

# All quiet on the western front vs. postmodernism assignment

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There are many novels that recollect various periods throughout the decades. The novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* is one of these. The author Erich Maria Remarque uses a fictional character named Paul Bäumer to instill feeling, thoughts, and actions that the German soldiers went through during World War I specifically battling on the Western front. This novel gives a historical outlook on how the war affected these soldiers during and after the Great War.

Before getting into the book Remarque gives a few words to set his expectations or what one gets out of the book. "This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war." This small quote is not unlike some parts of modernist literature, although the author is not speaking directly to the reader through first person, Remarque is talking about his fictional book.

He is giving a kind of personal note on what to expect, this does "bypass traditional narrative styles" however, Remarque does this in a very formal manner and only occurs this one time in the beginning of the book. Where a postmodern writer could throw his or her thoughts about any part of a story anywhere they please and be informal about it; often times using "techniques that parody the writer's craft, mingle past, present, and future events, leave situations unresolved, and freely mix the ordinary and the bizarre." Modernist literature is often referred to as "fiction about fiction." One way to tell that a piece of literature is a modern piece of literature is by looking for the rejection of traditional authority and heroism. This happens early on <https://assignbuster.com/all-quiet-on-the-western-front-vs-postmodernism-assignment/>

in the book when Paul Beamer remembers his schoolteacher Keynoter, whom being too old to fight in the war himself encouraged his students to sign up for the army. He regularly gives patriotic speeches that glorified defending the fatherland. One pupil resisted to sign up at first, Josef Beam, but he too caved when the rest of class had enlisted. Ironically Josef was the first one in the class to be killed in combat.

In the text Remarried says, ' The idea of authority which they presented was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a manlier wisdom. But the first death we saw shattered this belief the world as they taught it to us broke in pieces. ' I They is referring to his teacher and other older role models, Josef represented this first death that shattered his belief; he rejected the age-old patriotism that pressured young men into going to war. In the text Group, the intellect, who is one of Paula classmates and good friend during the war sarcastically brings up a postmodern view of war.

He suggests that the generals and ministers should dress up in bathing suits and use clubs to fight with the enemy, gladiator style in an arena. Group says this in a joking manner however this idea can have a much deeper meaning. This idea represents a postmodern view, war as entertainment, which was not brought on until later with Vietnam and the Gulf War. A modern, realist writer; he uses this book to show a realistic view on WWI and on many occasions graphically depicts the atrocities of war in detail. Showing war through the eyes of an average soldier instead of a general or political leader of the time.

Amidst all the violence the characters are always moving back and forth between the front and the safer camping sight behind the front where they can have some time to relax, enjoy nature, smoke cigars, and eat some chow with their comrades. Remarried in a way Juxtaposes the graphic fighting of the war and simple pleasures the soldiers take part in during their rest days. Juxtaposition is very common in postmodern writing. However, in All Quiet On The Western Front Remarried Juxtaposes two somewhat related things war and peace, where a postmodern writer may compare two completely random or unrelated ideas.

Sometimes even taking “ fragments of information out of their original literary/ historical context and Juxtaposes them with little or no commentary on their meaning. “ 2 This type of writing can leave the reader with a lot of unanswered questions, or leave them pondering why an author selected to mention two unrelated ideas. Compare All Quiet On The Western Front to the story we read in class A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings by Gabriel Garcia Marquee. Obviously they are numerous differences to be pointed out, the title alone of Marquee story can raise an eyebrow in curiosity.

Although Armature’s book can be chaotic and surprising at times, it follows rational thought and nothing out of the ordinary happens outside of typical warfare. In Marquee story there are mythical creatures falling from the sky, people spontaneously being turned into spiders and crabs that seem to be on the verge of taking over this town. The narrator portrays all of these bizarre things that are happening as completely normal and makes it seem as if these kinds of things happen often. If an angel figure fell out of the sky

in Armature's book the war might even have ended, then again at that time no one would have taken him seriously as a writer.

Armature's book follows a realistic outlook on the world and the characters are fighting for a reason, while Marquez's style of writing is more like a fairy tale where the characters don't always act rationally or have a purpose. The end of the novel really brings together the death, tired, depression, confusion, and mixed feelings that were brought on by the brutality of war. Kate the last of Pall's friends dies. He is devastated by this. " Do I walk? Have I feet still? I raise my eyes, I let them even round, and turn myself with them, one circle, one circle, and I stand in the midst.