

Horror of war



This story speaks the truth about the war rather than romanticizes it and emphasizing on the idea of the honor, patriotic duty, to endure, and glory. *All Quiet on the Western Front* displays the war how it really was. Using images of fear and meaninglessness to replace the romantic visions of heroism. This novel focuses much on the physical and psychological damage that war brings.

In the end, almost every major character is dead. This shows war's horrible and devastating outcome on the young generation of men who were recruited and forced to fight. One of the worst things about war is the images shown to man. Men killed by the millions in terrifying ways. Bodies blown to pieces, limbs broken, and flesh mangled from the bones. Along with the deaths, there are many injuries that often outnumbered dead men. As Paul Bäumer witnessed his friend, Franz Kemmerich's, death in the hospital, the images were terrifying and often lead to death. Kemmerich's death was the first sign of the meaninglessness of life and death in the war. The turmoil was expressed in the lines, " Day after day goes by with pain and fear, groans and death rumbles. Even the death room I no use anymore; it is too small. " (Armature 19) In the novel and in war the men have no where to hide from bombs and bullet shells. Paul and his friends must reside in dirt trenches where death surrounds them. " We lie under the network of arching shells and live in a suspense of uncertain fate.

If a shot comes, we can duck, that is all; we neither know nor can determine where it will fall. " (Armature 101) They sleep holding their breath so no rats steal it. The dirt surrounding them turns dark as it absorbs the blood of the

fallen. The worst part of the war is that both sides fighting live through the same conditions. Paul realizes this when he guards the Russian prison camp. Paul sympathizes with the soldiers poor shape and he knows that he shares the same role as them in the war. When Paul kills the man who dies in his shell hole he feels remorseful.

But now, for the first time, I see you are a man like me. I thought of your hand grenades, of your bayonet, of your rifle; now I see your wife and your face and our fellows' hip. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor or devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the same generative me, comrade; how could you be my enemy? " (Armature 223) This is when he decides that he must live with the fact that all the men have killed others that were just like them.

In the end of the novel, Paul is the last of his friends to die. As he falls to death his face shows a sense of calmness. Ryan 3 " He had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over on saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come. " (Armature 296) Paul was happier in death than life because of the horrors of war. Paul was happier that he didn't have to lead a life of war any longer.