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War Trauma on Soldiers in *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque and *A Rumor of War* by Philip Caputo

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Abstract

The psychological effects of war on soldiers probably constitute the most significant repercussions of war. This article deals with the war trauma on the soldiers in the fictive representation of the American Civil War by Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), the memoirs of World War I and the Vietnam War in *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) by Erich Maria Remarque and *A Rumor of War* (1977) by veteran Philip Caputo. Whereas some authors have treated romantically war, others such as Stephen Crane, Erich Maria Remark, and Philip Caputo portray it realistically in all its aspects, including the dehumanization, the death, the suffering of soldiers, the absurdity, the psychological devastation of soldiers hence the state of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This article studies the above-mentioned novels to illustrate that war has psychological damages on soldiers.

Keys words: Vietnam War, Representation, American Civil War, Dehumanization, World War I, Realism, Post-Traumatic Stress (PTSD), Psychological effects

Résumé

Les effets psychologiques de la guerre sur les soldats constituent vraisemblablement les répercussions les plus importantes de la guerre. Cet article traite du traumatisme de guerre sur les soldats dans la représentation fictive de la guerre civile américaine par Stephen Crane dans *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), les mémoires de la Première Guerre mondiale et de la guerre du Vietnam dans *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) d'Erich Maria Remarque et *A Rumor of War* (1977) du vétéran Philip Caputo. Alors que certains auteurs ont traité la guerre de manière romantique, d'autres comme Stephen Crane, Erich Maria Remarque et Philip Caputo la décrivent de

manière réaliste dans tous ses aspects, y compris la déshumanisation, la mort, la souffrance des soldats, l'absurdité, la dévastation psychologique des soldats d'où l'état de stress post-traumatique (SSPT). Cet article étudie les romans mentionnés ci-dessus pour montrer que la guerre a des dommages psychologiques sur les soldats.

Mots clés: Guerre du Vietnam, Représentation, Guerre civile américaine, Déshumanisation, Première Guerre mondiale, Réalisme, Stress post-traumatique (SSPT), Effets psychologiques

Introduction

War appeared in the history of humanity as soon as structured communities knew how to organize and maneuver armed forces. We have witnessed many wars from the American Civil War, the two World Wars, the Vietnam War to those that happened in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, the North Mali and more recently Russian Invasion of Ukraine, not counting the genocides in Gaza (2022). Warfare methods have evolved in the past, and are evolving rapidly today, due to progress of industry and science. The profusion of wars in the world and the invention of very sophisticated weapons such as atomic bombs, missiles, mines or drones urge us to study this phenomenon and its consequences, in particular the psychological effects it has on soldiers.

The spread of controlled missiles, drones as well as bombers constitute threats to the humanity and wars continue to tear out people's lives. For this reason, many poets, novelists, playwrights have deplored the omnipresence of death, the futility of war, "dehumanization", and the mental health problems resulting from wars. Jesse Glen Gray in 'The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle' captures with eloquence the effects of war when he states:

Men who have lived in the zone of combat long enough to be veterans are sometimes possessed by fury that makes them capable of anything. Blinded by rage to destroy and supremely careless of consequences, they storm against the enemy until they are either victorious, dead, or utterly exhausted (39).

Like Glenn Gray, many writers have committed themselves to demystifying war, denouncing the consequences of this plague and showing its psychological effects on soldiers. Among them, we can list American creative writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque, Dean Myers, James Jones, Philip Caputo, Stephen Crane and Kurt Vonnegut to name a few. Their literary works remind us that war is constant in our society and it is an issue that will continue to be the subject of important debate. Centuries after the first works on war, many authors continue to describe the true realities of war and their efforts continued into the twentieth century. In their works, the authors show that soldiers are exposed to permanent physical risk because they can be physically wounded and killed by explosives or machine guns. This constant feeling of being attacked affects the soldiers' nerves. The psychological effects of war on soldiers in all the novels are painted accurately in Remarque's words at the beginning of the novel:

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 (1).

The epigraph states that the book is the story of a "generation" who even if it has survived physically the horrors of war, has been mentally "destroyed" after the war. The quotation thus opens the novels' examination of the effects of war on those who fought it. Because soldiers have seen so many horrors in the trenches, they are subjected to emotional distress, shell shock, nostalgia etc.

Dorit Szykierski describes the terms used to present trauma resulting from war. He states:

During the American Civil War [war trauma] was designated as nostalgia or soldier's heart, pointing to the idea that the breakdown was caused by homesickness. In the World War I the term shell-shock indicated that the etiological factor was the neurological damage due to excessive exposure to shelling or bombing. After the Great War, the growing influence of psychoanalysis on psychiatry shifted the emphasis to unconscious conflicts as vulnerability-increasing factors expressed in the term war neurosis (941).

War trauma has been differently labeled by experts. As far as the World War II is concerned, the term most psychoanalysts use is “combat fatigue.” The term “post-traumatic stress reaction” was coined after the Vietnam war. However, since the World War I had several psychological victims cured, “war trauma” became one of the most commonly used terms.

In our study of the psychological effects of war on soldiers, we focus particularly on the works of Philip Caputo, Erich Maria Remarque and Stephen Crane. Although they do not all belong to the same era, they are all militant literature for the American cause. Erich Remarque in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Caputo in *A Rumor of War* and Crane in *The Red Badge of Courage*, all describe through these novels, the effects of war on the soldiers’ mental health. Given that literature has always taken a great interest in the problems of society as well as its well-being, American literature, like our authors, has been able to produce works committed to peace and justice. The history of war has been a source of inspiration for many writers, American and non-American, who have focused on the absurdity of war and the lie of the false ideals that threw so many young men into it. War is a reality which affects the country in general and families in particular. These people can find relief in literature to the extent that it provides an account of what is happening. War literature has existed since the first literary texts were written, like Homer in *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Edward Bond writes in the preface to *Lear*: “violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent, we have no future... so it will be immoral not to write about violence” (3). This is the reason why Remarque in *All Quiet on the Western Front* takes a very critical look at the nationalism instilled by Germany in its population. It describes the shocking truth of the trenches in all its horror. Caputo in the prologue to *A Rumor of War* states:

My purpose has not been to confess complicity in what, for me, amounted to murder, but, using myself and a few other men as examples, to show that war, by its nature, can arouse a psychopathic violence in men of seemingly normal impulses (xviii).

However, the investigations carried out on our research project allowed us to realize that there is still a lot to say on the theme of war as perceived by Caputo, Remarque and Crane.

In this essay, focusing on a work by Crane, Remarque and Caputo and leaning on the theory of psychoanalysis; I seek to show that the similar portrayal of war trauma on the soldiers in *works* by the above-mentioned authors is to display the psychological effects of war on soldiers. By highlighting the similarities and differences in the representation of the psychological impacts war has on soldiers, I want to show that this depiction suggests the horrors, a condemnation of war ideologies and futility of conflict.

The War Trauma

War has long-lasting and deep effects on soldiers who serve on the battleground. These soldiers face daily battlefield conditions that can wound, disable and haunt them for life. Because of war's catastrophic effect on the soldiers' *psychology*, there is a tendency from authors to describe that condition in an effort to show its real sense. *The psychological effect of war on soldiers is generally attributed to trauma caused by the crash of shells. Besides, this collision is thought to disturb the brain and provoke "shell shock". In fact, W. J. Scott defines a shell shock as "the dazed, disoriented state many soldiers experienced during combat or shortly thereafter" (296). The term shell shock was invented to express the result of some soldiers in World War I to the trauma of battle. Moreover, the definition of "shell shock" is more explained by Adam Hochschild in To End All Wars - a story of loyalty and rebellion, 1914-1918. In that article, Hochschild states that a "shell shock" is "a reaction to the intensity of the bombardment and fighting that produced a helplessness appearing variously as panic and being scared, or frightened, an inability to reason, sleep, walk or talk" (242, 348).*

War trauma comes from experiences of harsh events which have an effect on the psychology of soldiers related to warfare; that can lead to dehumanization or depression. Seeing so many killings can increase this trauma. "When You see Millions of the Mouthless Dead", a poem by Charles Hamilton Sorley,

describes evidence of war trauma. He states in his poem, "Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow." Sorley is inferring, due to effects of war, many soldiers have become emotionless which befalls the characters in *A Rumor of War* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Furthermore, Sorley declares in his aforementioned poem, "It is a spook. None wears the face you knew." Here he is implying that soldiers involved in battles are changed into what is called a spook which is in literary terms a ghost.

Moreover, another theory of psychological effect of war is suggested by Sigmund Freud which is the "war neurosis." To illustrate the existence of psychological extracts in the narratives, it is essential to explain some Freudian concepts. It is his colleagues Sandor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham, Ernst Simmel, and Earnest Jones who engaged in this speculation and produced a book titled *Psycho-Analysis and the War Neuroses* (1919).

The introduction to the book was written by Freud in which he explains his theory of war neuroses as engendered by fights between soldiers' "war egos" and "peace egOS:" Sigmund Freud states that:

The war neuroses, in so far as they differ from the ordinary neuroses of peace time through particular peculiarities, are to be regarded as traumatic neuroses, whose existence has been rendered possible or promoted through an ego-conflict...The conflict takes place between the old ego of peace time and the new war-ego of the soldier, and it becomes acute as soon as the peace-ego is faced with the danger of being killed through the risky undertakings of his newly formed parasitical double. Or one might put it, the old ego protects itself from the danger to life by flight into the traumatic neurosis in defending itself against the new ego which it recognizes as threatening its life (2-3)

Freud also points out that war neurosis is best treated by the cathartic method of psychoanalysis. From the Columbia Encyclopedia Third Edition, "Psychoanalysis" is the "name given by Sigmund Freud both to a system of psychopathology and to a therapeutic procedure designed primarily for the treatment of psychoneurosis." Besides, Freud was summoned by the Austrian War Ministry to give his view on the violent healing of psychologically wounded soldiers by Army Doctors. In 1920, he presented a memorandum entitled, "Memorandum on the Electrical Treatment of War Neurotics."

Sigmund Freud declares that war neurosis has psychical causes that are best treated with psychoanalysis rather than electrical shock treatment.

In reality, when veterans come back to their country, many reveal major psychiatric symptoms. These symptoms vary from difficulty sleeping to dramatic flashbacks which are known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a growth of symptoms subsequent to a psychologically shocking event. The illness “begins with an event in which the individual is threatened with his or her own death or the destruction of a body part, to such humiliation that their personal identity may be lost” (Howell-Koehler 147). As seen in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, soldiers consume greatly cigarettes to prevent them from sleeping. Furthermore, sleepless nights can lead to anxiety or a popular disease known as, post-traumatic stress disorder.

In his Poem “Spring Offensive” Wilfred Owen represents war trauma in the form of sleep deprivation which is predominant during war. Wilfred Owen mentions trauma due to war wounds through literary techniques such as metaphors. A case in point, he says, “Leapt to swift unseen bullets, or went up.” In this context “unseen bullets” means that soldiers are frequently protecting themselves from the unidentified like in *A Rumor of War* where soldiers fight against an invisible enemy in the dark forest (Vietcong). Therefore, the terror of constantly being anxious for your life, may cause war trauma. Furthermore, Vietnam veterans who experience PTSD have a feeling of anger, insomnia, and a tendency to reply to anxious situations by using survival strategy. The illness has not been taken seriously until the 1980’s when numerous Vietnam veterans were complaining of similar symptoms. The war has let its stigmata on the soldiers but by talking about the war they think it will help them cope with depression, anger and grief but the pain may never go away.

Crane, Remarque as well as Caputo reveal in their novels the war trauma on the soldiers. The novels share a common view of war which is that war leads to the inevitable mental destruction of soldiers who have seen so much suffering.

Depiction of War Trauma in the Narratives

Crane, Remarque as well as Caputo represent in their masterpieces the war trauma on the soldiers. In their novels we see the characters fighting their nerves which have capitulated to war trauma. In fact, in the beginning of the novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque announces that “it will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war” (1). This excerpt reveals the difficulty of going back to civil life after having endured the physical effects of war. Remarque uses an anxious and severe tone to express his view of the war. This sad tone is in line with the themes of “The Lost Generation”, the horrors of war and the destructiveness of war. These themes express what young soldiers of the lost generation have to live through, if they survive. Besides, scenes of battle appear not easy to forget by the soldiers who have seen their comrades lying dead or mutilated by fires and shells. Consequently, it becomes difficult for the soldiers to get rid of all these morbid images. The psychological effect of war is shown clearly by Paul Bäumer when he takes a leave and goes home. In fact, having experienced and seen physical injury, Paul demonstrates the soldier’s incapacity to return to normal life. At this point, Richard Church notes that: “his old world was dead: barriers lay between him and his parents, his old associations. Even his mother dying of cancer [...] even that was a distant, half-real sensation” (39-43). Bäumer acquires throughout his leave that he has no feeling anymore for life outside the front. At the end of the chapter, he says, “I ought never to have come on leave” (*All Quiet* 182).

Additionally, Paul feels anxious and isolated even when he returns home. It is obvious when the main character deliberately states “I prefer to be alone, so that no one troubles me” (*All Quiet* 168). Remarque shows the way war has damaged Paul by making him incapable to be with others particularly his family. Therefore, when Paul Bäumer cannot go to anybody, he turns to his books in his childhood bedroom to find some peace of mind, but he can not. The books do not help Paul; indeed, he says, “Words, Words, Words -- they do not reach me” (*All Quiet* 173). When the leave is coming to an end, Remarque uses a technique to demonstrate the psychological effects of war. This is shown in the “Ah, Mother, Mother” (*All Quiet* 183) to prove that Paul

cannot express his feeling to his mother. Furthermore, Paul's home is present only in his reminiscences, but now it is transformed because his relatives are like strangers. Paul understands that the soldier's trauma can be overlooked but certainly not removed. As a consequence, in the trenches, soldiers must repress their emotional harm to survive. Without due consideration of the soldier's courage or stratagem, war destroys everything.

Similarly, *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane describes the mental consequence of war through Henry Fleming's perception. Narrated in a third-person limited point of view, the novel is a bildungsroman as it follows the experience of Henry Fleming, a young soldier who runs away from combat. Besides, it describes the war in the soldier's own mind about fear of death and feeling guilty from fleeing the battle field. Also, the strength of the book is that the writer can describe the effect of fear and the idea an ordinary person has in its mind through the experience of war. In *The Red Badge of Courage*, the story concentrates on the thoughts and development of young Henry. The reader can see the effect war has on Henry's beliefs and moods. The main protagonist like the majority of the soldiers suffers from mental problems when confronted with the reality of death. Henry wonders how he will behave in battle and how the atmosphere of battlefield will be: "He tried to mathematically prove to himself that he would not run from a battle" (*The Red Badge* 30). To relieve himself by means of reason, Henry makes "ceaseless calculations" of days. Finally, Henry recognizes that "he could not sit still and with a mental slate and pencil derive an answer" (*The Red Badge* 35).

Furthermore, during the darkness he perceives "visions of thousand-tongued fear that would babble at his back and make him to flee". Henry's perception forces him to feel lonely until he familiarizes with his fellows in the first battle. The first meeting with the enemy is brief and in the second which happens in his mind is extensive: "He began to exaggerate the endurance, the skill, and the valor of those who were coming" (*The Red Badge* 73). Henry Fleming conceives the enemy as "dragons" and sees himself being "gobbled". When he does not feel surrounded anymore during his first engagement, Henry flees from the battle. Thus, Henry's psychological variation is the outcome of experience from the battle which exposes the horror of war that

devastates soldiers. In addition, the psychological effect on Henry derives from the mental development from the routine of seeing assaulted by war and the fact of being vulnerable facing the brutality on the battlefield.

Alongside with Crane and Remarque, Philip Caputo has written a memoir that reveals the psychological damages of war on soldiers. In *A Rumor of War*, Caputo mentions things that really concerned the soldiers: lack of sleep, lack of cold food, constant rain, fear of ambush, and continuous biting bugs. He reveals that the lack of sleep is mostly caused by the fear of being attacked by surprise in the night and this has an important consequence on their mood. All those things lead to psychological shock along with the fact that there is so much death around them. The psychological effect of war is mostly caused by seeing a huge amount of killed and mutilated soldiers. Besides, soldiers witness their comrades being killed horribly without being able to do anything about it which can often result to a feeling of guilt.

A Rumor of War reports the psychological cost of witnessing the human toll. Moreover, Caputo and his friends scarcely sleep; they eat cold food, and go through the jungle in the rain knowing that at any moment they can be shot by a sniper or blown to bits by a minefield. In this atmosphere of high risk, Caputo and his men begin slowly to show signs of psychological trauma from their anxiety. At this point, when studying comparatively the Vietnam War and World War II, the psychological effects of both wars on the soldiers, bear resemblances that cannot be ignored. In this sense, Peter Kindsvatter in his book titled *American Soldiers Ground Combat in the World Wars, Korea, & Vietnam* (2003) recognizes that the intense brutality of war exposes soldiers to a mental state in both World War II and Vietnam.

Moreover, Kindsvatter places side by side passages from authors which expose the state that the human brain succumbs to while dealing with a huge quantity of stress. He cites Eugene B. Sledge's portrayal of Peleliu as a "fierce struggle for survival." Sledge recounts such a statement in an effort to grasp his sense of humanity while at the same time being forced into a primitive state as the only means of survival. A major factor in the degradation of a soldier's humanity into a primitive state was witnessing the horrific brutality

on friends and fellow comrades. Kindsvatter attributes this effect to the soldier's entrance into the environment of warfare.

What is more, Eugene B. Sledge, in his renowned memoir *With the Old Breed*, describes such a scene in which he sees the mutilated corpses of Marines. He states that: "One man had been decapitated... In disbelief I stared as I realized that the Japanese had cut off the dead Marine's penis and stuffed it into his mouth" (148). Sledge's reaction to such a horrifying scene is a great example of the type of conditions that force soldiers to lose all sympathy for their enemy. Most of the soldiers become psychologically affected in witnessing these atrocities. In this connection, Caputo in the novel *A Rumor of War* describes such consequence of the war on soldiers. He remembers that they "were sickened by the torn flesh, the viscera and splattered brains" (*A Rumor of War* 128). The war obviously takes a heavy toll which is expressed in this quotation:

The war was beginning to take a psychological toll. Malaria and gunshot and shrapnel wounds continued to account for most our losses, [...] To some degree, many of us began to suffer "anxiety" and "depressive" reactions [...] It was partly caused by grief, grief over the deaths of friends (*A Rumor of War* 128)

This quote gives explanation of the psychological effect that the soldiers endure while in war. This impact is partly caused by the fact that soldiers see their friends die in front of them. That circumstance pushes the soldiers into taking revenge for their comrades' death hence the savagery that causes the killing of a whole village. In fact, Caputo and his company have been for several hours in a steady fight during an operation against the Viet Cong's reserve of small arms. Besides, in this village, there are only civilians but from anxiety the Marines suddenly burn that Vietnamese village. Caputo explains that the event "had been a catharsis, a purging of months of fear, frustration, and tension. We had relieved our own pain by inflicting it on others" (*A Rumor of War* 288). Caputo also clarifies that their relief is as short-lived as the adrenaline rush that enables them to burn down the village: "that sense of relief was inextricably mingled with guilt and shame. Being men again, we again felt human emotions [...] The change in us, from

disciplined soldiers to unrestrained savages and back to soldiers, had been so swift and profound” (*A Rumor of War* 289).

In this regard, Kindsvatter attempts to examine the psychological evolution of a soldier being thrown into an aggressive atmosphere. According to him, a fresh trained soldier before knowing battle would usually be full of confidence but once he knows the sense of death, the fear is a normal result. Thus, the fear resulting from the regular presence of death creates the sort of shock that drives Caputo and his company to believe they are reassured by burning a village. Leigh Gilmore’s Foucauldian approach to traumatic autobiography-writing in her *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* helps us identify Caputo’s ambiguous position concerning the crime he is said to have committed in Vietnam. Gilmore conceives shocked individuality as a form of what she calls traumatic limit-cases. For Gilmore, trauma memoirs give “alternative truths” by “exploring representations of personhood” and “how its impact is registered in personal, aesthetic, and legal terms” (36). She believes that works which “examine the relations among people that exist in the presence of trauma can differ from the identity trauma imposes” (146).

Additionally, Caputo’s *A Rumor of War* certainly emphasizes the mutual contact of his private case with the mainly traumatic event. On the other hand, it is as well an ethical struggle to deal with his personal guilt in the losses of his comrades as well as enemies. For instance, while describing in what manner he creates his psychotic plan to kill two Vietnamese civilians he believed were Viet Cong spies, Caputo writes:

I slept briefly and fitfully in the bunker and woke up agitated. Psychologically, I had never felt worse. I had been awake for no more than a few seconds when I was seized by the same feeling that had gripped me after my nightmare about the mutilated men in my old platoon: a feeling of being afraid when there was no reason to be. And this unreasoning fear quickly produced the sensation I had often had in action: of watching myself in a movie. Although I have had a decade to think about it, I am still unable to explain why I woke up in that condition (*A Rumor of War* 297).

This passage shows that *A Rumor of War* is a characteristic description of what psychiatrists refer to as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Caputo is undergoing a brutal type of mental illness which is proved by his incapacity to explain his actions. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that is produced by a horrifying event either experiencing it or witnessing it. Besides, its symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.

In *The Vietnam in Me*, Tim O'Brien a Vietnam Veteran states that: "In war time, the world is one big long horror movie, image after image. If this is anything like Vietnam, I'm in for a lifetime of wee-hour creeps" (1994). The horrors of the trenches which soldiers have experienced make their return to civilian life impossible. In fact, because of their shocking experience from the battlefield soldiers have difficulties dealing with the civilian life after the war. This is mainly due to mental problems they have taken from seeing their friends die before them and witnessing so many killings. At this point, early in the epigraph, Remarque comments that his novel is about "a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped the shells, were destroyed by the war" (*All Quiet* 1). Remarque undertakes to tell the story of an entire generation who have escaped the destructiveness of war but still live under its nightmare. Although the soldiers' body have escaped physical damage, their psychology has been destroyed by the war. Therefore, Remarque in *All Quiet on the Western Front* attempts to describe Paul's difficulty to adjust to civilian life.

The difficulty for Paul to adjust to life is shown in chapter 7 when he receives seventeen days of leave. The moment Paul reaches his hometown; he feels uncomfortable around his family. Paul Bäumer has difficulties adjusting to civilian life so much so that he wishes he is back in the trenches, even though it is more dangerous there. Moreover, the life of the trenches is so embedded in Paul Bäumer that he no longer feels at ease at home. What is more, his mother asks him if it was "very bad out there". Paul has no words that she would understand about his experiences on the battlefield. Paul the main protagonist has seen so many terrors that in the same chapter, "the screeching of the trams" frightens him because it has the same noise as shells. To try to cope with his strangeness, he sits in his bedroom with his books and pictures,

trying to remind his childhood feelings and desire, but the memories are only shadows. His personality as a soldier is the only thing to which he can hold, at this point he states: “I am a soldier, I must cling to that” (*All Quiet* 81).

Furthermore, the horrors of war have demolished Paul’s identity. He is unable to disconnect all the suffering of war and continue with a regular life. Consequently, he regrets having come home because he does not let himself get closer to his dying mother. Besides, Paul even has problem communicating with the rest of his family and other civilians. He describes his feelings saying, “I find I do not belong here anymore, it is a foreign world” (*All Quiet* 168). By the end of the novel, Paul feels even more separated from his previous life. He doubts he will not find his human behaviour anymore, and he will not be able to adjust to society again. Therefore, for Paul Bäumer, the adjustment to civilian life and a profession seems impossible because he has been destroyed mentally by the war’s atrocities. At this point, David Jenkins a United States Marine Corps veteran working in the public sector as a mental health therapist state in the journal that:

Being out of harm’s way and trying to catch up with life outside of the Corps [...] However, it was not as easy as I had thought it was going to be. [...] I missed and craved the high intensity life of the Marines including the adrenaline rushes. I didn’t know what was going on, but knew I had better get myself straight and focused. I thought I was assimilating back into society, but found myself rather accommodating to societies accepted norms. I formulated a plan to fit in. I figured as long as I looked similar to other civilians, nobody would know how much I was still mentally in the military.

This quotation describes how difficult it is for Jenkins to adapt back into society. Despite the fact that Jenkins tries hard by having the same physical look with everybody else, his psychological condition does not change. The trouble of integrating back into civilian life is caused by Jenkins’ life in the armed forces. For several Americans, the Vietnam War has come to an end and long forgotten but for some the trauma of their battle experiences has devastated their lives so that their reintegration into civilian life has become difficult.

Conclusion

Finally, it is evident that war has a noticeable psychological toll on soldiers. War has resulted in numerous deaths and psychological effects on soldiers who have been used on the battlefield. As war continues, soldiers suffer from circumstances such as post traumatic disorder, depression and mental health problems upon their return to civilian life.

In the novels *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Red Badge of Courage* and *A Rumor of War*, the authors expose the effect war has on soldiers through the atrocities and massacre of the war coupled with the mental troubles. During their sojourn on the front, soldiers are dehumanized as they are stripped from their human feeling. The novels display all the brutality common to all war novels. However, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *A Rumor of War* depict the horrors of a new kind of war, one that allows a massive death by using new weapons technologies such as machine guns, atomic bomb or gas bomb. Therefore, the narratives provide a very close description of the atrocities of the war in which even those who physically stay alive are victims of the atrocities of war. Soldiers are exposed to eternal physical danger which develops into an attack on the soldiers' nerves making the soldiers' return to civilian life impossible as we have seen with Paul Baumer returning home. From the war trauma to the impossibility to reinsertion in civilian life the nature of war has been scrutinized.

Crane, Remarque and Caputo give a scrutiny of the horrors of war and its long-lasting outcome of those who participate in it. We notice in the novels a change from enthusiasm to pessimism of Henry Fleming, Caputo and Paul Bäumer. War has ruined the fixed ideas of soldiers like Caputo, Paul and Henry Fleming leading to their desensitization and dehumanization. The study provides a convincing perception into the mental toll of warfare and how it forever affects the lives of those who experience it. The novels of our corpus present an inspection into the difficult psychological environment of war and its permanent effects on the soldiers' mind.

The three books show that war can never be erased in the soldiers' mind and its effects would stay until the end of their days. Even those who survive will

not escape: “We had survived, but in war, a man does not have to be killed or wounded to become a casualty. His life, his sight, or limbs are not the only things he stands to lose.” (*A Rumor of War*, 207)

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