's quest. When he first shows up in flesh in the narration, he is alone in the beach, and people are seeking for him. This search for Jacob continues on other levels until the end of the novel. They look for true Jacob. While on the beach, Jacob encounters a skull: "he saw a whole skull—perhaps a cow's skull, a skull, perhaps, with the teeth in it. Sobbing, but absent-mindedly, he ran farther and farther away until he held the skull in his arms" (Woolf, 2008, p. 7). Jacob's encounter with the skull, as a child, hints his final confrontation with death as a soldier. The skull foreshadows Jacob's immature passing away. Jacob runs towards the skull rashly. This is the most active behaviour of Jacob narrated in the novel. In all other scenes, he is quite tranquil. As Jacob clings to the skull, he embraces his future. The "absent-mindedly" phrase points out Jacob's future behaviour and manners, which put him into the centre of events but takes away his voice. Zwerdling (1981) observes, "To die young, to die later: the book seems to say

that the distinction borders on the trivial. From the first page of her novel, we hear the note of mortality" (p. 909). Especially, the scene with the skull emphasizes the overwhelming role of mortality in the novel. Derrida (2001b) claims that "the death that is promised, given, or received, the death that thus always comes before coming—and so, alas, comes always before its time" (p. 136). Derrida writes that death always happens before its time. Every death is premature. *Jacob's Room* also takes a similar stance since death is already there in the novel even before it arrives to seize Jacob. Upon seeing Jacob with the skull, Mrs. Flanders interrupts him. She urges Jacob to let go of the skull as if trying to intervene with his future death: "Drop it this moment! Something horrid, I know" (Woolf, 2008, p. 8). Mrs. Flanders instinctively recognizes the associations of the skull. She foresees the future with her maternal instincts. She predicts the early arrival of death for Jacob.

Jacob's shell-shock stands in the way of him constructing an identity. His transformation is intentionally blocked as he has no place in the post-war society. He will not survive the war. Thus, he sustains a ghostlike persona since there is no use in the readers' knowing Jacob. Pre-war Jacob will not matter after the war. Therefore, Woolf chooses to erase Jacob's pre-war self. Only his ghost comes back to the society, he does not exist as an individual. Jacob's years in Cambridge give a picture of him as a young man in the making. He develops into a fascination for elderly ladies. Page after page the reader is exposed to another lady who comes, mentions her opinion and disappears. Mrs. Norman observes Jacob on a carriage: "Taking note of socks (loose), of tie (shabby)" (Woolf, 2008, p. 36). Mrs. Norman's observation creates an atmosphere of carelessness. She also reveals that Jacob does not show any interest in his clothes. He does not dress sharply. He does not take time to fix his appearance. Mrs. Norman's other thoughts also reveal Jacob's being out of place:

“indifferent, unconscious”, “Grave, unconscious…”, “he seemed so out of place” (Woolf, 2008, p. 36). Jacob does not belong there, and the readers are constantly reminded of that. Feeling dislocated is a common symptom of trauma, “Many trauma survivors report that they automatically are removed from the scene; they look at it from a distance or disappear altogether, leaving other parts of their personality to suffer and store the overwhelming experience” (Van der Kolk and Van der Hart, 1995, p. 168). Jacob removes himself from the scenes and fails to fit in as many trauma survivors do. He unconsciously eliminates himself from social scenes by not participating and not paying attention. Jacob does not care about his surroundings. The overwhelming existence of minor characters obsessed with Jacob accentuates his significance and keeps him central. His non-attendance makes him more present by attracting everybody’s attention. Sanja Bahun (2014) claims that this is a prominent feature of modernist literature:

> The modernist chronotope is vitally shaped by the interplay of two basic aspects of space—presence and absence. While any perception of reality, as well as its representation in fiction, natural relies upon a move across these two manifestations of space, it is the condition of melancholia—premised as it is on the absence of an object that is symptomatically felt as present—that foregrounds their relationship and problems attendant to their perception. (p.55)

Bahun states that melancholy eliminates the traditional distinction between absence and presence. The absence of an object makes it more present. People are obsessed with Jacob’s loss. Therefore, he is more present than ever. He will always stay as the young awkward man in the memories of other people. However, even memories fade and lose their lurid depiction: “the ephemeral or fleeting nature of memories is acknowledged with the recognition that memories ‘fade’ or threaten to wither or die and consequently need to be ‘kept alive’” (Hallam, Hockey, 2001, p. 27). The obsession with Jacob and melancholy make people more attached to their memories

with Jacob. They try to prolong his existence through their repetitive comments which serves to extend Jacob's memory. Eventually, losing his memory will remove him from their lives by excluding the last scraps of Jacob's existence.

There are brief references to Jacob's childhood; however, his college memories take up the most of the narrative. Jacob's can be seen attending social activities at his youth. Pierre Bourdieu (2007) claims that the society separates the boy from his mother to guarantee his masculinization and prepare him for confrontation with the outer world (p. 25). This separation actualises for Jacob when he attends university. His social circle, education, and travels were supposed to complete his masculinization which gets interrupted by the war. Jacob's entrance into privileged scene is credited through his privileged education. His prestigious college life offers Jacob a ticket into high society and dinner parties. His lifestyle begins to shape Jacob according to the masculine discourse. He is expected to embrace the prevailing culture and act accordingly "Jacob Flanders had put on a dinner jacket." (Woolf, 2008, p. 74). As a representative of his class, Jacob is supposed to get dressed and face the society. Jacob's face, his posture and his looks are supposed to embody his status. The dinner jacket contrasts his former shabby clothes with the purpose of serving as a shield to protect him from the gaze of the crowd. The dinner jacket should function to make him blend with the people surrounding him. Nonetheless, the perfection of the clothes collides with Jacob's awkwardness: "his neck, wrists, and face were exposed without cover, and his whole person, whether exposed or not, tingled, glowed so as to make even black cloth an imperfect screen" (Woolf, 2008, pp. 74-75). The suit cannot consummate its duty of guarding. It makes Jacob more exposed. He feels out of his comfort zone. His character and inner imperfection disrupt the perfectness of his appearance. His

chaotic existence translates into the scene. Charlotte, Mrs. Durrant and Miss Elliot end their casual conversation to acknowledge Jacob—"The silent young man" (Woolf, 2008, p. 78). When the conversation flows, Jacob is removed from the scenes. His lack of participation cannot camouflage his "distinguished" looks. The narrator persistently acknowledges that any person who sees Jacob for the first time makes similar comments about him. As Kristeva (1980) states, "The melancholy person who exolts that boundary where the self emerges, but also collapses in deprecation, fails to summon the anality that could establish separations and frontiers as it does normally or as a bonus with obsessive persons" (p. 15). The characters cannot set boundaries. Jacob accompanies their identity as they don't know where to draw the line. Their remarks show that Jacob either stands in the background or appears out of nowhere as if to emphasise the inappropriateness of the position. Thus, Jacob acquires a ghostlike position in the novel, "The ghost is that which interrupts the presentness of the present, and its haunting indicates that, beneath the surface of received history, there lurks another narrative, an untold story that calls into question veracity of the authorized version of events" (Weinstock, 2013, p. 63). His lurking existence implies his unfinished transformation and the faults of society which dragged young men into war. In a way, his ghostlike presence becomes a reminder of these problems. Therefore, people cannot get over his loss and move to the mourning phase. Mrs. Durrant describes Jacob's entrance to a party. Her observations also imply this ghostlike condition: "Jacob came out from the dark place by the window where he had hovered. The light poured over him, illuminating every cranny of his skin; but not a muscle of his face moved as he sat looking out into the garden" (Woolf, 2008, p. 80). Even Jacob's first appearance carries along mystery and ambiguity to accentuate his inaccessibility. Mrs. Durrant can be

physically close to Jacob, yet she cannot reach his essence. She cannot know who Jacob really is. He comes out of the blackness, and the light swarms into him making him the star of the gathering. Nevertheless, he does not take any interest in the scene. Weinstock (2013) recognizes the main characteristics of ghosts: "Ghosts, as noted above, violate conceptual thinking based on dichotomous oppositions. They are neither fully present nor absent, neither living nor dead. The ghost is the mark or trace of an absence" (p. 64). Jacob is physically present in the party yet he detaches himself by looking out of the window. He is there but not fully. He is absent, but his trace can be followed. Every scrap of his existence screams his being out of place. Nonetheless, his manners keep fascinating the people around him.

Considering Jacob's ghostlike presentation, it becomes an impossible quest to know him. The narrator intentionally erases any clues for that end. Jacob does not communicate with people surrounding him. Woolf's narrative breaks away from the tradition of war novels and silences its male "protagonist". Hélène Cixous (2001) suggests that women "must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse" (p. 2049). Woolf constructs her version of a war novel. She effaces war, battles, wounds and soldiers. Besides mystifying Jacob, Woolf profoundly analyses the possibility of really knowing a person and narrating a person's life after his/her death. How can a person truly know another individual dead or alive? How much do people reveal their nature? What remains behind when a person dies? A mere tombstone? What does the tombstone tell about the deceased person or how much can it tell? Is it possible to sustain someone's memory even after their death? Or how long is it possible? The example of Jacob's father and his tombstone initiate this examination. There is not much

information regarding Jacob's father other than his tombstone which was engraved with "'Merchant of this city'" (Woolf, 2008, p. 14). It is unlikely to infer whether this phrase defines Mr. Flanders or not. Why did Betty Flanders choose this expression? She could have picked other descriptions for his late husband—the father of her children. She had to come up with something that could summarize his life. She preferred an unsentimental title for his late husband. It was chosen to set an example for his boys. Mr. Flanders's life was reduced to being a merchant of the city. His most recent title eliminates his other qualities and experiences. Even Betty could not describe his husband any better. Derrida (2001b) mentions this problem of representation, "Living, Roland Barthes cannot be reduced to that which each or all of us can think, believe, know, and already recall of him. But once dead, might he not be so reduced?" (p. 47). He acknowledges that Barthes—living—cannot be perceived as what other people think of him. However, can he "not be so reduced" after his death? It is not possible to know or label a person when they are alive before our eyes. How can it be probable not to be reductive of them after death? Derrida, as Barthes's friend, poses these questions. Mr. Flanders's tombstone and Jacob's obscurity exemplify this reduction. How can acquaintances and readers know Jacob when he is alive? How can his memory linger following his death? Woolf's novel and the documentation of impressions regarding Jacob ensure Jacob's remembrance. However, it cannot be the true illustration of him. *Jacob's Room* touches upon the capability of post-war soldier memorials which were built to remind the catastrophe and honour the heroes. Following the war, there were many memorials for the soldiers. Woolf examines how much they could represent the heroes of the war and their struggles through examples of graves and tombstones. Mrs. Lidgett rests beneath Duke's tomb. Duke fought for his country and earned a memorial: "A

magnificent place for an old woman to rest in, by the very side of the great Duke's bones, whose victories mean nothing to her, whose name she knows not" (Woolf, 2008, pp. 86-87). Mrs. Lidgett does not know Duke's contribution to his nation. The memorial does not contribute to his immortality. It creates an illusion of commemoration. On the contrary, it becomes a reminder of mortality. Mrs. Lidgett recognizes the possibility of her own death upon seeing the tomb of the Duke. Similarly, the minor narrators try to avoid thinking about their mortality by prolonging Jacob's existence through their memory. Nonetheless, Mrs. Lidgett does not know anything of the Duke, his heroic actions or even his name. Mrs. Lidgett's glimpse of Duke's memorial reflects upon the future status of overall war memorials. People stop to look at the memorials or tombs. They respect the soldiers and thank them. However, the memorials do not create an opportunity to introduce the dead ones and their contribution to the society. They serve people to remind them of their own death.

It is not even attainable to summarize a person's life or truly know a person. Let alone, writing a dead person's life. It is not likely for any person to expose Jacob or to reveal the secrets of his soul which makes it impossible for the narrators to talk about him properly other than uttering their impressions. It can be argued that the narrator refuses to "sum up" the character, and rejects the phallocentric approach regarding the issue of life and death. Woolf does not confirm to traditional forms which were in the boundaries of mainstream writing. She leaves her own trace in her new version of a war novel. The novel cannot transform into a bildungsroman, and remains a mocking bildungsroman without any character transformation. Jacob's transition into an adult cannot be traced since his changes, ideas and motives are kept hidden. Periods of Jacob's life up until he joins the army can be seen in the novel, yet

the reader is kept in dark about his personal life. The narrator touches upon this notion and reveals the overall philosophy of the novel: “this was Jacob Flanders, aged nineteen. It is no use trying to sum people up” (Woolf, 2008, p. 37). It is possible to grasp biographic information about Jacob. The reader is allowed to access other people’s impressions of him. However, there is no depth in their remarks. The narrator repeats the exact statement for Jacob a few years later: “How far was Jacob Flanders at the age of twenty-six a stupid fellow? It is no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done” (Woolf, 2008, p. 214). The narrative proposes that people cannot be reduced to summaries. Their essence cannot be fully comprehended. Only traces can be tracked. Therefore, the narrator makes sure to convey that one person cannot know another person truly. There are only personal judgements depending on the beholder: “Virtually every character in the novel knows Jacob’s name, yet he remains largely mysterious to them. Nonetheless, naming is a way of creating meaning; naming another person represents an effort, however inadequate, to “know” or form connection” (Groover, 2012, p. 54). Groover suggests that even though another person cannot be “known” learning someone’s name is an implication of a struggle. It can be argued that the characters do more than just finding out his name. They spend a good deal of energy to decode him to reveal their opinions regarding Jacob. However, the narrative posits that even if the narrator and Woolf gave away other details, it would not be possible to know Jacob since people cannot perceive other people’s spirits or consciousness even in normal times. Therefore, Woolf creates an atmosphere in which Jacob is either absent or cannot be communicated to emphasize the destructive effect of war on communication.

Jacob's trauma prevents him from forming meaningful connection with other people. It is as if he does not speak the same language. As Jenny Edkins (2003) states, "Communicating trauma is very difficult, and many witnesses never either wish to recount the event, nor succeed in doing so. Bearing witness or giving testimony is problematic" (p. 41). He cannot convey his ideas or create constructive communication channels. He suffers alone with his knowledge as a proleptic character from the future. Nonetheless, his mother wants to connect with him. Therefore, letters become important narrative tools for Virginia Woolf, who unravels female writing as well as encouraging females to reveal their thoughts. The novel makes it a mission to reflect upon the possibilities for women. When she cannot use utterances to reach her son, Betty utilizes letters. The novel's opening solidifies the theme of women expressing themselves. *Jacob's Room* begins with Betty Flanders writing letters. Betty keeps forming letters as if trying to be heard with the help of her pen. Betty is mostly seen writing. She makes her important decisions through her letters. Her passion for letters may be resulting from her fear of being silenced or interrupted while speaking whereas people cannot interfere with her writing: only she can control her words. She leaves her "trace" and guarantees the possibility of being read one day. Jacob will be alerted when the letter arrives. He will see a physical object which will be the bearer of news from his mother. Other people might also find it, and read it one day. Writing assures that her words will be permanent, they will not vanish. Derrida (2001a) challenges Plato's ideas regarding writing and speech in *Dissemination* in relation to *Phaedrus*. In *Phaedrus*, writing is offered to the king as a present. If the king does not approve, writing has no value: "God the king does not know how to write, but that ignorance or incapacity only testifies to his sovereign independence. He has no need to write. He speaks, he says, he dictates,

and his word suffices" (Derrida, 2001a, p. 1840). The king is the authority; therefore, his words are the law. He does not need to write to . On the other hand, Mrs. Flanders, as a mother, needs to write to be heard. She has no remedy but to write to be taken seriously by the men around her. Her speech does not carry the same authority. The King—the father—underestimates writing: "The *pharmakon* is here presented to the father and is by him rejected, belittled, abandoned, disparaged. The father is always suspicious and watchful toward writing" (Derrida, 2001a, p. 1840). The father does not approve of writing whereas Betty as the mother embraces writing. She employs it to reach to other people, especially to her son. However, she is not totally free from her social boundaries. Betty sends letters to Jacob when he is away to stay in touch. She proceeds into her self-censorship; Betty's maternal instincts and her social manners clash in her letters. She wishes to warn Jacob and treat him as a small child by bombarding him with warnings, "But she said nothing of the kind" (Woolf, 2008, p. 122). Once again, Betty writes what is expected of her: small talk about this and that person who Jacob does not care about. Betty cannot directly interfere with Jacob's life. Instead, she asks him to write them more often. She tells him news to remind his life back home. She establishes her own indirect style to get Jacob interested. In a way, she tries to reverse Jacob's absence through her writing. Her maternal letters attempt to protect Jacob from his future, and from the war. Betty Flanders's letters stand for "the unpublished works of women, written by the fireside in pale profusion, dried by the flame, for the blotting-paper's worn to holes and the nib cleft and clotted" (Woolf, 2008, p. 123). Betty's highly restricted letters throw light on the male dominance in writing, as in many other areas. Woolf intentionally draws attention to the conditions of female writers in her own writing attempt. Betty Flanders has a passion for writing, yet she is expected to be satisfied

with what she can write. Betty's letters become a powerful symbol of her maternity. Derrida (2001a) takes logos as the son:

> One could say anachronously that the "speaking subject" is the father of his speech . . . Logos is a son, then, a son that would be destroyed in his very presence without the present attendance of his father. His father who answers. His father who speaks for him and answers for him. Without his father, he would be nothing but, in fact writing. (p. 1840)

If logos is the son, and the speaking subject is the father, the writing subject turns out to be the mother. In the absence of his father, both as speech and as his biological father, Jacob becomes an orphan. Only his biological mother and her writing stay to protect him. Betty does not endeavour to control Jacob by trying to establish authority through her writing. Instead, she writes to guide him. Her letter stands there to be read while Jacob is with Florinda behind closed doors: "But if the pale blue envelope lying by the biscuitbox had the feelings of a mother, the heart was torn by the little creak, the sudden stir…My son, my son—such would be her cry" (Woolf, 2008, p. 124). The object—letter—becomes one with the writer—the mother—and speaks out the words Betty could not openly utter in her letter to her son. Even with the words being censored or omitted on paper; the ink, the handwriting, the envelope carry Betty's emotions and scraps of her personality. Her words constitute a message for Jacob. Woolf (2008) reflects on letters and "how they come at breakfast, and at night, with their yellow stamps and their green stamps, immortalized by the postmark—for to see one's own envelope on another's table is to realize how soon deeds sever and become alien" (p. 125). Letters become the deliverer of news. Once a letter is sent, it stops being the writer's. It belongs to the receiver. The words inscribed on the paper are possessed by the reader. The letter is owned by Jacob the moment it is received by him. It stops being Betty's and becomes public. Her emotions lay before someone else's eyes. Hélène Cixous (2001) touches upon the

importance of writing for women to be heard as public speech has been dominated by men. She claims:

> It is by writing, from and toward women, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm women in a place that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is, in a place other than silence (p. 2044)

Writing is the only option for women to break away from silence and suppression. Betty seizes power by picking up her pen. She guarantees being noticed by Jacob through her letters. Nonetheless, once something is written on paper, it cannot be taken back. In this way, letters resemble all other narratives which come from the past to the present. Betty's letters, which serve to break away Jacob's silence, mimic how Virginia Woolf's novel breaks away from the dominance of men in the war writing. As Betty Flanders finds her own voice and attempts to construct her own narrative, Woolf carves her place as a war novelist by leaving the phallocentric forms used to narrate wars. She employs emotions over guns to portray her reality of the war.

2.4 Jacob's empty rooms

As the title suggests, Jacob's several rooms are also portrayed in the novel. It should be noted that rooms are quite important in the context of grief, mourning and melancholy since they embody the memories of the deceased person. Therefore, they need to be cleared out to prevent the extension of further grief and emotional pain. Jacob's rooms are the inspiration for Woolf's title. It can be suggested that these rooms enable intervention to Jacob's privacy as well as being significant settings for the novel. Jacob's rooms have both literal and metaphorical meanings within the context of the narrative. With Jacob gone, his room becomes empty. Thus, there is

space for newcomers. Similarly, with majority of young population joining the war, there were jobs to be occupied, rights to be gained. The empty space called for new people to fill in. Therefore, Jacob's empty shoes make more sense at the end. Someone else should adopt Jacob's hollow shoes and his status in the world. During the war females of all ages claimed the vacancies left from the soldiers. They became more active and dominant in the social life. There was more room in the society for them. There were new opportunities during the war. The misfortune and doom of men paved new paths for women. Following the war, the authority of men in the society declined. Women seized the chance to be more dynamic in social life and business life. They took over "male jobs" and even produced bullets that made fighting possible for men. Women felt more freedom as the war "increased the presence of unchaperoned middle-class and upper-class women in more and more public places" (Grayzel, 2002, p. 63). They became more present in social scenes. On literal level, we encounter several of Jacob's rooms he used at different periods of his life. Rooms are quite individual entities embellished with personal objects that reflect upon someone's character. Rooms are associated with freedom and personal space. Therefore, it might be quite essential to have a look at Jacob's rooms while trying to comprehend him. His rooms are marked with his presence even in his absence. This creates a parallel with the general structure of the novel since Jacob's presence imprints the whole novel even though he is absent.

First room the reader encounters is Jacob's college room which accommodates a round table with two chairs, some cards, a photograph of his mother, papers, pipes, books of all kind and his crummy shoes (Woolf, 2008, pp. 48-49). These objects give clues about Jacob's personality. The photograph which stands in his desk reminds him of his mother and their relationship. His papers and

books show his scholar side and his involvement with intellectual activities. The pipe can be regarded as a symbol of masculinity for Jacob. He uses his pipe as a mask to conceal his awkwardness. In a way, he seeks to become more ordinary through his pipe. Peeping into Jacob's empty room feels like going through a dead person's belongings. His stuff is laid out while Jacob is nowhere to be found. The last object which the narrator points out is Jacob's empty chair which accentuates Jacob's physical absence: "Listless is the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker armchair creaks, though no one sits there" (Woolf, 2008, p. 49). It is made clear that we glanced at Jacob's room in his absence. His privacy was disturbed. Even though the room is empty, it feels haunted with the swelling curtain and creaking chair. Through her looks at Jacob's empty rooms, the narrator makes subtle excursions to point out his death in the near future. Jacob's second room is casually presented later when Bonamy pays him a visit. The new room—being a different setting than his college room—implies Jacob's graduation. The room contains a "black wooden box where he kept his mother's letters, his old flannel trousers, and a note or two" (Woolf, 2008, p. 93). This box shows Jacob's ongoing contact with his mother. His mother's letters are being protected in a box. It hints Jacob's caring attitude towards his mother even though he offers a reserved stance in his relationships. He cares for his mother's letters, but he wants to keep them in a box out of his sight. He doesn't get rid of them, yet he doesn't need her maternal warnings to be out. Like his crummy shoes in the previous room, he has old trousers. His treatment of clothes shows his reluctance to dress up or to be presentable. His bedroom contains "three wicker chairs and a gate-legged table—came from Cambridge" (Woolf, 2008, p. 93). Jacob still uses the same

furniture. It also reflects upon his lack of interest in material objects. He focuses on their function.

The final room of Jacob is displayed after his death. Bonamy and Mrs. Flanders occupy the room—Jacob's sanctuary. Their effort to analyse Jacob's belongings mimic the behaviours of other characters presented in the novel. They try to make sense out of Jacob's possessions. Throughout the novel, everyone tried to look through Jacob's soul. They tried to examine the scraps of his existence. Finally, Betty and Bonamy—the most important people in Jacob's life—try to solve the puzzle. They have a chance to intrude his privacy: "'He left everything just as it was,' Bonamy marvelled. 'Nothing arranged. All his letters strewn about for anyone to read. What did he expect? Did he think he would come back?' he mused, standing in the middle of Jacob's room" (Woolf, 2008, p. 246). Bonamy makes his final remarks regarding Jacob. His comments reveal that Bonamy still does not know Jacob well. He cannot guess Jacob's reasoning. The final condition of his room illustrates Jacob as he was viewed by people. He was not bothered to tidy his room. His messy room reflects upon the chaos of the outer world. Jacob left his room as if he was going out for a short time. Unlike Bonamy's assumption, Jacob was likely to know that he had a one way ticket. He knew that he would not be back. The whole novel prepares the reader for Jacob's final departure. Therefore, it can be deduced that he did not feel the necessity of arranging his room. The letters are laid around to be read by others. The letters become Jacob's last message for people. The way they are settled enables and encourages people to access them. This becomes the last chance for people to reach to Jacob's inner world. Jacob's presence marks the empty room once again. Paradoxically, his existence is felt in the room after his death. Woolf repeats the same observation made about the previous room scene: "Listless is

the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker armchair creaks, though no one sits there" (Woolf, 2008, p. 247). The narrator takes the room to be empty without its resident. She ignores the existence of Bonamy and Mrs. Flanders. Even the description of an empty room carries along a sense of agony. The setting implies a ghost being present in the room: the curtain moves by itself and the chair wickers. Woolf creates such an atmosphere that implies a haunting presence: "For some, the haunting is a feeling in the room, a presence that seems like a loved one hovering, a beloved soul lingering" (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2007, p. 56). Even though there are only Mrs. Flanders and Bonamy in the room, Jacob's lasting effect is felt most. The objects are loaded with Jacob's presence. People need to accept his departure to escape this haunting which is embedded in their melancholy. The enduring existence of Jacob shows their reluctance to bid farewell: "As a symptom of repressed knowledge, the ghost calls into question possibilities of a future based on avoidance of the past" (Weinstock, 2013, p. 64). They need to avoid remembering Jacob to seize their own future. Only then they can move on. Woolf ends the novel with a doomed scream: "Bonamy crossed to the window . . . A harsh and unhappy voice cried something unintelligible. And then suddenly all the leaves seemed to raise themselves" (Woolf, 2008, p. 247). When the gaze turns into outer world, the anguish of the room is replaced by the remorse outside. The mood reveals a collective suffering. There comes an unidentified voice crying which encourages Bonamy to utter his grief:

> 'Jacob! Jacob! Cried Bonamy, standing by the window. The leaves sank down again.
> 'Such confusion everywhere!' exclaimed Betty Flanders, bursting open the bedroom door.
> Bonamy turned away from the window.
> 'What am I to do with these, Mr Bonamy?'
> She held out a pair of Jacob's old shoes. (Woolf, 2008, p. 247)

The end of the novel recreates the beginning with Bonamy's cry. Bonamy's call imitates Archer's search for Jacob. This time Jacob is physically absent. He is not seen carrying a skull. Instead, Jacob's death is materialized by his empty room. His death is not directly given in the novel. It is only implied. Nobody articulates his death, the reader is not directly informed. His old pair of empty shoes emphasise his absence. Neither the room nor the shoes have an owner. His absence leaves confused people behind. Neither Bonamy nor Betty Flanders can decide what to do with Jacob's belongings. In order to get over his death and exterminate the melancholy, they need to begin by getting rid of his belongings. Giving away Jacob's shoes may help them to get rid of their melancholy and transition them to the period mourning: "The emotions of going through someone's things will be enormous, possibly overwhelming. With the smell or the touch of their fabric, clothes remind us of the one we love and the moments we spent together and their likes and dislikes" (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2007, p. 133). They do not know how to deal with his departure. It will be hard for them to say goodbye to Jacob and go through his clothes and personal items since everything will remind him. On the other hand, if they keep his room, it will retain being a source of pain. Once they complete this process, things will be easier. Unless they go through with this significant step, their pain and melancholy will sustain. Materials help people to cling o memories: "Unexpectedly finding an old garment at the back of a wardrobe yields an upsetting reminder that the person who once wore it has gone forever" (Hallam & Hockey, 2001, p. 105). They need to give away his shoes and other belongings to get over his loss and their sorrow. It will enable them to accept his death. Due to the propleptic structure of the novel, the sorrow was already there from the beginning. Jacob's eventual death reinforces the sense of loss. The end of the novel creates a cycle that goes back to the

beginning. This novel is not a linear narration with a certain beginning and an end. The novel ends where it begins and begins where it ends. What remain unchanged are the sorrow, agony and confusion.

CHAPTER 3

POSSIBILITIES OF RETURN IN REBECCA WEST'S *THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER*

Rebecca West's debut novel *The Return of the Soldier (*1918) follows the homecoming of a shell-shocked soldier, Chris Baldry, from the Great War. Chris is marked with a 15-year memory loss due to his traumatic experiences. Rebecca West does not depict any war scenes in the novel; instead, she employs Chris to present the psychological condition of discharged soldiers who were wounded and unable to fit in the domestic world. Moreover, as Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, the novel is narrated by a female narrator, Chris's cousin Jenny, in first person narration. The novel explores the domestic sphere during the war. When Chris returns from the war, he has no recount of his adulthood; his memory ends where his responsibilities begin. This chapter focuses on what forgetting and remembering means for Chris in the context of the Great War. This section analyses Chris's amnesia in relation to his duties along with his journey for the discovery of a potential cure. I argue that his accomplished adult identity and his war memories were meant to be wiped out for his survival; they were replaced with the remains of happier days exempt from responsibilities. As a result, he cannot remember his adult life and returns not to his home but to his youth. Remembering his youth opposes the lifestyle designed for him by the traditions. I will trace the similarities between shell-shock and hysteria in the light of Elaine Showalter's work (1997) to review Chris's condition and survey the feminine associations of shell-shock. I also claim that Rebecca West appoints a female narrator to emphasise the increasing role of women in the community during the war. The narrative employs a female narrator and silences its male character

whose adult self is inaccessible in the narrative. He can only be brought back to light by women with Jenny narrating his story and Margaret solving his condition. I will examine Chris's traumatic amnesia in the light of Richard McNally's theory (2003). McNally's claims diagnose Chris's case is classic psychogenic amnesia which results in a retrograde episodic memory loss. I relate Chris's amnesia to the emasculating effects of the Great War which surfaced Chris's dissatisfaction with his lifestyle. The Great War challenged the boundaries of gender and the notions of masculinity. Instead of strengthening the concept of masculinity with the labels of glory and bravery, it emerged emasculating features in men. In *The Return of the Soldier,* Chris's amnesia changes his personality since it is not possible for him to remember his previous self; his past memory supplies him a safe space by bringing back the carefree days of youth. Chris was a strong, masculine figure. He was the patriarch of his family. He had a house with land. He was married to a beautiful woman and had a baby boy who passed away. I claim that the inexplicable horrors of the battlefield reminded Chris of his deceased son, Oliver, which triggered masculine crisis in him during a battle causing his traumatic amnesia. I propose that losing his son was the first stroke in his masculine identity. Therefore, it arose during the battle when he felt fragile

3.1 Distant tales of masculinity

Chris's marriage to Kitty and the birth of his son were milestones in his life. These transitional thresholds took up a big space in Chris Baldry's life by affecting his personality. They solidified his place in the society as a patriarch. Therefore, when he lost his son, his life was shattered. This effect was revived through the Great War,

which obscured the lines between life and death. At the beginning of the Great War enlisting was on a voluntary basis; there were no regulations to force men into joining the army. Chris Baldry joins the army voluntarily as it is expected from him as a man, not because he has to enlist as a citizen. In some cases, not joining the army resulted in humiliation for men; females were used as a means of propaganda to recruit men by humiliating them in public which was an emasculating experience for most men who did not register. Women distributed "white feathers—a symbol of cowardice—to men out of uniform, women tried to shame them into joining up" (Grayzel, 2002, p. 20). This project led most men to join the army to avoid any potential degrading circumstances. In *The Return of the Soldier* it is implied that Chris chose to attend the war without any obligations since it was only after 1916 when enlisting was made compulsory, and Chris returns from the war in 1916. Chris's early enlistment accentuates his serious take on masculine duty: "Manliness, understood as sexual or social reproductive capacity, but also as the capacity to fight and to exercise violence (especially in acts of revenge), is first and foremost a duty" (Bourdieu, 2007, pp. 50-51). Chris regards joining war to be his duty as a capable man. Exercising violence on a legal ground to protect one's country screams duty for many men, and Chris can be regarded as one of them. He feels the urge to put himself out there. Nonetheless, the conditions of the Great War, which utilised the facilities of modern warfare, clashed with the long known concept of warfare which was based on personal combat.

Chris's condition echoes the situation of numerous soldiers who attended the war to defend their country. However, ideal masculinity concepts were challenged during the war. Especially, lack of personal combat, which used to prove one's masculinity, contradicted the tales of manhood and bravery during the Great War.

Instead, it was replaced with mass weapons created mostly by women in factories. Men were recruited by women, to protect women and had to use weapons produced by women, the combination of which created a shadow over the glory of great men protecting their country during combat. Modris Eksteins (1990) points out this feature of modern warfare:

> It is often said in the literature of war that men no longer made war; war was made on men. Given the overpowering technology of warfare—the machine guns, the artillery, and the gas—the individual soldier was overwhelmed by a sense of vulnerability and the helplessness. (p. 184)

Instead of feeling capable and glorious, men felt helpless and lacking while fighting. Moreover, they felt incapable upon encountering the reality of death. Their notions of manhood and bravery were challenged by the most masculine duty. Men did not fight the enemy; they tried to fight a superior war technology: "The injuries were not even usually caused by another identifiable individual, but by long-distant shells. Many servicemen never saw 'the enemy'" (Burke, 1996, p. 42). They could no longer locate the enemy and beat them in physical combat. Soldiers were the victims of shells which was not the case for previous wars where men fought men in a traditional sense. The absence of personal combat and the overwhelming use of technology emerged psychological problems which were getting more prevalent. Physical wounds were not the only concern. Psychological problems made men more vulnerable than physical deficiencies which were regarded to be badges of bravery. On the contrary, psychological cases were thought to be the symbol of weakness.

Due to his experience of the war, Chris returns home with shell-shock which initiated amnesia. Chris has no physical wounds to embody his courage. Instead, he has no memory of ever fighting. Richard McNally's explanations (2003) identify Chris's case as classic psychogenic amnesia: "Classic psychogenic amnesia is

characterized by sudden onset in response to stress, inability to remember precipitating events, loss of personal identity, and extensive retrograde amnesia" (p. 187). Chris's amnesia is a result of shell-shock. Being exposed to mass deaths and injuries in the front plays a key role in his condition. It is not explained in the novel whether Chris was involved in fighting prior to his injury or he just witnessed fighting and horror around him. Notwithstanding, the battle marks him with shell-shock, which was "a phenomenon of the First World War. For the first time, the technology of war included high velocity, explosive shells employed in frightening and seemingly endless bombardments. As instruments of terror and death, these shells were hells apart from cannonballs" (Burke, 1996, p. 109). It was believed that pieces of shells caused psychological symptoms in soldiers. However, later it was discovered that shell-shock did not necessarily emerge as result of actual wounds and shell explosions; witnessing constant fighting and bombardments were enough for soldiers to get traumatised. The cause of Chris's case is not also specified in the novel. Chris's cousin tells about his memory loss in a letter to inform Kitty: "Chris is suffering from a memory loss of extending over a period of fifteen years" (West, 1987, p. 46). He cannot give more details as nobody in the narrative knows what happened. Due to his condition, Chris thinks that he is still in 1906. The doctors cannot do anything to alter his condition and suggests sending Chris back to his family.

Losing his son at an early age influenced Chris's psychological health and scarred his exemplary patriarchal life. I claim that mass deaths around him trigger Chris's memory in the battlefield and remind him of his son's death, the scar of his adult life, causing his amnesia. Pierre Bourdieu (2007) reveals the associations of manliness with virility and having a male offspring:

> Manliness, virility, in its ethical aspect, i.e. as the essence of the *vir*, *virtus*, the point of honour (nif), the principle of the conservation and increase of honour, remains indissociable, tacitly at least, from physical virility, in particular through the attestations of sexual potency—deflowering—of the bride, abundant male offspring, etc.—which are expected of a 'real' man. (p. 12)

Having a son to ensure continuity of family tree is highly associated with "manliness" and it enhances one's honour and status in the society. On the other hand, after losing his only heir, Chris feels vulnerable. In a way, the death of Oliver attacks his manliness. Therefore, it can be inferred that he joins the army voluntarily to build up his masculine identity and to compensate the loss of his son and status. Contrary to his expectations, the war reminds him of Oliver's death once again. Therefore, he ends up with amnesia, which erases his adult life along with the horrors of front line. As Van der Kolk and Van der Hart (1995) write, "Many trauma survivors report that they automatically are removed from the scene; they look at it from a distance or disappear altogether, leaving other parts of their personality to suffer and store the overwhelming experience" (p. 168). The chaotic condition of battlefields was convenient for such removal and dislocation. Therefore, Chris remembers his son's death upon witnessing the death of others. His mind prevents itself from suffering by shutting it down through amnesia. He channels his pain and anxiety which supresses all his problems. He takes shelter in the past.

Shell-shock makes Chris return to his youth, a period without his obligations, which clashed with the necessities of war time. The chaos of the war carries him into the safe space of happier times. Chris's response—forgetting his adulthood—highlights war's emasculating effect on men making them question their roles and duties. This situation creates a masculine crisis—a decline in male ideals—and causes Chris to forget his adulthood. Chris, who is not in a situation which would allow him to escape the misery of the army, could only think about the spring of his

life exempt from suffering the loss of his child and the burden of fighting. He takes shelter in a moment filled with love and joy: “But if I do not see Margaret Allington I shall die.”” (West, 1987, p. 64). He cannot even face his wife whereas he feels a constant urge to see his former lover. She becomes the focal point of his life within the chaos of war. Chris’s shell-shock results in amnesia. However, there were multiple other symptoms observed in other soldiers. Some indications of shell-shock were quite similar to those of hysteria, which had previously been regarded as a feminine condition for centuries. Elaine Showalter (1997) writes the associations of hysteria, “Being hysterical means being overemotional, irresponsible, and feminine. During an argument, “hysterical” is what you contemptuously call your opponent when you’re keeping your cool and he’s losing his” (p. 8). Being hysterical implied the victory of emotions over logic and emotion had long been associated with women. The similarities of shell-shock with hysteria and its undertones imply not being “manly” enough and not being fit enough to do the job. Thus, in a way a masculine space created feminine connotations in soldiers leading to a state of emasculation. This crisis came out in numerous soldiers during the war, so it has been a hot topic in war literature. Virginia Woolf showed this crisis by effacing her male protagonist in his own story and letting women narrate. Rebecca West also authorises Jenny to control Chris’s narrative which parallels Chris’s condition. West employs Chris to represent this condition through his failed ideals and loss of memory which decreases his control over his estate and his family.

Prior to the twentieth century, there were also men who suffered from hysteria. However, doctors shadowed male patients of hysteria in their works whereas the cases of women were highlighted in the nineteenth century. When male cases were surfaced in rare occasions, these patients were carefully labelled:

"Predictably, nineteenth-century doctors forced to acknowledge strong emotion and other hysterical traits in men often concluded that their patients were unmanly, effeminate, or homosexual" (Showalter, 1997, p. 64). Showalter claims that men with hysteria were considered to be effeminate. It was reflected as a disgrace on their masculinity. On the other hand, with the Great War came along hysterical symptoms in soldiers who were supposed to be the opposite of feminine. They were expected to be masculine and brave:

> World War I brought with it a great epidemic. In every European country, soldiers and officers were returning from the trenches with limps, loss of voice, paralyzed limbs, headaches, amnesia, incapacitating insomnia, and emotional distress. When an English military doctor, Charles S. Myers, first encountered these symptoms in 1914 among British soldiers in France, he immediately saw their relation to hysteria. But Myers did not want to describe British soldiers as hysterical, and so he suggested that the symptoms might be caused by physical or chemical effects of proximity to an exploding shell. He christened the disorder "shell-shock," a name that stuck, although doctors soon realized that many victims had never been under fire. By the end of the war, 80.000 men with shell shock and war neurosis had sought medical health. (Showalter, 1997, p. 72)

Charles Myers, knowing the associations of hysteria and its image in people's minds, avoided diagnosing serving soldiers with hysteria and coined the term "shell-shock", which was commonly used afterwards. The number of shell-shocked soldiers was increasing. Myers refrained from drawing attention to their similarities with hysterical patients. Another significant problem with the situation was that the majority of the soldiers who were diagnosed with shell-shock were the members of upper-class whereas in the previous century those diagnosed with hysteria were mostly working-class men. As Joanna Burke (1996) writes, "A more important explanation for the willingness of military authorities to adopt pathological or psychological explanations for shell-shock was political. Many of the shell-shocked men were of a high social class" (p. 112). They couldn't risk calling them hysterical and handled the condition more delicately. They needed a safety belt as "shell-

shock". Despite of the efforts of the political authorities, men suffering from shell-shock couldn't escape from being associated with femininity and weakness. People could not take it seriously as an illness, "men exhibiting the physical symptoms of 'shell-shock' were regarded as malingerers and were also liable to be shot for cowardice" (Burke 94). Even then, many soldiers with shell-shock were thought to be malingerers faking their condition to avoid fighting. People did not want to acknowledge shell-shock's seriousness. Moreover, soldiers with physical wounds got all the sympathy from fellow soldiers and non-combatant females. West draws attention to this perception and the common approach in her novel when Margaret comes to inform Kitty and Jenny regarding Chris's amnesia. When she tries to explain Kitty asks: '"Wounded you mean?"' (West, 1987, p. 27). Kitty cannot imagine any kind of problems other than Chris being "wounded". A physical scar is the only kind of trouble she can foresee. Margaret, unable to phrase what's wrong with Chris, chooses the word "hurt" (West, 1987, p. 27). Wounds were easier for people to comprehend rather than traumatic problems. Kitty's reaction stands for many people's difficulty in understanding trauma and shell-shock. Margaret functions as an ambassador as she tries to explain his situation further, yet she only complicates things: "He's lost his memory, and thinks—thinks he still knows me" (West, 1987, p. 35). Jenny and Kitty has no knowledge of her existence when she claims that Chris assumes himself to be Margaret's lover and knows nothing of his marriage to Kitty. Margaret's statements shock Kitty and Jenny. Especially, Kitty cannot accept Margaret's assertions since she cannot understand Chris's condition. It would be easier for her if Chris was simply physically wounded, "Either it means that he's mad, our Chris, our splendid sane Chris, all broken and queer, not knowing us…" (West, 1987, p. 38). An injury can be seen; therefore, it makes the patient

seem more sympathetic whereas trauma stands as an obscurity. If Chris was injured or shot, Kitty would nurture him and take care of his scars and eventually heal him. Nonetheless, his amnesia creates an invisible wall between them and acts as a barrier that prevents her from getting closer to Chris.

3.2 When silence speaks louder

While a masculine duty, being a soldier and taking part in active combat, created masculine crisis and led to "feminine" behaviours in men, in the domestic sphere women were changing their lifestyles and taking more active roles in social circles. Moreover, the war lasted longer than expected and the conditions of wartime created a big opportunity for women to find a place in the business world. Some took up new jobs in the absence of men. Slight changes in women's condition had begun with The New Woman movement in the late nineteenth century. However, that movement was mostly associated with a small group of women who were members of middle class families. The absence of men during the war created bigger opportunities for more women. Women even worked in the factories and claimed jobs previously done by men: "Women entered not only wartime factories, but also banks and places of government as clerks, typists and secretaries" (Grayzel, 2002, p. 27). Men did not find the world as they had left: their jobs were taken away by women. Women succeeded in supporting themselves in their absence. They began working in factories and offices. Moreover, post-war regulations allowed women to be Members of Parliament and lawyers. Their working options were no longer limited with working class occupations. Eventually, the war blurred the lines between traditional

gender roles. Women began wearing pants, and started smoking in public areas. On the other hand, men also had to assume "feminine" chores in the absence of women:

> The absence of women had an additional component: gender roles were rendered more fluid in wartime as men were required to carry out many tasks that had formerly been the preserve of the opposite sex…Men took over the roles of mother, sister, friend and lover. (Burke, 1996, p. 133)

They were soldiers who were assigned to defend their country using weapons, yet they had to cook and clean. Furthermore, they had to keep each other company. They gave emotional support and cared for one another which were expected from women in times of peace. This reversal of roles also damaged the fabrics of gender creating a sense of helplessness in men. Their experience in the trenches contradicted their expectations. Moreover, what they witnessed upon returning added more to their insecurity. In a way, the Great War released the boundaries in an unimaginable way: it decreased men's trust in the gender system as well as increasing the power of women.

Rebecca West does not depict the conditions of working women in the novel. The reader does not witness Kitty and Jenny going out of the Baldry Court to work: "like most Englishwomen of my time I was wishing for the return of a soldier" (West, 1987, p. 13). However, they are in charge of the estate which was previously handled by men. They make the decisions in the absence of Chris and command the workers. West shows the rising role of women through their management of the Baldry Court. Moreover, she assigns Jenny to narrate her war novel. Similarly, *Jacob's Room* also depicts women waiting, and gives them a chance to take control of their own narrative. Thus, both novels reflect how the Great War created some irreversible changes in gender roles. In a way, it challenged long-accepted assignments forming gender definitions. War blurred the lines by urging both parties

to question their roles and traditional connotations that came along with their genders. The world was no longer the same and pre-war rules no longer applied.

There are no combat scenes in the novel. The whole story takes place in the domestic setting. Rebecca West gives the horrors of the war without depicting battlefield scenes in detail. She picks a female narrator to tell the story of war through her own perspective, away from battlefields which goes hand in hand with the increasing role of women in the society. West employs silence, amnesia and trauma to speak out. Chris's amnesia brings along war to the Baldry Court. The reader is exposed to the story of only one soldier; however, even that single soldier's situation touches the lives of multiple people. West is able to give the broader effect of the catastrophe by presenting a particular example. West mutes her male protagonist who was supposed to be in the centre of the narrative and lets Jenny speak out and tell her reality of the war. Jenny is familiar with the domestic side of the war; therefore, she expresses what she knows best. She chronicles the pain of expecting and the bitter sides of reality.

There are no details regarding Chris's wound or his regiment as Jenny omits them. Many critics assume that Chris was hurt during the battle of the Somme:

> Since he was wounded in the summer of 1916 and recuperated in a hospital in Boulogne, West implies that Chris was wounded in the Battle of the Somme. Many historians contend that the carnage and horrors of the Battle of the Somme transformed British soldiers' view of the war. (Cowan, 1998, p. 290)

West does not specify where Chris fought or how he got his wound. She leaves clues for the imagination of the reader which coincides with the overall structure of her novel. She tells the story of the war without actually telling the war. She cures Chris's condition without actually curing him. She specifies Chris's regiment without actually naming it. It was not easy for participants to convey the terror of the war, let

alone a writer who did not witness it at first hand. West's take on Chris's amnesia reinforces the inexplicable atmosphere of the war even in a domestic setting. As Pinkerton (2009) writes, "Amnesia is Chris's way of performing the untellable" (p. 4). The impact of Chris's amnesia is felt through the narration. It creates a strong presence by making people wonder about his back story. Even if he told his experience in detail, it would not have been as powerful as his silence. It was not possible to narrate the atmosphere of the war and convey how it felt to be there:

> Traditional language and vocabulary were grossly inadequate, it seemed, to describe the trench experience. Words like courage, let alone glory and heroism, with their classical and romantic connotations, simply had no place in any accounts of what made soldiers stay and function in the trenches. Even the basic descriptive nouns, like attack, counterattack, sortie, wound, and shelling, had lost all power to capture reality. (Eksteins, 1990, p. 218)

Words prove worthless to depict the ambiance of battlefields especially during the Great War. Old tales of war were proven wrong. Many people were getting disillusioned. They did not discover glory in fighting. They faced hard conditions and the rotten reality of death. Even the military jargon was far from conveying the extremity of the conditions. Chris's amnesia underlines the failure of words. If he explained what he had suffered, it would be forgotten. However, his amnesia arouses the imagination. Even Jenny acknowledges the power of his amnesia: "His very loss of memory was a triumph over the limitations of language which prevent mass of men from making explicit statements about their spiritual relationships" (West, 1987, p. 133). In a way, she recognises how his amnesia reinforces the limitations of language. It does not leave any space for superficial remarks which do not reflect the truth. She regards it as a triumph over language and accepts the authority of silence. She implies that most men cannot describe the depth of their emotions because of the language. Eventually, it can be inferred that Chris's forgetting becomes a remembrance not leaving any possibility for anyone to disregard the horror and terror

of the war and the trauma that comes along with it. Cathy Caruth (2013) claims that "The language of trauma is the language of this absolute erasure, not imaginable in the past or present but, always, as something missed, and about to return, a possibility, always, of a trauma in the future" (p. 87). As Caruth writes, trauma evokes the horror by creating an outlet for its arrival at any moment. It can be deduced that West creates Chris to become the embodiment of trauma by erasing his adulthood memory. Chris cannot grasp his situation even though his wife, his cousin and his former girlfriend are exposed to the constant reminder of war through his memory loss. As Caruth suggests, Chris's amnesia wipes away his knowledge of war. However, it brings about a presence which always reminds of war, trauma and loss. His amnesia keeps haunting the residents of the Baldry Court.

Chris's amnesia also serves to bring attention to the question of communication problems which were quite common between soldiers and non-combatants. *Jacob's Room* also highlights this problem through the silence of Jacob. He cannot construct meaningful communication which leads to his total silence. Soldiers could not express themselves upon returning since they could not find any common grounds to discuss. Many soldiers experienced the communication problem:

> A common feeling among soldiers was that their experience at the front had created an insurmountable barrier between them and civilians. Communication with home was no longer possible. People simply could not understand what the soldiers had been through, and the soldiers themselves could not articulate their experience appropriately. (Eksteins, 1990, p. 228)

Chris's amnesia leads everyone to assume the worst. Considering the condition of the discharged soldier, it can be argued that even if Chris remembered his life in the trenches, he would not able to express it to Jenny, Kitty or Margaret. Therefore, the narration ends when his memory is recovered. His conscious self would not be any different than his amnesiac self. The communication channel would not be

established. Some people view this failure of communication as disregarding the experiences of survivors; on the contrary, it acknowledges the difficulty of their experience and offers a safe space:

> The use of the term 'unspeakable' in relation to trauma is not only an excuse to avoid the need to listen to what is being said. It also reflects the view of survivors that what they have been through cannot be communicated. Communication takes place in language and language itself is social and political, not individual. (Edkins, 2003, p. 7)

"Unspeakable" is not used to ignore trauma but to highlight the impossibility of capturing its reality trough words which would not suffice. Survivors may not articulate correct words to explain themselves as such words which would be the exact representative of the events may not exist in language which is a political entity. They may not find the strength to speak of what they have been through for some time. However, their taciturn attitude doesn't undervalue their experience. Therefore, Chris's being amnesiac accentuates the significance of his experience.

3.3 Youth: Duty-free zone

What Chris remembers is not arbitrary. He forgets even general things concerning his adult life whereas his memory of 15 years ago is quite vivid. As mentioned previously, Chris forgets about his wife, the death of his parents and finally his deceased son. He begins to exist as a teen. Richard McNally (2003) emphasises memory's significance for personal identity:

> Memory means several things. Most generally, it means our capacity for acquiring, retaining, and using information. It can also refer to the neurocognitive mechanisms mediating these processes, to the content of the information itself, or to the subjective experience of reliving our past, which is essential to our sense of personal identity. (p. 28)

McNally accentuates memory's role for a sense of personal distinctiveness, thus, forgetting a certain period leads to disruption in one's identity by creating a void. Having lost his memory, Chris can no longer connect with his self as the landlord of the Baldry Court. Therefore, he is deprived of certain elements of his essence. He can acquire new information, yet he cannot access necessary information to restore his relationship with Kitty and save their marriage. His memory loss shapes his identity once again making him a young reckless person. For Chris, forgotten period is confined to his adulthood. He cannot even declare his home address in the hospital and lets Margaret know about his situation first, only to inform his household about it. His not revealing the home address accentuates how he does not feel connected to his roots. His wife's first reaction becomes denial since she cannot imagine Chris forgetting to inform her: "It could not possibly be true. The War Office would have wired to us immediately if Chris had been wounded" (West, 1987, p. 27). However, his interest is limited to his first love who would not be a proper match for him in the first place. His trauma erases his responsibilities and takes him back to a time when he had possibilities. As Rebecah Pulsifer (2013) writes, "The novel plays on the distinction between normal memory and traumatic memory when Chris recollects Monkey Island, the site of his earlier romance with Margaret. This blissful memory is untouched by trauma" (p. 50). As Pulsifer points out Chris's memory with Margaret does not contain any components of trauma. Moreover, his memory of Margaret is also untouched by responsibilities. His trauma brings out uncertainties and doubts regarding his masculine identity to surface. Therefore, he forgets his wife, who represents a dutiful marriage but remembers his youth love vividly. Jenny Edkins (2003) claims:

> Events of the sort we call traumatic are overwhelming but they are also a revelation. They strip away the diverse commonly accepted meanings by

> which we lead our lives in our various communities. They reveal the contingency of the social order and in some cases how it conceals its own impossibility … Those who survive often feel compelled to bear witness to these discoveries. (p. 5)

As Edkins writes, traumatic incidents expose the disappointments one is subjected by the society. Trauma makes them irrelevant. Especially, military related trauma cases are more likely to uncover the problematic structures of a society which make citizens behave in a certain way. Similarly, Chris' trauma surfaces his discontent with his previous life style. He silently refuses to confirm to social and traditional definitions of masculinity through his amnesia. The threads of dissatisfaction begin with his responsibilities. His frustration reaches its peak during the war and causes his amnesia. The war should have been a glorifying experience for Chris as a masculine space. Instead, it is tainted by failed ideals, death and trauma. Chris comes to recognise this through his condition. Therefore, the period he forgets is quite essential in analysing Chris's case; his memory ceases where his obligations begin. He forgets not 5 years or 20 years, but exactly 15 years. He remembers his relationship with Margaret, but cannot remember their separation:

> when the bursting shell provides his unconscious with the opportunity to reconfigure the memories that form the fabric of his life, he rejects the profitable, normal years in which his life looks like a case history of an average, wealthy Englishman's life. Instead, he turns to his earlier years, when his love defied class and status boundaries and he lived in hope (Covington, 2014, p. 65)

Covington also pays attention to the span of this confined period. Chris does not end up in a time when he can maintain his life style and his marriage. On the contrary, his unconsciousness takes him back to a time which would enable him to decide for himself, a time with endless possibilities. Covington refers to "average" time of an adult man as a "profitable" period since Chris would be in charge. On the contrary, this "profitable" time stands for everything he refrains from. The war makes Chris

question his identity and shuts down the paths leading to that "profitable time" which requires personal sacrifices.

Ultimately, Chris's amnesia creates a void in his life: he is stripped from all his duties and his marriage which defined his masculine self. Amnesia supplies a temporary escape for him as the forgotten period is a specific era without Chris's duties as a patriarch. Chris's cousin who wrote to inform Kitty and Jenny about his condition remarks that Chris interrogated his father's well-being upon seeing him: "'Is Father alright?' I prayed for guidance and answered, 'Your father passed away twelve years ago.'" (West, 1987, p. 45). It can be noted that Chris wishes his father's well-being so that he can be free of all accountabilities. The discovery of his father's death puts him in charge once again. His father's departure reminds him of his liabilities. Chris's tasks as the patriarch of Baldry Court began soon after his break up with Margaret followed by his father's passing away. Chris had to assume the role of the head of the family after his father to orchestrate his business and to supply for his relatives. These responsibilities stood in the way of his dreams to conquer the world in his authentic way as Jenny explains:

> First of all, at his father's death, he had been obliged to take over a business that was weighted by the needs of a mob of female relatives who were all useless either in the old way with antimacassars or in the new way with golf clubs. (West, 1987, pp. 20-21)

Even Jenny describes herself and Kitty as "useless" since they were dependent on Chris. She puts emphasis on how Chris was a man of duty who would not leave them unattended. He did not run away from his responsibilities, but he settled for his new lifestyle. He had to take over the business to afford their lifestyle. Jenny explains Chris's family life as a child: '"His father was old when he was born, and always was a little jealous of him. His mother was not his sort. She wanted a stupid son, who

would have been satisfied with shooting.”’ (West, 1987, p. 167). It can be concluded from Jenny’s remarks that Chris was the ultimate hope for his family which affected his upbringing. He was given a mission in his childhood: he was raised to be in charge. His childhood was designed in a way to prepare him for his future. His father was jealous of him since he was aware that Chris would replace him one day. Moreover, his mother wanted him with the attributes of a masculine boy whose sole ambition would be “shooting”. Nonetheless, Chris’s short-term relationship with a lower-class girl contradicts the role carved for him. In a way, he earns his birth rights when he leaves Margaret, who would not fit his lifestyle.

Considering Chris’s life standards prior to the war, it can be deduced that Chris followed the required steps. He took a graceful, feminine wife of his class to accompany him in his duties and had a son:

> Then Kitty had come along and picked up his conception of normal expenditure and carelessly stretched it as a woman stretches a new glove on her hand. Then there had been the difficult task of learning to live after the death of his little son. (West, 1987, p. 21)

He marries to ensure a domestic life and has a child to maintain his legacy as his father did before him. Jenny compares Kitty’s effect to stretching new gloves. Her comparison implies her dissatisfaction with the changes Kitty imposed on Chris. It can be concluded that marrying Kitty made Chris more responsible. His marriage, especially after his son’s death, proves Chris’s dutiful personality. He puts on a mask and continues his loveless marriage without hurting his wife or neglecting her. Nonetheless, he cannot remember any of it following his trauma: ‘“Jenny, is this true?” . . . “That Kitty is my wife. That I am old. That——”’ (West, 1987, p. 69). The premature death of his son becomes the first wound in his masculine quest. Ultimately, the war creates the final touch. His memory ceases right before a period

followed by obligations to come. Having a male heir marked his success as a patriarch. On the contrary, losing his only heir fractured his fragile life. War eventually accentuates the delicacy of his crystal life. Chris's case resembles Pierre Janet's patient Irene's case. Irene's sick mother dies, yet she cannot remember her death and pretends as if her mother is still alive. She "had absolutely no memory of the death of her mother and did not want to believe that her mother had died" (Van der Kolk & Van der Hart, 1995, p. 161). Similarly, Chris—who deeply cared about his son—forgets his son's death and existence as result of trauma. Unlike Irene, he can't remember Oliver ever existed. His brain blocks details regarding Oliver instead of grieving his loss. Having a son completed Chris as a grown man, making him more attached to his life and marriage. On the other hand, his son's death created a reverse effect making Chris move away from his dutiful marriage and made him a distant man. Following Oliver's death Kitty and Jenny were rendered to angels to reassure his safety. Pulsifer (2013) claims that Jenny's representation of Kitty turns her into a selfish woman, an object: "While critics accept that Jenny's narrative ambiguities affect readings of Chris and Margaret, they seem to take her representations of Kitty at face value" (p. 41). On the contrary, I propose that Kitty's distant representation reflects her as Chris perceives her upon his return. Chris neglects her on his arrival because she is a reminder of his duties. Kitty is also cold towards Chris: "Kitty's deterioration after Chris's return signals that the stress of his arrival has brought the memory of Oliver's death closer to the surface of her consciousness" (Pulsifer, 2013, p. 48). They remind each other of their deceased son which damages their personal relationship and causes them to keep a distance. Therefore, Chris is more reserved when it comes to Kitty who is the trigger of his trauma along with his son. Oliver was their bondage, the arch of their marriage. They

tried to maintain what was left of their marriage, yet the war shattered their pretending. They came to a point where they could no longer underestimate their grief.

After the arrival of Kitty and Oliver, Chris's role as the patriarch of his family is solidified. He has to undertake the burdens of the estate not only for himself but also for the well-being of other people. The Baldry Court substantiates his status in the community. At first glance, Margaret pays attention to the magnificence of the Baldry Court, and she relates it to Chris's endeavour rather than simply admiring its beauty: '"It's a big place. How poor Chris must have worked to keep it up."' (West, 1987, p. 115). She notices the connection between Chris's adult life and his property. As a member of a lower class family who had to calculate her expenses and keep her lifestyle under control, Margaret acknowledges financial dimension of the Baldry Court. On the other hand, Jenny and Kitty, who were born into such a life style, could not comprehend the challenge of it. Jenny realizes that "No one had ever before pitied Chris for the magnificence of Baldry Court. It had been our pretence that by wearing costly clothes and organizing a costly life we had been the servants of our desire" (West, 1987, p. 116). The greatness of the house materialises the magnitude of Chris's responsibilities. The house stands for what he had to give up and what he had to take over. It becomes the burden on his shoulders. Kitty and Margaret regarded the house as a safe space instead of considering its financial liabilities. Spending more money was their pride. They thought that they kept it for Chris's happiness while it represents everything Chris had to sacrifice. Kitty and Jenny wait for Chris's return while trying to preserve the house at its best as a peaceful environment which counteracts the wildness of the frontline. Jenny thinks "that we were preserved from the reproach of luxury because we had made a fine

place for Chris, one little part of the world that was, so far as surfaces could make it so, good enough for his amazing goodness" (West, 1987, p. 16). The Baldry Court became their illusion. It was the only world they knew until Chris arrived with shell-shock which carried the aura of the war. Chris kept his appearance to ensure their deception before the war. He pretended to be satisfied with the life they supplied for him; however, war surfaced his dissatisfaction.

3.4 A domestic space engraved with masculinity

The Baldry Court, which is the material equivalent of Chris's responsibilities, is the main setting of the novel. The most significant compartment of the Baldry Court in the novel is Oliver's room. The novel opens in Chris's deceased son Oliver's room and ends with Chris being reminded of Oliver's death. The opening foreshadows the major role Oliver is yet to play in the plot. The room embodies the dominant theme of absence and loss: "*The Return of the Soldier* begins with the theme of absence. It opens in the now empty, lifeless nursery which had once been filled with the vitality and activity of the Baldry's lost child" (Cowan, 1998, p. 287). This absence is embedded with Chris's presence in the Baldry Court even when he is away. He is present in Kitty and Jenny's minds. His presence is constantly reinforced by the empty nursery which is kept due to his instructions. Even though the idea of masculine Chris, who manages the Baldry Court and the inhabitants, is always present in the Baldry Court, he is absent in the text even when he returns. Chris's absence/presence is similar to Jacob's absence/presence in *Jacob's Room*. Both novels depict rooms carrying the traces of these men. Jacob's rooms prove that Jacob was once alive and they keep other people's sorrow fresh. Chris's influence is felt in

every inch of Oliver's room and maintains the loss of Oliver. Chris has a ghostlike presence which can only be represented through Jenny's story. He is not given a chance to explain himself, his amnesia purposefully silences him. Nonetheless, the house and his relatives are imprinted with the idea of pre-war adult Chris, who was always in control. There is no place for shell-shocked Chris in the text. He never interacts with the room or the news of his son's death until the end of the novel. Nonetheless, his pre-war decisions force Kitty to deal with this information on a daily basis. Even though Oliver passed away years ago, Chris insisted on keeping the room as it was, furnished as a nursery. The room stands there as a constant reminder of Oliver and becomes a source of irreplaceable pain for Kitty. Even in his absence, Chris marks his home with his existence through the nursery:

> We were sitting in the nursery. I had not meant to enter it again after the child's death, but I had come suddenly on Kitty as she slipped the key into the lock and had lingered to look in at the high room, so full of whiteness and clear colours, so unendurably gay and familiar, which is kept in all respects as though there were still a child in the house. (West, 1987, pp. 9-10)

The room is kept in a pristine condition as if the owner can come at any moment to reclaim it. The room is locked, out of reach. However, Kitty uses it whenever she finds a chance even though the room preserves her sorrow fresh. Jenny pays attention to the gayness of the room. There is a happy atmosphere which is quite misleading. It is revealed that Chris cannot handle Oliver's death and tries to capture his memory through the untouched nursery. However, his amnesia strikes him to forget Oliver ever existed whereas Kitty has to face Oliver's death everyday: "Kitty's returns, which repress the knowledge of Oliver's death, suggest that Kitty resists remembering her son, a resistance she emphasizes by articulating her desire for the nursery's removal" (Pulsifer, 2013, p. 46). She tries to continue her routine and pays tribute to Oliver by visiting his room. Chris's existence is imprinted in the nursery

alongside with the baby. He does not let anyone to change the room. He guards it as a token of their misery. The lightness of the room contrasts the overall darkness and obscurity of the novel along with the amnesia of Chris which keeps him in dark regarding son's death unlike Kitty, who as a mother has to suffer every moment with this knowledge. Jenny keeps depicting the decoration of the nursery which is the most vividly described space in the Baldry Court:

> It fell on the rocking-horse which had been Chris's idea of an appropriate present for his year-old son and showed what a fine fellow he was and how tremendously dappled; it picked out Mary and her little lamb on the chintz ottoman. And along the mantelpiece, under the loved print of the snarling tiger, in attitudes that were at once angular and relaxes—as though they were ready for play at their master's pleasure but found it hard to keep from drowsing in this warm weather—sat the Teddy Bear and the chimpanzee and the woolly white dog and the black cat with the eyes that roll. Everything was there, except Oliver. (West, 1987, pp. 10-11)

Jenny makes it obvious that the room was decorated according to Chris's taste. Kitty had a little say in it. First of all, she mentions a rocking horse which accentuates Chris's masculine taste and what he envisions for his son. His decoration echoes his mother's vision for him when he was a child. He bought a rocking horse for Oliver when he was barely one-year old incapable of playing with it. Nonetheless, Chris considered it to be a proper gift for a baby. There is also a picture of a tiger which contrasts Mary and her lamb. There are also stuffed animals of all kind as if to emphasise how Oliver was a lucky and loved child. Jenny draws attention to their liveliness and preparedness. They are ready for a master, yet they lack one. When a person dies, their relatives are left with difficult tasks as well as coping with their pain. One of the worst tasks is to deal with deceased person's belongings, yet it makes coping easier on long term. Therefore, it is an essential step:

> One of these tasks is to pack up your loved one's clothing. Another is to decide what to do with it. This often feels like the most difficult job of all,

> because to deal with a person's possessions is to clearly face the fact that they are gone. (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2007, p. 133)

Chris cannot decide what to do with Oliver's belongings, thus he decides to cling to the room to avoid acknowledging his death. Confronting Oliver's death means recognizing his struggle and dissatisfaction with life. Therefore, he keeps the room so long as he can as if keeping his room will revive Oliver. It creates the illusion that Oliver may come back any moment. Kitty and Chris's sorrow is embedded in Oliver's room and they cannot find the power in themselves to be fully separated from him. The room preserves their grief. Nonetheless, it is easier for them to hold on to it rather than accepting his departure. The room delays their confrontation with the painful truth.

Kitty and Jenny undertake the mission of prioritising Chris after the child's death. They try to cheer him up by using the house as a tool. They make Chris's suffering a focal point in their life which makes them ignore Kitty's trauma altogether. Even though Kitty's lack of participation and throwing herself into Oliver's room at any chance can be taken as a cry for help, they overlook her pain. Instead, they turn the room into a museum for Chris. Jenny's narration regards Kitty as an outsider in the story shifting the focus to Chris:

> Like Chris, who represses the horrors of the present to reexperience his memories of his youth with Margaret, Kitty returns repeatedly to the nursery, signalling that her experience of the present has been interrupted by the trauma of Oliver's death. (Pulsifer, 2013, p. 46)

Chris reinforces Kitty's trauma by keeping the room extant as if to remind Kitty of her failure as a mother as well as repeating his own fiasco as a patriarch. Moreover, Kitty does not attempt to remove the nursery in Chris's absence. The nursery deteriorates her condition yet she doesn't revolt: "she cannot even insist that the nursery be removed. This discrepancy highlights the imbalance of power between

men and women attempting to negotiate trauma" (Pulsifer, 2013, p. 47). By preserving the room she punishes herself on a daily basis. On the other hand, Jenny includes herself in every state of their lives. Eventually, she chooses to narrate their story which is the best way to integrate herself into their lives. She has some sort of an inferiority complex when it comes to Kitty. Therefore, she tries to show herself as a natural ally for Chris and Kitty as if they couldn't pursue their lives without her: "It had lain on us, as the responsibility that gave us dignity, to compensate him for his lack of free adventure by arranging him a gracious life" (West, 1987, p. 21). She puts herself in charge and makes herself responsible for Chris. Jenny makes it clear that Chris is life is lacking as a patriarch since it limits him to a confined life rather than an adventurous one. She regards herself and Kitty as burden and claims that they tried to "compensate –" by trying to make his life better. She doesn't refer to only herself as a burden but makes sure to include Jenny even though it is her life and her marriage. By mentioning all the downsides of Chris's life, Jenny informs the reader that it was not what Chris imagined his life would be. He was squeezed into his father's life.

3.5 When expectations clash with reality

Chris's arrival brings along a superior presence for Jenny as he has always been their material and spiritual support. Chris was a reliable figure, who would always take care of them; therefore, Jenny expects to find the same Chris she sent off to war: "Through the thudding of the engines came the sound of Chris's great male voice" (West, 1987, p. 49). She is excited to meet him once again. She even attributes masculine features to his voice. Nonetheless, deep down she is aware that he will not

be the same man he once was. She associates his absence with death: “I had felt his absence as a kind of death from which he would emerge ghostlike impalpable” (West, 1987, pp. 49-50). She knows war means mass deaths. Therefore, she imagines his return to be “ghostlike”. She identifies that his returned version would not be the same as pre-war Chris even if he manages to survive. With or without trauma he would be a different version of himself, and Jenny realized it subconsciously. Nonetheless, his return as a shell-shocked soldier makes him beyond ghostlike than Jenny could have envisioned. Chris does not return as a man who is capable of running the house. He comes back as a helpless boy who needs their guidance to figure life out:

> Ironically, in a text focused on returning, there can be no return to what the characters have known before. One of the text’s greatest anxieties is that it is impossible to restore the stability of the past because history itself was not what it seemed (Pulsifer, 2013, p. 51)

Their confused situation echoes the circumstance of the nation, there was no going back to the past. The effect of the war could not be easily reinstated. Jenny comes to recognise this problem. There is no possibility for a return in the text. Chris’s homecoming is not a permanent one. If he cannot remember, he will never be the Chris everyone knew. On the other hand, if he remembers, he needs to go back. The novel refuses to construct any grounds for an eventual return: “Great War narratives tend to contradict the ideas of atonement and peace that had often been associated with the homecoming tale and place war trauma as the dominant literary construction” (Pividori, 2010, p. 90). The return of a soldier does not imply a potential of a happy future for anyone. Chris with amnesia contradicts the vision Jenny had for him in mind. He can no longer maintain his relationships as if nothing ever happened. War experience declined Chris’s ideals and made him get away from his duties instead of making him more glorious. The new image of Chris reveals the

authentic experience of World War I for numerous men. Within the context of the war, glory and victory lost their meanings and were rendered to be distant tales narrated through generations. Chris cannot even get used to small adjustments in the house: '"He's fallen down those steps from the hall," I whispered. "They're new…."' (West, 1987, p. 57). Chris is unable to adapt to changes and feels rather helpless. As the landlord, he was the person who decided on the alterations in the household, yet he cannot adjust to his own changes. Previously, he took care of people whereas he needs their help now: "His fall had ruffled him and made him look very large and red, and he breathed hard like an animal pursued into a strange place by night, and to his hot consciousness of his disorder the sight of Kitty" (West, 1987, p. 57). Jenny compares him to a confused, displaced animal which is dislocated in a strange environment. He is unable to properly accommodate his new life style. His inability to fit in makes him more impotent, he feels dislocated. He can neither accommodate the conditions of the domestic scene nor the circumstances of the battlefields. Most soldiers experienced similar things following their return: "Yet some soldiers, on coming home, found the life they had once known exasperating and depressing. When he was invalided home in August 1916 Robert Graves felt conversation with even his parents was "all but impossible."" (Eksteins, 1990, p. 227). Even soldiers who had their memory could not maintain communication. Robert Graves reported the uneasiness of communication. The things they witnessed diminished their desire to go back to their lives as if nothing happened. Their knowledge created an imaginary barrier between soldiers and non-combatants. West indicates this wall through Chris's amnesia and displacement. Richard McNally (2003) informs that some traumatic events may create classic psychogenic amnesia in patients. The symptoms he mentions diagnose Chris's case:

> Classic psychogenic amnesia begins immediately after the precipitating event; involves loss of personal identity; involves massive retrograde memory loss; not merely loss of memory for the precipitating event; rarely lasts more than a few weeks; and usually ends suddenly rather than gradually. (p. 189)

Chris's amnesia begins right after his injury and results in a loss of identity which disregards his adult life and marriage. His memory loss begins with the precipitating incident and can be traced back as McNally suggests. Moreover, he is recovered suddenly. Rebecca West also offers an explanation for Chris's case through Doctor Anderson in the novel when he summarises Chris's story to Kitty, Jenny and Margaret: '"His unconscious self is refusing to let him resume his relations with his normal life, and so we get this loss of memory."'(West, 1987, p. 163). Doctor Anderson's explanation accentuates how Chris's amnesia generates a hole in his social relations succeeding his regression. He disregards certain relations acquired after that 15 year period. Doctor Anderson presents this situation as an unconscious choice of Chris. He implies that Chris refuses to preserve his relations with Kitty and Jenny whereas he chooses to go back to his relationship with Margaret.

After giving some background information regarding Chris's condition and explaining its source, West employs Doctor Anderson to speculate on how to find Chris's cure. Anderson claims that treating his amnesia lies in detecting his discontent: '"Quite obviously he has forgotten his life here because he is discontented with it.'", '"One forgets only those things that one wants to forget. It's our business to find out why he wanted to forget this life."' (West, 1987, p. 165). Anderson presents Chris's amnesia as an unconscious choice and believes that finding his dissatisfaction will finalise his situation. Doctor's quest is fulfilled by Margaret who comes up with the idea of reminding Chris of his deceased son. Following this conversation, Margaret coincidentally learns about Oliver's existence and his premature death. Nobody mentions Oliver to Chris, Margaret or the doctor

prior to Margaret's coincidental discovery. Oliver stays as a taboo in the novel. They do not intentionally hide his death, but they make an unconscious choice to keep him a secret until the final pages. It is revealed in the end that Margaret also lost a child. Therefore, she can relate to his pain. She believes that reminding Oliver will heal Chris as it is a strong source of grief and frustration for him. Margaret takes Oliver's ball and jersey to restore Chris's memory. McNally (2003) claims that "Most people with psychogenic amnesia spontaneously recover their identity and memory within a matter of hours, days, or weeks. In rare cases, amnesia persist for months. Recovery from psychogenic retrograde amnesia usually occurs suddenly" (p. 188). Chris is suddenly recovered as McNally proposes. It takes him a few minutes to get his memory back. McNally further explains how memory is restored after traumatic amnesia. There needs to be a strong source of emotion to trigger the moment of forgetting:

> some psychotherapists believe that mood-state-dependent effects may be relevant to remembering trauma. Because trauma occurs during states of extreme emotional arousal, they suspect that survivors may be incapable of recalling terrible experiences while in normal moods. Perhaps, they conjecture, the difference between the emotional state during the trauma and subsequent emotional states leads survivors to experience complete amnesia for traumatic events. (p. 42)

Chris's amnesia is caused by war fields consumed by mass death. The extremity of the battlefield resulted in his amnesia afterwards. It can be argued that Oliver was the trigger of his condition. Therefore, being reminded of him once again prompts his memory. The long-expected cure comes from death which had initiated amnesia in the first place. Chris reclaims his memory when he is reminded of Oliver. Jonathan Flatley (2008) proposes that "Our affects come into existence only when attached to the ghosts from our past. Emotions, we might say, never happen for the first time; like ghosts, it is in their essence to always and only return" (p. 89). As Flatley

suggests Chris's strong emotions for Oliver become an origin of forgetfulness and remembrance for him at the same time. It can be inferred that Oliver is Chris's ghost from the past who haunted him in battlefields. Similarly, he is cured upon being reminded of the initiator of his trauma. Nonetheless, the restored memory fails to be a remedy since it sets Chris out to join the army once again to assume his role as a soldier. Apart from being the cause of Chris's memory, Oliver marks the failure of Chris's adult life on a symbolic level. Therefore, Oliver's death surfaces at a moment when Chris doubts his masculinity and competence during the battle being unable to stop what goes around him. He feels helpless and shuts his consciousness. Pividori (2010) claims that "It would not be an exaggeration to claim that Chris Baldry is made to survive because there is a person-Margaret- that justifies his living" (p. 98). Contrary to Pividori's claims Margaret does not bound Chris to life since remembering means death for Chris as he will have to go back and decrease his chances of survival. Margaret relates Chris to his youth without responsibilities. The remembrance comes through her not from Jenny or Kitty who are a big part of Chris's adult life. Eventually, his youth eliminates his amnesia and reminds him of his duties through the memory of his lost child. Along with Margaret and Oliver, the Baldry Court also plays a critical code in Chris's recollection as it marks his memories which constitute his identity:

> What we remember sometimes depend on the context of recollection. Certain memories may pop into mind only in certain situations. All else being equal, we are more likely to recall something when the context of remembering resembles the context of encoding. (McNally, 2003, p. 40)

Chris remembers his past through his son whose memory is embedded in a specific context. The Baldry Court as a unit affects Chris; however, especially Oliver's room reminds him of his failure as well as duties. Therefore, the place of recollection enhances the success of recovery.

Cathy Caruth (1996) claims that waking from a nightmare resembles trauma as it is also lead to a sudden alteration. Moreover, "the trauma is not only the repetition of the missed encounter with death but also of surviving—of waking into life—that repeats and bears witness to what remains ungrasped within the encounter with death" (p. 6). This can be applied to Chris's amnesia. When he forgets his life, he is in a dream. On the other hand, when he remembers it can be considered that he wakes up to the realities and recognises his survival after a combat. And through survival he faces his own encounter with death. Forgetting was Chris Baldry's ticket out of the war, ultimate escape from death. On the other hand, remembering meant going back to the war and once again being forced to face his obligations. As Jeffrey Hershfield (2014) writes:

> Chris would also be stripped of the protection afforded by his amnesia, which shields him from having to acknowledge an unsatisfactory marriage to Kitty, a dead son, and the crushing experiences of serving at the front; moreover, he also risks being deemed fit enough to fight again. (p. 370)

Chris's amnesia was sheltering him from the harshness of his life. However, once he remembers, he faces all the challenges again. They expect a "cure", yet nothing can "cure" the damage the war casted on them. Jenny observes the moments of Chris's recovery, yet the reader is kept in the dark regarding what happens between Margaret and Chris. In a way, West does not let the reader be acquainted with pre-war Chris since there is no place for him in the novel. Pinkerton (2009) claims that "The scene of Chris's cure, then, cannot be written. It refuses textual representation, at least until after the fact of its performance" (p. 9). Chris's cure, as his war memories, resists narration. The reader doesn't need to know adult Chris, he will cease to exist. There is no need to show the moment of healing because it is not possible to restore the damage. Even when he remembers, things will not change. Therefore, the moment of cure stays as an intimate moment between Chris and Margaret, their last chance to

share a moment. Even Jenny has to watch the scene from a distance. She narrates her observations through the glass: “He wore a dreadful decent smile; I knew how his voice would resolutely lift in greeting us. He walked not loose limbed like a boy, as he had done that afternoon, but with the soldier’s hard thread upon the heel” (West, 1987, p. 187). Chris is a 35 year-old soldier, yet the character present in the novel was his teenager self. He remains as a boy until the end of the novel. Only in the end, he becomes an adult again. Nonetheless, his adult self is not shown in the narrative only his grieving smile remains to mark his consciousness. His amnesia silenced him yet remembering would not make him recover or resume his relationships. His conscious self can no longer reside in the Baldry Court, he goes back to fight. He can only have a place as a boy in the novel. Similarly, the soldiers who fought and came back could not fit in the domestic scene after what they had seen. The moment he remembers, he stops being a boy and becomes a man carrying the burden. His grieving smile symbolizes his awareness. Jenny pays attention to the changes in his posture. He stands as a soldier. Grown up Chris realises that he will have to go back to the war. He will leave Margaret behind and probably end up dead in the cold trenches rotten with death: “Ultimately, the “cure” that Jenny and Margaret orchestrate revives not Chris, but the soldier he has become—the only part of the past that can be salvaged” (Pulsifer, 2013, p. 45). West does not specify the details, yet Chris is ready to go back to assume his duty. Being disillusioned, he cannot survive in the novel or in the domestic scene. He will not probably survive the war as majority of soldiers did not. Margaret and Jenny are aware of the probable results of their action. In a way, they send Chris back to war by curing him:

> When we had lifted the yoke of our embraces from his shoulders he would go back to that flooded trench in Flanders under that sky more full of flying death than clouds, to that No Man’s Land where bullets fall like rain on the rotting faces of the dead…. (West, 1987, p. 187)

Chris's traumatic existence disillusions them by deconstructing their concept of war. Jenny does not feel that Chris will be glorious while fighting. She is aware that he is likely to die. She emphasises that death commands the sky in the trenches not clouds. She perceives the war to be a death machine. On the other hand, the book finishes with illusioned Kitty's exclamation, '"He's cured!"' (West, 1987, p. 188). While Jenny and Margaret can foresee Chris's potential death in the trenches and acknowledge it, Kitty regards it as a cure that will reconnect her to her husband. Regardless of Kitty's lack of analysis skills, the end of the novel implies that remembering or returning are not achievable in the context of the war.

CHAPTER 4

CONFRONTATION WITH DEATH:

DECLINE OF IDEALS IN A *FAREWELL TO ARMS*

Ernest Hemingway employed his World War I experience when he wrote *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), which traces the transformation of an American soldier in the Italian army. Hemingway's protagonist is a lieutenant ambulance driver who volunteered to fight for Italians like Hemingway did. When Hemingway decided to enlist for the army, he was declined due to his poor vision. Later on, he volunteered via Red Cross, and he was accepted. Hemingway was wounded by shells during the war. Following his injury, he was awarded with a silver medal for his courage. Hemingway was sent to a hospital in Milan, where he had an affair with a nurse. Hemingway's own experiences inspired the formation of *A Farewell to Arms*. Nonetheless, it took him a long time to write and publish his novel. He did not finish it immediately after the war. He needed some time away from the war to expose his reality of the war. Two previous chapters of this thesis featured Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* and Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*, and focused on the domestic side of the war and the war's influence on the daily lives of women. However, this chapter analyses a novel narrated by a soldier, and focuses on the military aspect of the war. The arrangement of the novels in this thesis follows a specific order. The first novel does not even refer to the war directly. The second novel presents a soldier in the domestic atmosphere; however, the soldier is traumatised and unaware of his condition. Finally, the third novel features a soldier—as its narrator—and the soldier can be observed while he is in the army serving. Each novel takes the reader one step closer to the veracities of the war. Woolf and West formed their own version of war novels

and silenced men in their narrative by creating an opportunity for women to speak up. Jacob and Chris are doomed to suffer from the consequences of the war since they chose to pursue fighting, and the narratives silence them. On the other hand, Frederic risks his reputation and revolts in his own way; therefore, the narrative gives him a voice to reveal his truth. Frederic narrates his version of the war. His narrative does not glorify war, courage, or heroism. Hemingway displays a soldier's disillusionment. The novel throws light on the myth of death and immortality created by modern societies with the premise of separating the death from the modern individual. Hemingway examines encounter with death in trenches through a soldier's personal adventure, which reconstructs the idea of death. In this final chapter, I focus on the notion of death during the Great War in relation to Jean Baudrillard's *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993), and analyse how it contributes to the idea of mortality, heroism, sacrifice and warfare. Moreover, I claim that Frederic gets more disillusioned after getting injured since his injury marks the first moment of confrontation with death for Frederic. After that harsh introduction to death, he begins to evaluate the idea of warfare. I propose that when he is taken to a hospital in the city, he gets a chance to compare and contrast army life with civilian life in a limited time, which contributes to his process of disillusionment. Furthermore, I argue that his quest is completed when he decides to desert the army by giving up his rank and reputation. His desire for life triumphs over his masculinity as deserting the army will scar his manliness. I suggest that this novel serves as a therapeutic experience for Frederic on his path to spiritual recovery. He makes peace with his own experience and decisions by narrating his story. His tale justifies his survival by erasing his guilt.

4.1 Separation of death

Modern societies distributed the concept of immortality which was a privilege reserved for the elite in ancient societies. Thus, they created a sense of equality among individuals. According to Jean Baudrillard (1993), this premise was rendered possible with the prohibition of death which laid the basis for modern societies and the power balances in these societies. The new community existed on the oblivion of death. The elimination of death into obscurity blessed with the assurance of afterlife prioritised survival. Baudrillard (1993) claims that "The emergence of survival can therefore be analysed at the fundamental operation in the birth of power. Not only because this set-up will permit the necessity of the sacrifice of this life and the threat of recompense in the next" (pp. 129-130). Authorities located survival at the heart of their operation. Everything in modern life depended on existence. It procured power on behalf of the establishments. After survival became the foundation of life, the sacrifice of it came to be crucial since the possibility of immortality created another chance for everyone in the afterlife. This promise also determined the basics of governments. Authorities monopolised both life and death. The concept of sacrifice constituted the basics of warfare. Soldiers, if they gave up their lives for the greater good, would not cease into a void. They would be martyrs. This was the logic behind the recruiting campaigns. Young men were encouraged to incorporate meaning into their lives or into the loss of their lives. Baudrillard (1993) asserts that the separation of death is the main means of control:

> Shattering the union of the living and the dead, and slapping a prohibition on death and the dead: the primary source of social control. Power is possible only if death is no longer free, only if the dead are put under surveillance, in anticipation of the future of confinement of life in its entirety . . . the social repression of death in the sense that this is what facilitates the shift towards the repressive socialisation of life. (p. 130)

Baudrillard indicates that power springs out of the withdrawal of death and the dead from social life. Death is kept under control to dominate life and survival. It can be inferred that Baudrillard's claims present the separation of death as a social contract. The citizens are given a life on the condition that they abandon the dead. I believe that Baudrillard's assertions apply for ordinary life. However, extraordinary events may change the course of social life. War shakes the basis of society. It can be argued that wars eliminate the prohibition of death; people become familiar with it once again. The acquaintance with death reverses this condition; it leads to disillusionment among soldiers and failure of ideals such as glory, heroism and victory. Soldiers coincide with the ugly truth of death in the trenches. Hemingway shows this intimate meeting with death through Frederic's experience.

Death and loss dominate wars. Therefore, war novels mostly feature deaths of characters' beloved ones. *Jacob's Room* begins with the search for missing Jacob, as a small boy, and ends with the news of his death. *The Return of the Soldier* opens with the absence of Chris and finishes with the news of his return to the front. Similarly, Hemingway begins *A Farewell to Arms* with the news of dead soldiers and concludes it with the death of Catherine. The thin line between life and death is highlighted in Hemingway's novel. The beginning of the novel demonstrates a soldier's experience in the front. However, short after his time in the front, he is relocated to a war-free zone. Therefore, the protagonist is not confined within the territory of battles. He gets to observe both death and life in a condensed period. The opening sentence mocks death by reflecting how it is diminished to numbers: "At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 4). This seemingly casual sentence gives away the approach towards disease

and death in the front. It is normalised. Seven thousand is not considered to be a big number during the war. This opening foreshadows what is to come for Frederic: death after death. Death may be rendered to numbers for authorities; however, soldiers confront with the harsh reality of death. They face the combats, the bodies and the absence of their companions. Jean Baudrillard (1993) claims that death was separated from modern societies since graveyards were rendered to being outcasts. However, each piece of land turns into a graveyard during the war, and shatters this division:

> There is an irreversible evolution from savage societies to our own: little by little, the dead cease to exist. They are thrown out of the group's symbolic circulation. They are no longer beings with a full role to play, worthy partners in exchange, and we make this obvious by exiling them further and further away from the group of the living. In the domestic intimacy of the cemetery, the first grouping remains in the heart of the village or town, becoming the first ghetto, prefiguring every future ghetto. (p. 126)

Baudrillard regards graveyards as the outsiders of the society banished by the living. They form a group of castaways. They are intentionally removed from the lives of breathing individuals to wipe out the traces of death. The dead have no active roles in the lives of the living. Therefore, they are disconnected from the social life. Thus, Baudrillard claims that graveyards set the basis for every future ghetto. Accordingly, cemeteries are the first ghetto in the human history and the dead are the first victims of discrimination. Baudrillard points out this to be an irreversible act. Nonetheless, it can be claimed that the situation is reversed in case of active warfare. The dead—the banished—becomes a part of everyday life for soldiers at the heart of the trenches. Death, which was feared and exiled for centuries, becomes the only reality. This creates a conflict with what soldiers were used to in their social life. There are no separate spaces for graveyards during the war. Each and every piece of land qualifies to be a mass grave. Dead bodies lay aside the living, breathing soldiers. They rot,

smell, spread diseases and cause despair. Death rules in the trenches, and the living kneels before it. It affects the psychology of soldiers by creating an unusual environment as well as creating health issues among them. There comes a familiarity with death which is hard to accommodate. This familiarity makes soldiers question the reasons of warfare. Hemingway (2004) depicts the weariness of soldiers:

> 'I believe we should get the war over;' I said.
> 'It would not finish if one side stopped fighting. It would only be worse if we stopped fighting.'
> 'It would not be worse,' Passini said respectfully.
> 'There is nothing worse than war.'
> 'Defeat is worse.'
> 'I do not believe it;' Passini said still respectfully.
> 'What is defeat? You go home.'
> 'They come after you. They take your home. They take your sisters.'
> 'I don't believe it;' Passini said.
> 'They can't do that to everybody. Let everybody defend his home. Let them keep their sisters in the house.' (p. 47)

The dialogue demonstrates that soldiers do not want to pursue fighting. They no longer believe in the ideals which integrated them to the army. They do not feel enthusiastic about victory. Even "defeat", the worse possible result of any war, does not scare them. Nothing feels more exhausting than fighting. It is shown that failure is deprived of its meaning in the context of the war. It equals going home to retrieve beloved ones rather than face the possibilities of death, trauma, or injuries. This conversation reveals the propaganda carried out to recruit soldiers. Much of the propaganda was conducted through women. Men were told that the enemy would arrive, take their wives and sisters. Young men were persuaded to join the army to protect their women as well as their boundaries. However, confrontation with death refuted these false premises. They decided that survival and going home were more important than sacrificing themselves. Passini even thinks that authorities should not assemble huge armies; everyone should be at their homes to defend their territory. Soldiers long for the safety of home during the war. Home becomes the most alluring

thing. They long for a pre-war society exempt from confrontation with death each and every day.

4.2 Encounter with death

Frederic's own decision to go to war also resonates with the pre-war ideals of masculinity. He is an American; however, he decides to fight for the Italian army. The promise of masculinity constitutes the core of war and people's perception of it. Men are sent to the front with the possibilities of turning out to be victorious heroes or sacrificing themselves for holy causes. Nonetheless, it is exemplified in the novel that both being a hero and a treacherous villain are rather simple during the war. One moment you can be rewarded with medals, and labelled as a hero for doing nothing. On another instance, you can be marked as a traitor. Frederic's own story reflects this dilemma. Frederic and his friends are sent on a mission to take cars to an attacked area where they are caught in the middle of a bombardment. *Traumatic Pasts* focus on the period between 1870 and 1930, and "this period was characterized by the rapid growth of industrial, technological modernity, which brought Western societies an unprecedented productive potential" (Micale & Lerner, 2001, p. 10). The use of technology reconstructed the idea of war by locating the emphasis on the industrial power rather than soldiers. The rapid advances affected weaponry and eliminated the sense of one on one combat which emerged a feeling of alienation in the soldiers: "modern military weaponry, which was capable of destruction on a hitherto inconceivable scale seemed to produce a host of dramatic and previously unseen pathologies" (Micale and Lerner, 2001, p. 10). Frederic's story of injury reflects on this side of machine weaponry and loss of personal combat. Mass artillery and

bombs eliminated the feeling of heroism as well as leading to mass casualties. Men witnessed more death. Frederic says that the place was constantly being bombarded by the Austrians: "A big shell came in and burst outside in the brickyard. Another burst and in the noise you could hear the smaller noise of the brick and dirt raining down" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 49). This instance gives a glimpse of the conditions. First, they hear the sounds of shells and explosions. Then, Frederic and his friends are directly influenced by the bombardment:

> Through the other noise I heard a cough, then came the chuh-chuh-chuh-chuh – then there was a flash, as when a blast-furnace door is swung open, and a roar that started white and went red and on and on in a rushing wind. I went out swiftly, all of myself, and I knew I was dead and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died…I breathed and I was back. The ground was torn up and in front of my head there was a splintered beam of wood. In the jolt of my head I heard somebody crying. I thought somebody was crying. I thought somebody was screaming. I tried to move but I could not move. I heard the machine-guns and rifles firing across the river and all along the river. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 51)

He narrates the bombardment in detail. First, they are exposed to incessant noise of guns and bombs. Then, their door is shattered, and the room is brightened up with white light turning red. He thinks that he is dead, and then he breathes. He cannot even comprehend that they are under attack in the beginning. He sees that the floor is cracked open. When he hears his friends, he feels an urge to move for the first time. This shows his dedication to duty and loyalty for his comrades. However, he cannot move. The sound of machine-guns keep going. He notices Passini and realizes that he was injured:

> I tried to get closer to Passini to try to put a tourniquet on the legs but I could not move. I tried again and my legs moved a little. I could pull backward along with my arms and elbows. Passini was quiet now…I saw there was no need to try and make a tourniquet because he was dead already. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 52)

Frederic uses his last strength to get to Passini. He wants to save his legs by crawling. However, he realizes that Passini no longer breathes. This is the first time he witnesses someone so close to him pass away. Passinis's death marks the beginning of personal loss Frederic is yet to witness. Passini executes his first encounter with death at first hand. The bombardment and Passini's passing marks the beginning of Frederic's disillusionment. Only after trying to help Passini and confronting his death, he thinks about himself: "I knew that I was hit and leaned over and put my hand on my knee. My knee wasn't there" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 52). He feels that he is severely injured. Fredric's urge to rescue Passini sets an example of the behaviour of soldiers and the bond they form serving together. They become more than friends. Therefore, each death influences them more.

Even though Frederic is injured on a mission due to a bombardment, he is thoroughly examined by a military doctor to prove that he is not a malingerer. The doctor says his skull fractures save him: "That's what keeps you from being court-martialled for self-inflicted wounds, he said" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 55). This shows how men were often sent to court for self-inflicted wounds, and labelled as malingerers. Being a malingerer was equal to being a traitor. In the midst of death and combat, trying to get out of the army was quite common among soldiers. Being a cripple meant survival. Many soldiers attempted to hurt themselves to be sent back home or to hospitals. Therefore, each wound was carefully examined by doctors. The number of malingerers imply the condition of the trenches. After the inspection, Frederic is sent to a field hospital to recover. Rinaldi visits him as soon as he can:

> 'Because you are gravely wounded. They say if you can prove you did any heroic act you can get the silver. Otherwise it will be the bronze. Tell me exactly what happened. Did you do any heroic act?'
> 'No,' I said. 'I was blown up while we were eating cheese.' (Hemingway, 2004, p. 59)

Rinaldi's remarks show how easy it is to be blessed as a war hero. The only necessity is to be injured. Being wounded is getting one step closer to death; therefore, war heroes are awarded with medals to keep the enthusiasm. The medals are used to materialise the courage of soldiers. However, Frederic's statement shows how medals are distributed to everyone during the war which robs them away from their "true meaning":

> His injury, Henry, points out, occurs while he is eating cheese; traditional notions of glory and patriotism seem irrelevant. Thus if many men in this period felt masculinity to be in crisis, the novel powerfully implies that the traditional heroism of battle is no longer available as a secure source of masculine identity. (Hatten, 1993, p. 83)

Most men join armies to reprise their masculinity. Nonetheless, the Great War challenged this idea due to mass murder weapons and lack of personal combat. The war solely depended on the quality and quantity of industrial products. Adam Hochschild (2011) writes that "The Germans soon coined a word for it, Materialschlact, the battle of material" (p. 160). Weapons decided who were more advantaged. Therefore, men felt incapable and useless. Officials had to find a way to corporate men into the system, and medals were one of the tools they used. Frederic could have been judged as a malingerer; however, he could also get a silver medal for his "bravery". When considered in the light of Baudrillard's claims, it can be assumed that as the idea of immortality was promised to ensure the continuation of systems; medals were used to guarantee the maintenance of fighting. Medals were constructed by the society to be signs of courage. Yet the excessive distribution of medals during the war reinforces the failure of them as representational devices to signify the war experience.

After the field hospital, Frederic is taken to an American hospital in Milan, where Miss Barkley serves. When doctors tell him that they need to wait for 6

months to operate his knee, he insists that another surgeon examines him. Frederic's eagerness shows how he still wants to pursue his military career. He wants to go back to front as soon as possible. He does not wish to waste his time in Milan in the beginning. Dr. Valentini agrees to operate him the following day. After the operation Catherine takes care of him rather than other nurses:

> We had a lovely time that summer. When I could go out we rode in a carriage in the park. I remember the carriage, the horse going slowly, and up ahead the back of the driver with his vanished high hat, and Catherine Barkley sitting beside me. If we let our hands touch, just the side of my hand touching hers, we were excited. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 101)

Frederic summarizes that they had lovely time enjoying their love in the summer. Their summer together was a safe zone exempt from the dangers of the war. His time with Catherine reconnects him to life without war and away from death. Such a time undermines the reality of war and creates an illusion of safety which altered Frederic's heart regarding the army. Baudrillard (1993) writes, "death is not an event, but a myth experienced as anticipation. The subject needs a myth of its end, as of its origin, to form its identity" (p. 159). Frederic anticipates death in the army. Therefore, he tries to delay his departure. Frederic's lack of enthusiasm shows itself in the form of excessive drinking. He gets jaundice, and the nurse, Miss Van Campen, detects his alcoholism when she notices excessive amount of the alcohol bottles (Hemingway, 2004, p. 128). Frederic tries to ignore this problem. He does not reflect it as an issue. On the other hand, Miss Van Campen blames him for purposefully creating jaundice by drinking to postpone his leave:

> 'I suppose you can't be blamed for not wanting to go back to front. But I should think you would try something more intelligent than producing jaundice with alcoholism.'
> 'With what?'
> 'With alcoholism. You heard me say it.' (Hemingway, 2004, p. 129)

After that revelation, he was obliged to return to the front as they terminated his leave. Frederic was examined for malingering before being located in Milan; however, he attempts to malinger in order to prolong his stay. His time away from the war creates his peaceful illusion. His alcoholism becomes a coping mechanism by making him forget about the horrors and gives him an opportunity not to go back.

4.3 Decline of ideals

Frederic's unconscious attempts to extend his stay in Milan shows the fade of ideals in him after having a chance to experience both civilian life and military life. He no longer believes in the glorious meaning attributed to death which ultimately means losing someone. Losses become a heavy source of grief. Therefore, people invent splendid meanings to celebrate the dead:

> The concept of immortality grew alongside the segregation of the dead. For the flip-side of death, this eminent status which is the mark of the 'soul' and 'superior' spiritualities, is only a story that conceals the real extradition of the dead and the rupturing of a symbolic exchange with them. When the dead are there, lifelike [*vivants*] but different from the living [*vivants*] whom they partner in multiple exchanges, they have no need to, and neither is it necessary that they should, be immortal, since this fantastic quality shatters reciprocity. (Baudrillard, 1993, pp. 127-128)

Baudrillard claims that the concept of immortality was nourished when the dead were separated from the society. When they relocated the non-living, they had to ascribe a new importance to make meaning out of death. Therefore, they assigned spiritual, abstract and religious attributions to those who passed away. They tried to erase the horror of death. The remaining ones were manipulated to imagine that the deceased were in a better place to put up with their absence and the notion of loss. When the dead are near the living, this designation of immortality cannot be founded since their location eliminates this sense of parting. However, it is more convenient

to establish such a myth of death when they are away. Moreover, death of soldiers is further glorified since they are ascribed with martyrdom. Other dead people are not equal to them. Their death means more since they die fighting for other people. Therefore, they hold a more meaningful place among the dead. Hence, these concepts of immortality and spirituality are utilised by governments to recruit soldiers. Young men are persuaded that it is sweet to die for one's country. They will be glorious, victorious heroes whether they survive or die. However, it can be observed that *A Farewell to Arms* shows how this illusion is shattered soon after soldiers witness trench experience and death of their friends. Frederic also witnesses the destruction of this myth when he returns to the front following his surgery. After enjoying civilian life again, he finds everything changed. He feels less patriotic and sees that other soldiers also lost interest. He questions famous words used to describe military experience such as sacred, glory and sacrifice. He does not see the glory of death, he sees clueless young men die:

> I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by bill posters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 165)

Frederic questions the value of these words, and reveals how they don't correspond to the real army experience. He does not believe that the word "sacrifice" covers the death of young men. He thinks that they are not treated as sacred bodies instead they are handled as butchered animals. They are buried like the rest of the dead. There is nothing glorious in that process. This passage marks the disappointment of Frederic.

It can be argued that he recognises the futility of the attributions of immortality when the dead are among the living. When soldiers witness mass deaths, promises such as spiritual prizes and immortality does not appeal to them. On the contrary, their belief in the system is exhausted. Their names or personalities do not mean anything to people. Frederic concludes that only names of places and certain numbers of regiments were glorified by people—not actual men who served. Adam Hochschild (2011) visits a small World War I cemetery in France and narrates his observations: "Each gravestone in the small cemetery has a name, rank, and serial number" (p. xi). Hochschild's observations support Frederic's arguments. Even the gravestones were serialised with numbers and engraved with ranks. Their military career summarized their lives. Death was normalized for soldiers. They did not count people. They counted numbers. Moreover, dead people were to be replaced with new soldiers. They needed more soldiers to fight. Hochschild's observations and Frederic's remarks coincide with *Jacob's Room*'s narrator's refusal to "sum up" her characters. It is not an attainable mission to sum up the complexity of a person. Nonetheless, military ranks end up summarizing soldier's lives when engraved on tombstones. Individual experiences and sacrifices lose their meaning. Therefore, Frederic's survival gains more symbolic importance in the end since he narrates his friends' stories which make them human independent from numbers, regiments or ranks. Frederic highlights the abstractness of these words during war: "Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 165). These holy words did not portray the authentic experience of the war. The reality was more mechanical rather than spiritual. Moreover, soldiers constantly witnessed this process of butchering and replacement.

It can be inferred that Frederic was more receptive following his return since he could compare two different spheres in a compressed time.

Soon after Frederic's arrival retreat commences. Therefore, Frederic and his friends are assigned with a mission. They are supposed to take three ambulances to Pordenone in a short time. However, they come across firing on the way and their friend Aymo dies. They cannot decide whether it was the Germans or the Italians who targeted them:

> 'Those were Italians that shot,' I said. 'They weren't Germans.'
> 'I suppose if they were German they'd have killed all of us,' Bonello said.
> 'We are in more danger from Italians than in Germans,' I said.
> 'The rear guard are afraid of everything. The Germans know what they're after.' (Hemingway, 2004, p. 190)

Their doubt clarifies the situation in the army. Nobody is safe, nobody can be trusted. Their own party shoots them. They don't ascribe big meaning to the death of their comrade. On the contrary, they undermine it. Their cold response reflects upon the normality of losing a friend. However, the incident leads them to think of their own survival. The next day, Frederic realizes that Bonello left them:

> 'Where is Bonello?' I asked.
> Piani looked at me.
> 'He went away, Tenente;' he said. 'He wanted to be a prisoner.'
> I did not say anything.
> 'He was afraid we would get killed.'
> I held the bottle of wine and did not say anything.
> 'You see we don't believe in the war anyway, Tenente.'
> 'Why didn't you go? I asked.
> 'I did not want to leave you.' (Hemingway, 2004, p. 193)

Nationalistic feelings desert Bonello, and he leaves the army upon facing danger and losing a friend. He risks being taken a prisoner. On the other hand, a special bond emerges between Frederic and Piani when Piani stays in order not to leave him alone. It also emphasizes how war was no longer about nationalistic feelings at that point. Brotherhood excelled. It was more important to save people around you rather than

think about other people at home. War surpassed nationalism, glory, pride and heroism. Instead, it was reconstructed as the comradeship of men who had each other's back. Fighting was not about a country, it was performed to protect soldiers' own lives. This dialogue captures the altered meaning of war after months of fighting and the disillusionment of soldiers who lost their belief in ideals. Piani and Frederic are alone abandoned by friends, betrayed by their regiment in the middle of nowhere. That was the reality of war. These events take place during the retreat when German and Austrian soldiers got into Caporetto. Adam Hochschild (2011) acknowledges that during this invasion "more than half a million men killed, wounded, or taken prisoner." (p. 292). The conditions of the retreat were extreme; therefore, it brought out the worst in the soldiers. Everyone was scattered around away from their regiments. The chain of command was broken. Moreover, everyone was wary of the chaos.

Frederic and Bonello were separated from their regiment due to the orders of their commanders. The unexpected invasion of Germans forced them to leave before the roads were cut off and the bridges were burned. They thought the danger was the Germans. However, they were captured by their own police while walking. The police was arresting soldiers, questioning them, and shooting them regardless of their answer. Their own people became the enemy. This was the final step which demolished their belief and demonstrated the ugly truth of war. According to Edkins (2003), for something to be traumatic:

> It has to involve a betrayal of trust as well. There is an extreme menace, but what is special is where the threat violence comes from. What we call trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger. (p. 4)

Edkins states that trauma contains disloyalty. Accordingly, when the source of the risk is a trusted party, trauma emerges. Similarly, Frederic and Passini, as soldiers fighting for Italy, should feel safe around the Italian soldiers. However, they are threatened with death by their own army. They are charged with treason even though they were following the instructions. They realize that they have no safe space. Moreover, their sense of trust is disturbed. This situation reflects upon the chaotic features of the world around them after three years of fighting. They are surrounded with danger. People's physical and psychological health is in decline. Frederic portrays the moment of interrogation which resembles psychological torture. Idelber Avelar (2004) highlights that "without being excessive, obscene, absurd, terror is simply not terror. Torture exists in that excess" (p. 28). The interrogators made others watch the soldiers being shot while waiting for their own turn. This made them weaker and emerged more fear, "The pain of anticipation is frequently reported by survivors as one of the worst forms of pain" (Avelar, 2004, p. 28). They know that a similar fate awaits them regardless of their answers. Frederic and Piani were made to observe other soldiers being questioned while they waited for their own turn:

> The questioners had all the efficiency, coldness and command of themselves of Italians who are firing and are not being fired on.
> 'Your brigade?'
> He told them.
> 'Why are you not with your regiment?'
> He told them.
> And they shot him. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 198)

The questioners seized all the authority. They were power-drunk. During the retreat, there was no authority to question their actions. They did not care about the process which led the soldiers to wander away from their regiments. They focused on the result, and shot soldiers for deserting. The shooters did not have to justify their actions. However, they could get away with it easily:

> questioning is justified not because it produces truth…because it produces pain. Herein lies its entire truth, in fact. Its purpose is to lead the tortured subject to self-incrimination—often the betrayal of a loved one—and trap him/her in a perennial circle of guilt. Such forced production of statements in the tortured subject is the act of torture itself. (Avelar 31)

They do not need the soldiers' answers as they are not interested in what they can reveal with their statements. It can be assumed that the interrogators desire to create an atmosphere of terror and turmoil. This incident gives Frederic a chance to observe things more clearly following his return. He expected to a future with Catherine and their child after the war. He had seen the life out of war zone following his injury. He could not risk losing what he could have with Catherine. Frederic had to make up his mind quickly:

> I did not know whether I should wait to be questioned or make a break now. I was obviously a German in Italian uniform. I saw how their minds worked; if they had minds and if they worked. They were all young men and they were saving their country. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 199)

He knew that these men did not trust them and their interrogation was not valid. He would end up like the other soldiers who were shot and disgraced. He considered his options thoroughly:

> I looked at the carabinieri. They were looking at the newcomers. The others were looking at the colonel. I ducked down, pushed between two men, ran for the river, my head down, I tripped at the edge and went in with a splash. The water was very cold and I stayed under as long as I could. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 200)

He decided to take control of his destiny instead of trying to express his reasons and persuade those young men of his innocence. He is aware that his decision marks him as a traitor. Nonetheless, he puts his reputation at stake rather than his life. Avelar (2004) focuses on Derrida's notion of "decision", he paraphrases Derrida's thoughts:

> A decision that does not host the trace of the undecidable would be nothing more than the unfolding of mere calculation, of a pedestrian and predictable application of predetermined rules that make of the action…For deconstruction, the essence of decision is the undecidable. (p. 82)

Frederic's choice qualifies to be a "decision" since he takes risks. He does not yield to what is expected of him. He jeopardizes both his status with one action. He does not confirm to the rules. On the contrary, he breaks away from the boundaries of the society. He jumped into the river hoping the police wouldn't follow him. He stayed under the water for a while which represents his new beginning. As he swims, he lets go of his identity as Tenente. He stops being a warrior and dives into the normal life. He beats the bullets while escaping, "There were shots when I ran and shots when I came up the first time. I heard them when I was almost above water. There were no shots now" (Hemingway, 2004, p.200). He deserts the army to establish a new life with a baby and the love of his life. This is the turning point in his military career. He decides to exchange honour for life. However, he still wonders what his family will think about him: "Piani would tell them they had shot me. They went through the pockets and took the papers of the people they shot. They would not have my papers. They might call me drowned. I wondered what they would hear in the States" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 206). While speculating, he insinuates that Pioni will survive the questioning to inform his family. He refrains from assuming that Piani is more likely to die after his escape. He does not stay to suffer with Piani even though Piani did not leave him behind when he had a chance. He discharges their comradeship and chooses a selfish path since he no longer believes in sacrifice and heroism. His final military act contradicts with his "heroic" actions during his injury. His decision may be regarded as an unethical choice by many; however, Avelar (2004) mentions Carl von Clausewitz's ideas regarding ethics and war:

> war is precisely the moment of complete ceasing of ethical concerns in politics. War is the culmination of politics in a brutal game of force. There may be a pragmatics of warfare but there may never be—except due to a tremendous irresponsibility—an ethics of war. (p. 3)

Avelar states that Clausewitz believed that war abolished ethics. This can be seen in the enforcement of interrogators who take lives without solid proofs. Everyone uses force to realise their wishes. Considering Clausewitz's remarks Frederic's action should not be rendered to be unethical. He did not condemn anyone to suffer with his decision. He just rebelled against the enforcers and saved his life from being wasted for the ego of others. He risked his reputation by accepting the emasculating associations of being a deserter which contradicts with his earlier behaviours. What Frederic put on stake shows his total distrust on the system and on warfare.

Frederic directly goes to Milan to find Catherine and get a glimpse of civilian life. When he arrives in Milan, he goes to a wine shop. In the shop, people presume that Frederic is a soldier and ask him about the front and the bartender realizes his situation:

> 'Then let me tell you one thing. Do not go about with that coat.'
> 'Why?'
> 'On the sleeves it shows very plainly where the stars have been cut away. The cloth is a different color.'
>
> I did not say anything.
> 'If you have no papers I can give you papers.'
> 'What papers?'
> 'Leave-papers.' (Hemingway, 2004, p. 212)

He notices that Frederic is a deserter and cut off his stars to hide his identity. Nonetheless, instead of snitching on, he warns Frederic to change his appearance. His speech implies that he does not regard Frederic's desertion to be treacherous. He does not question his actions and reasons behind them. He even proposes to help Frederic escape by supplying him with necessary paper work. Frederic does not reveal his intentions. However, he visits an acquaintance called Simmons who also tells Frederic to buy new clothes. He thinks that Frederic should row to Switzerland to get rid of any legal obligations or consequences. These two similar approaches by

different men show how people were fed up with the war. Therefore, they did not judge Frederic's actions. Frederic finds out that Catherine is out of town. He tries to find Catherine and takes a train to meet her. They do not have specific plans other than being together. At night barman comes to their room:

> 'What's the matter, Emilio? Are you in trouble?'
> 'No. You are, Tenente.'
> 'Yes?'
> 'They are going to arrest you in the morning.'
> 'Yes?' (Hemingway, 2004, p. 235)

The barman's warning saves Frederic and Catherine's life. It also reflects upon the general public view. Soldiers desired peace. Civilians desired piece. However, it was politically problematic: "Men had been maimed and killed in such unimaginable number that any talk of a compromise peace risked seeming to dishonour them and render their sacrifices meaningless" (Hochschild, 2011, p. 276). Frederic deserts the army alone; however, it is shown in the novel that the public support his decision. Several people warn him and help him to change his appearance in order not to be recognized. Finally, the barman saves his life by helping him to leave the country. The barman took his chances with them and gave away his boat and direction to Switzerland (Hemingway, 2004, p. 238).His attitude shows that he did not help them with material intentions. He only wanted to save their lives and give them a chance to start over. He prioritised saving them.

They rowed all night to get to Switzerland. The next day police questioned them; however, they had money. Nothing was a problem for them. Nobody asked tricky questions. Their answers were accepted without a question:

> 'What have you been doing in Italy?'
> 'I have been studying architecture. My cousin has been studying art.
> 'Why do you leave there?'

> ‘We want to do the winter sport. With the war going on you cannot study architecture.’ (Hemingway, 2004, p. 249)

Their simple excuse was winter sports. The police even suggested them suitable places for it. The attitude of the police contrasted the interrogation of the war police which signifies the easiness of the peace time. After that they found a comfortable place for Catherine to rest and began living in Lausanne. However, their happy days were cut short when another encounter with death emerged during Catherine’s labour: “‘I’m not going to die now, darling. I’m past where I was going to die. Aren’t you glad?’” (Hemingway, 2004, p. 282). Catherine gets quite sensational before labour. On the contrary, Frederic, who was exposed to danger of death on multiple occasions, does not think about the possibility of losing Catherine. She is his silver lining who attaches him to life. He assumes that he left death behind when he escaped the police. He does not care much about the baby as fatherhood appears as an abstract concept. It is easier for him to be worried about Catherine, who has been her companion during the war. Frederic’s feelings about his baby create a contrast with Chris’s approach toward his baby boy Oliver in *The Return of the Soldier*. Chris experienced fatherhood before the war, and confronted the loss of his son before he was sent off. However, he could not let his grief out which triggered his traumatic memory loss during the war. On the contrary, Frederic expects his baby right after violating his duties during the war. Therefore, having a son does not hold the same value for him. Chris lost his heir when his boy passed away; therefore, his pain peaked during the war which was also an emasculating experience for him. On the other hand, Frederic finds out the gender of his baby after birth when he has already lost his heroic ideals and belief in the war. Therefore, he is only concerned about Catherine’s pain:

> Poor, poor dear Cat. And this was the price you paid for sleeping together. This was the end of the trap. This was what people got for loving each other. Thank God for gas, anyway. What must it have been like before there were anaesthetics. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 283)

Frederic does not regard labour as a price to pay for bringing new life to the world. He perceives it as a punishment for love. After enduring the moments of danger and having multiple encounters with death, Frederic cannot foresee a reason for Catherine to die during labour. He imagines that he has left death behind when he swam across the land. Baudrillard (1993) mentions the increased life expectancy in modern societies and how it contributes to the idea of natural death which is expected at a later period of life:

> An ideal or standard form of death, 'natural' death, corresponds to the biological definition of death and the rational logical will. This death is 'normal' since it comes 'at life's proper term'. Its very concept issues from the possibility of pushing back the limits of life: living becomes a process of accumulation, and science and technology start to play a role in this quantitative strategy. (p. 162)

Modern societies invented a concept called 'natural death' which is expected of old people who fulfil their capacity in this world. They have nothing to exchange; therefore, their elimination can be regarded as natural. Old people are believed to live the life to its fullest. Technological and medical improvements elevated this concept as they promised longer lives due to improved comprehensive treatments. Life is about accumulation. However, the collection of time on earth ultimately leads to death. Frederic's inner monologue reveals his negative approach following the war. He cannot cherish the idea of having a baby. Instead, he keeps thinking that Catherine is being penalised for their love. Moreover, Frederic is thankful for gas which eases Catherine's pains. Gas is the product of technology which helps eliminating his dark ideas. Finally, when he thinks of the slight possibility of her death, he banishes the idea: "And what if she should die? She won't die. People don't

die in childbirth nowadays. That was all husbands thought. Yes, but what if she should die? She won't die" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 283). He cannot imagine a scenario where she perishes:

> Natural death therefore signifies not the acceptance of death within 'the order of things', but a systematic denegation of death. Natural death is subject to science, and death's call is to be exterminated by science. This clearly signifies that death is inhuman, irrational and senseless, like untamed nature. (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 162)

Catherine can be assumed to be too young to suffer from natural death. The phenomena of natural death; thus, eradicates the probabilities of death for young people in the normal course of life. Catherine does not fit in to that category. Natural death denies death to many people exempt from accidents or catastrophes. It is cooperated into the system of control which discriminates against death. Science exterminates death by delaying it until the last possible moment. Frederic thus thinks that no women die giving birth anymore. Having escaped from the terror of war, he cannot expect Catherine to die. It can be argued that Hemingway points out that deserting the war does not guarantee being relieved from the baggage of the war by killing Catherine and her son. When Frederic reveals the moment his son is born, he states that he did not feel change of heart:

> A doctor came out followed by a nurse. He held something in his two hands that looked like a freshly skinned rabbit and hurried across the corridor with it and in through another door. I went down to the other door he had gone into and found them in the room doing things to a new-born child. The doctor held him up for me to see. He held him by the heels and slapped him.
> 'Is he all right?'
> 'He's magnificent. He'll weigh five kilos.'
> I had no feeling for him. He did not seem to have anything to do with me. I felt no feeling of fatherhood. (Hemingway, 2004, p. 287)

Frederic exposes that the first time he sees his baby is far from being magical. He compares the baby to a skinned rabbit to accentuate its ugliness. His statement is not emotional. He does not say "my baby" or "my son", he refers to the baby as

"something" as if it held no value. He goes to see the baby, and admits that he felt nothing for him. He was exempt from the feeling of fatherhood. It can be argued that the war froze his feelings. After witnessing death followed by more death, he couldn't find any reasons to celebrate having a child in an unstable world. Especially, having a baby boy meant that the baby might have to fight one day. War period and post-war period did not leave any possibilities of stability: "The period following the Great War is portrayed as the end of Victorian certainties. Society was less secure. World-wide economic depression and labour unrest undermined men's roles as breadwinners" (Burke, 1996, p. 14). There was no guarantee of having a peaceful life. Frederic was aware that even though they were physically away from the war zone, the war had not ended. Even if it would end, there was no chance of a happy life. Frederic was conscious of the situation. Even the nurse was curious after Frederic's reaction:

> 'Aren't you proud of your son?' the nurse asked. They were washing him and wrapping him in something. I saw the little dark face and dark hand, but I did not see him move or hear him cry. The doctor was doing something to him again. He looked upset.
> 'No,' I said. 'He nearly killed his mother.'
> 'It isn't the little darling's fault. Didn't you want a boy?' (Hemingway, 2004, p. 287)

The nurse assumes that Frederic desired to have a son. Therefore, it was only normal for him to be proud. The baby's hands and face were dark. Even though he sees the darkness of the baby, he is still worried about Catherine and blaming the baby for causing her harm. After some time, he suspects that some things are wrong and talks to the nurse about the baby:

> 'What's the matter with the baby?' I asked.
> 'Didn't you know?'
> 'No.'
> 'He wasn't alive.'
> 'He was dead?'

> ‘They couldn’t start him breathing. The cord was caught around his neck or something.’ (Hemingway, 2004, p. 288)

Maybe he was aware of the baby’s situation; however, he denied it unconsciously. Therefore, he didn’t show any signs of sympathy for his baby. His time with Catherine created an illusion of happiness for Frederic but the dream was over. Baudrillard (1993) states that death creates a line between the living and the dead:

> Death is ultimately nothing more than the social line of demarcation separating the ‘dead’ from the ‘living’: therefore, it affects both equally. Against the senseless illusion that reduces life to an absolute surplus-value by subtracting death from it, the indestructible logic of symbolic exchange re-establishes the equivalence of life and death in the indifferent fatality of survival. In survival, death is repressed; life itself, in accordance with that well known ebbing away, would be nothing more than a survival determined by death (p. 127)

Baudrillard claims that death affects both the living and the dead since it is the decision maker. Frederic went between both sides of this thin line from beginning of the novel until the end. His life was in the hands of the death. Life is about survival. However, even the concept of survival is established and re-established by death. In survival, death is cast away once again even though being alive is the courtesy of death. Frederic survives with the decision of death which took away the lives of all precious people. Survival becomes Frederic’s curse. He survives without a meaning, without anyone to accompany his life. Frederic loses all his positive vibes and ebbs away to dark thoughts:

> Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. (Hemingway, 2004, p.289)

Frederic cannot supress his feelings any longer. He takes the example of the death of his son to make a generalization about life and death. Frederic, who did not react to the previous deaths of his beloved ones, now thinks about them deeply. He thought

that if he could have a life with Catherine, he could leave bad memories behind. He jumps into the conclusion that they have no choice, no will. They are alive just to die. This is their mere mission. Frederic survived but he doesn't have a goal. What did survival mean when all people he loved were dead? He escaped the army however was it worth? Did he save himself from the horrors of the world? After learning the baby's death, Frederic comes to terms with Catherine's death, "It seems she had one haemorrhage after another. They couldn't stop it. I went into the room and stayed with Catherine until she died. She was unconscious all the time, and it did not take her very long to die" (Hemingway, 2004, p. 293). In the end, Frederic simply explains the cause of Catherine's death and completes his duty by standing with her. His own survival does not mean much anymore. His survival costed him his beloved ones.

It is known that Hemingway wrote multiple versions for the ending of the novel each featuring various alterations. However, all known versions had something in common: "All of the conclusions in the Hemingway Collection presuppose Catherine's death. Hemingway chose to present the actual death in understated, summary fashion at the very end of the penultimate section of the last chapter" (Oldsey, 1977-1978, p. 493). Hemingway was determined not to give a happy ending to his war novel. Frederic's own survival did not bring happiness. Catherine was his only motivation for life. Frederic tells his perspective of the war long after it takes place. The novel can be considered to be the testimony of Frederic's loss. The fact that he narrates his story shows that he is coming to terms with his loss. This novels serves as a therapy for Frederic, "The aim of therapeutic reminiscence is the eventual production of forgetting, the anticipation of which produces a profound suspicion in the traumatized subject"(Avelar, 2004, p. 46). Paradoxically, he can only get over

loss by forgetting even though the expectation of forgetting is also painful. In order to get over his grief, he needs to share his feelings and his truth with other people. His survival accomplishes its mission when he gets to tell the reality of the war for him. Spreading the story helps him: "People often find themselves telling the story of their loss over and over, which is one way that our minds deal with trauma. It is a way of denying the pain while trying to accept the reality of the loss" (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2007, p. 10). Telling the story initiates his healing process. After losing all the people who mattered, commemorating them with his story is a significant undertaking for Frederic. He surfaces his memories and feelings with his narrative. It both distances him from the events and makes him face the authenticity of his experience. Avelar (2004) points out the difficulty of narration for traumatised subjects:

> The predicament of the traumatized subject is, then, that there can be no elaboration and overcoming of the trauma without the articulation of a narrative in which the traumatic experience is inserted. But this very insertion can only be perceived by the subject as a real betrayal of the intractability of the experience. (p. 46).

Silence does not heal trauma. As Avelar proposes the story of trauma requires to be told in detail even though the traumatised subject will struggle with it. Fredric needs to share his story to continue his life regardless of the struggle. Therefore, he skips many parts and refrains from showing his reaction to certain losses. Nonetheless, he narrates Catherine's birth story in detail as it is the most wounding part for him. He expected his desertion to be justified by Catherine and their baby. However, after telling everything he comes to acknowledge that his task was to inform everyone about their tale. Fighting or escaping was not related to bravery for Frederic. On the contrary, the narrative of his loss marks his courage as he reveals his vulnerability.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis explored Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* with regard to the Great War, which challenged the established distribution of work and taboos grounding gender roles. All three novels present the reader with a different aspect of the war and unique experiences of their characters'; however, they all come up with similar conclusions. These novels do not conduct explicit propagandas against wars. Nonetheless, they manage to disperse the negativity surrounding the individuals as well as illustrating the failure of abstract concepts used to glorify fighting. The order of the novels presented in the thesis follows a specific arrangement. Each novel takes the readers closer to the realities of the war. *Jacob's Room* deals with the war implicitly. *The Return of the Soldier* takes place out of war zone, yet it features a soldier as a central character. Finally, *A Farewell to Arms* exposes a soldier's account of his own experiences from heroic acts to desertion. Regardless of their unique settings and techniques, the novels depict characters suffering from loss which highlights the collective grief underlying social relations on the aftermath of the war.

This study was supported by a variety of critical and historical texts due to the depth and the delicacy of subject. Sigmund Freud's, Julia Kristeva's and Jacques Derrida's texts were used to explain and examine the slight yet significant differences between mourning and melancholia. It should be noted that the concept of mourning became problematic following the war as the quantity of bodies were increasing day by day. Therefore, previous rituals no longer applied which created confusion and mostly resulted in melancholy. Cathy Caruth's multiple works were

consulted to explore how trauma functions. Critical works dealing with trauma were consulted to detect the traumatic behaviours of characters. As well as studies on trauma, Elaine Showalter's writings on the similarities between hysteria and shell-shock was utilised to trace the emasculating effects of the war which emerged "feminine" symptoms in men. Susan Grayzel and Joanna Burke's historical accounts of the gender relations during the Great War were revised to supply background information regarding the social changes taking place. Richard McNally's theory concerning trauma and memory was featured to have more insight regarding the minds of shell-shocked soldiers. Finally, Jean Baudrillard's study helped to investigate the relationship of the living with death and the dead. All these scholarly works constituted the backbone of the theoretical frame work of this thesis.

The second chapter of the thesis focused on Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, which does not fit in to the category of a traditional war novel. The chapter states that Woolf breaks away from the typical war narratives dominated by men by erasing warfare from her version of a war novel. Woolf succeeds in revealing the layers of war through the melancholy of characters who are suffocated by loss. This section posits that Woolf appoints melancholic female characters to free them from their traditional role as assigned mourners. As a result, Woolf displays how women are no longer obliged to follow instructions and how they are in control of their own narrative. Their collective melancholy also serves to emphasize the impossibility of coping with loss when the amount increases each and every day. It is argued that Woolf applies melancholy to her stylistic preferences: she employs excursions to manipulate the time to mimic the time concept of melancholic people and the excessive use of repetitive sentences reflects the melancholy of characters who are obsessed with Jacob. Moreover, Woolf erases the voice of Jacob, who is the focal

point of the novel, to point out the increasing role of women in social and professional life. Furthermore, this part of the thesis debates that the silence of Jacob and his awkwardness presents him as a traumatised figure implying the communication problems discharged soldiers encountered when they returned. It is also argued that Jacob's discretion reinforces the inexplicability of military experience which refuses narration.

Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* pioneered the exploration of shell-shock in fiction as it was published in 1916. West based her novel on a case study of a soldier she read on a newspaper. The third chapter of the thesis dealt with the concepts of trauma and shell-shock in relation to memory and assigned gender roles. It explores the traumatic amnesia of Chris Baldry in accordance with his lifestyle prior to the war and the specific period which he forgot. It is claimed that Chris forgot his adult life as he couldn't cope with the harsh reality of the burden of his "role" in society when he faced the modern warfare which disregarded personal combat. New mass weapons trivialised the active duty of men by making them fight a superior technology. Chris was the head of an estate which supplied him with countless responsibilities and he lost his son prior to the war which scarred his exemplary life as a patriarch. Nonetheless, he joined the army to fulfil his duty as a citizen. It is asserted that encountering with modern warfare which illuminated his helplessness in combat reminded him of the loss of his son and caused his amnesia. It is stated that the war initiates Chris to question his lifestyle and duties. Therefore, his memory shuts down to protect him. Moreover, it is claimed that Chris is silenced by the narrative due to his amnesia to create a chance for Jenny to narrate her observations regarding the war. Jenny's narration points out the rising control of women in life as well as suggesting the declining authority of men controlling

various aspects of social life and business life. On the other hand, Chris's amnesia represents the confused situation of shell-shocked soldiers. The origins and the connotations of shell-shock and its similarities with hysteria are examined to find out people's perception of shell-shock at the turn of the century. Similarly, the complex structure of trauma puzzled everyone which prolonged the process of searching for a cure. The inadequacy of research and resources directed towards trauma problematized the possibilities of treating amnesia. Similarly, the text offers a symbolic cure as it is discovered by Margaret who stands for Chris's past representing his liabilities. Chris's recovery is inferred to send him back to death which implies the impossibility of turning to pre-war order.

The fourth chapter of this study presented Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* with the notion of death and decline of ideals during warfare. The protagonist of the novel Frederic Henry, who is also the narrator, experiences active warfare and civilian life in a compressed period which shapes his ideas regarding the war. This chapter asserts that Frederic loses his belief in fighting upon witnessing excessive death which was excluded by the society. It is argued that after his multiple confrontations with death Frederic concludes that there is no glory in fighting. On the contrary, it degrades the nature of men leading them to commit unspeakable acts. Therefore, he loses his belief in abstract dignifying concepts used to mask the ugly truth of death. It is implied that Frederic has a chance to evaluate his experience on his sick leave as he has time to compare two lifestyles in a short time. The whole process leads to enlightenment in Frederic causing him to risk his reputation for the sake of having a normal life away from the slaughters of the battles. The chapter posits that the "heroic" acts of Fredric at the beginning of the novel and his desertion towards the end substantiate the extremity of the war leading men to act in

unthinkable manners. Following his disillusionment, Fredric risks his reputation and deserts the army which is considered to be an emasculating behaviour. However, the ending of the novel illuminates the scarce probability of a normal life following the Great War with the specific example of Frederic's broken dreams even miles away from battlefields. The chapter postulates that Frederic's narrative of his experiences creates a therapeutic outlet by giving him a chance to confront with his wounds. He loses everyone around him, yet he survives to assume the role of maintaining their memory.

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