



## Comparing Fictional War Hero, Paul Baumer, and US Marine, Sam Siatta: A Trauma Study of PTSD Victims in Soldiers

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### ABSTRACT

This research focuses on new PTSD symptoms highlighted in C. J. Chiver's case study in "The Fighter" published in the New York Times under the trauma theoretical perspective with the aim to interpret the same in the character of Paul Baumer, the fictional war hero of *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Eric Maria Remarque. The research first defines PTSD in modern psychiatric terms and reviews it in light of the psychiatric theoretical studies outlined by Miriam Reisman and the trauma theorized by Dominick LaCarpa and Judith Herman. Reviewing the relevant literature to form a theoretical framework for the analysis of PTSD in Baumer, the research seeks to prove that Baumer suffers from PTSD signs. The research finds that Baumer is a soldier tougher than Siam Siatta, the US marine, who suffered the same during his Afghanistan tour. The research also highlights Baumer's peaceful death as compared to Sam Siatta's pulverization of the social fabric to highlight its significance as well as demonstrate ways to cope with such war victims.

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## 1. Introduction

"The Marine Corps taught Sam Siatta how to shoot. The war in Afghanistan taught him how to kill. Nobody taught him how to come home" (Chivers, 2014). This epigraph of C. J. Chiver's Pulitzer Prize-winning account of Siam Siatta, a US Marine, who loses his nerves on his back-home journey is a reflection of war trauma renamed as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the modern psychiatric jargon used in the academic world. Half a century earlier, there was no idea of what PTSD was, the reason that war victims used to get treatment only for visible injuries and rarely for invisible or mental injuries. Paul Baumer, the protagonist of *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Remarque (2004) as a fictional war hero, has rarely attracted attention as a PTSD victim due to his calm and peaceful death on the "quiet western front" (Remarque p. 40). This paper analyzes his character, as a tough PTSD victim, in the light of the modern psychiatric and literary theoretical framework. The discussion revolves around his person, signs of PTSD in him, and how he does not divulge his mental affliction in the face of the worst. This research highlights Paul Baumer's confrontation with traumatic events, the impact of shelling and blasts on his mental condition, the impact of traumatic events on his relationships, signs of traumatic events in the shapes of nightmares, recurring memories, sleeplessness, and extreme desire for sleep, flashbacks of memory, intrusions, and his comparison with his creator, Erig, to prove that Baumer has PTSD but he has repressed it to save civilians by dying on the front peacefully.

This study is significant in that no other study about PTSD in Paul Baumer's case has been conducted in the light of the modern psychiatric framework. This study highlights that though no modern therapeutic clinical treatments were available to Paul Baumer, he sensed the

presence of PTSD and cured it by dying peacefully on the front. The study does not make a comparison or contrast with any other character but only deals with Paul Baumer and evaluates his mental state on the yardstick of the PTSD framework outlined in the literature review section. The study would help other researchers in the future to evaluate other war novels and their characters on the same yardstick compared with the mental condition of Paul Baumer. The study is limited to only comparison with Sam Siatta, does not touch other characters of the novel, and also does not use therapies available now to evaluate Paul Baumer's character. Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the character of Paul Baumer in the light of modern psychiatrist theoretical framework and literary theories about PTSD and observe his behavior as well as acts until his death whether he exhibits those signs and deals with the issue. It seeks to answer the question of the impact of war trauma on Paul Baumer, the signs of PTSD in his characters, its signs, and the comparison with Siam Siatta, the US Marine.

## **2. Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology**

The study is based on the modern definition of PTSD as given in modern psychiatry and research on PTSD done by a psychiatrist, Miriam Reisman. It also includes the trauma perspectives of Dominick LaCapra and Judith Herman used to deduce a framework to base the analysis of the text. This is mainly a deductive approach used to deduce major PTSD signs to create a framework for the evaluation of the character of Paul Baumer and impacts of the PTSD on his mind. The methodology used in this study of the textual analysis, interpretation, and critique along with creative writing technique in the light of the given framework.

## **3. Literature Review**

Modern psychiatry defines PTSD as a mental state of shock, depression, or chronic anxiety that a person undergoes when confronting some "shocking, scary, or dangerous event" ("Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder", 2003). Defined in psychiatric jargon, it seems out of the scope of literary studies, but some common PTSD victims and journalists have put it in simple words to convey its horrendous impacts on victims such as in the case of (Kinchin, 2004). This former British policer explains PTSD saying it is the result of exposure of a person to some event "outside the range of the normal human experience" and resultant response of such a person by becoming somewhat abnormal (p. 02). In literature, Downing (2016) says that it is a somewhat soul-disruptive experience that shatters an individual's sense of self, making him disarticulate and causing him uncontrollable "belated effects" (p. 41). Perhaps his indication is toward stress and disorder that become a clinical issue if not treated psychologically. Judith Herman's three trauma categories of construction, intrusion, and hyperarousal that happen with the soldiers in the field (p. 35) also point to the same issue as LaCapra terms "disarticulation" as the central issue. It means the victim fails to convey what he realizes, feels, and experiences. A PTSD expert, Reisman (2016) states that it is a type of trauma but it is "war-induced" that causes "shell shock", "battle fatigue", and "delayed effects" of the battlefield on the victim (p. 624). Arguing her case of PTSD, she quotes Dr. Schnurr's words, saying the US veterans suffer from "physical and psychological trauma" of the battlefield (p. 626) with various PTSD symptoms such as intrusions, flashbacks, mood swings, avoidance, memory loss, condition or arousal of senses and negativity (p. 627). In the light of these definitions and symptoms stated by LaCarpa and Miriam Reisman, it seems Paul Baumer has been a PTSD victim, but only that his good luck ran out on the battlefield where he was killed to calm down the western front reported in the third person voice by the end the novel (Remarque 140). Even before that, it is a point of intensive dialectic due to the author's own epigraph on the novel of it being about the generation "destroyed by war"(Remarque, 2004). Borrowing the same idea unconsciously, C. J. Chiver argues that this generation, too, was not taught how to return home and live among civilians, though, Baumer realized very much that they are now "lost" (58). In light of these signs and his realization, this research sets out to investigate the signs of trauma in the tough character of Paul Baumer presented by Erich Maria Remarque.

## **4. Analysis of the Text: All Quiet on the Western Front**

### **4.1. Paul Baumer's First Confrontation with the Traumatic Event of War**

Regarding Paul Baumer's entry, he is merely a school-leaving teenager coaxed by Kantorek, his teacher, who thinks "they were acting for the best" (Remarque, 2004). Baumer knows only about the role of leaders when he hears his teacher but it blasts off with the first bombardment which "showed [their] mistake" and the world "broke into pieces" before Baumer and his friends' very eyes (p. 07). The very first death Baumer experiences in the war is of his friend, Joseph Behm, who is lying in "No Man's Land" (p. 08) but nobody has the courage to

touch him, for this act would have killed the person going to carry him. This is the first little shock for Baumer in his first encounter with a traumatic event of seeing a comrade dying in pain.

When his first war experience and shell shock are over, he visits the hospital to see Muller where friends talk about the war bragging, "We are the Iron Youth" over which Baumer's reply "We are old folk" (p. 10) is of typical maturity. It demonstrates his understanding of metaphysical realities of death and life. This sudden transformation from a shell-shocked boy to a mature soldier breaking down shows what Taylor Downing states that they "begin to break under the constant threat of death or suffocation" (Downing, 2016). It is because they constantly face shell fire and become so much shell-shocked that they find nowhere to flee. From this point to onward, they immediately touched maturity, constantly thinking about the blissfulness of domestic life and their own circumstances where their thoughts become melancholic about their having "become a waste land" (Remarque, p. 11) an echo of T. S. Eliot "The Waste Land". This is the first entry point that removes the illusion Kantorek feeds them with. They harbor very ideal and romantic views about war before this entry (p. 12). However, even before the shell shock, they have entered into a system where there is "not freedom but drill" which is not a complete shock toward trauma, but a beginning into the long list of traumatic events to follow.

The first step according to Baumer is the "renunciation of the personality" to make them "hard, suspicious, pitiless, vicious, tough," which they are lacking (p. 12-13). In fact, this is the first experience of death and shocks that Baumer becomes hardened within days, leaving him vulnerable to suffering from severe trauma later. Jones and Wessely (2005) argue that such traumas became a British nightmare during WWII when it "faced manpower crisis" (p. 17). Baumer's first experience of the system, death and escape echoes in Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely about which they think that the first experience unnerves the soldiers when the bureaucratic system becomes oppressive due to jingoistic shibboleths (p. 17). Baumer learns that they are living in "war comradeship" but are to obey the orders (Remarque, p. 14). That is why Baumer bursts out in the middle saying "The first bomb, the first explosion, burst in our hearts" (p. 42). However, the tragedy with Baumer is that he happens to be during the times when it was not diagnosed. Hence, there was no treatment for him. However, he seems to have become aware that there is something wrong with him. Clayton (2014) clarifies it saying Baumer has become "disenchanted of war" but he does not want to be "seen as psychologically damaged" which is a sign of PTSD (p. 28). If taken in the light of Judith Herman's categories of construction, (p. 35) it seems it has certainly been the case with Baumer. His first confrontation with the shell raining and bullets zooming past him leaves abnormality in his mind, about which Herman says that it happens with an active participant in the war (p. 39). So far, this entry has diluted his enchantment and ideals and shattered his mental capability, turning him into a cynical old mate, thinking meditatively about how he and his mates have faced devastation.

#### **4.2. Impacts of Shell Shocks and Combat Blasts on Paul Baumer**

The further Baumer goes into war, the more damage has it done to his humanity and innocence. It, however, is surprising that it does not blunt his meditative spirit and intellectual ability. He continues musing on his inclusion in the combat and his survival in the rain of shells. The further he is involved in combat, the more he goes down into the pit of mental depression -- a traumatic sign of extreme PTSD. This happens to make all of his comrades join hands prompted by their survival instincts, the reason he collapses like a "rotten tree" after the bombardment (Remarque, 2004). The impact of these shocks of shelling and blasts appears in the shape of numbness that deadens their senses. It is an extreme case of traumatic suffering. "We are deadened by the strain" which is a type of "deadly tension" (p. 53), he declares. In this type of numbness and deadening feeling, one's organs stop working and give way to pressure, strain, and tension as if the soldier has "neither flesh nor muscles" to bear it (p. 53). Kashdan, Elhai, and Frueh (2007) and his colleagues term it emotional numbing or avoidance of enjoyable activities (p. 726). When the first offensive ends, Baumer calls out "We are wild beasts" having no sense of who is killing who and who is getting killed, for "the death is hunting" us down (Remarque, p. 54). This is the numbing of senses demonstrated through Baumer and his comrades' emotional numbness in the battlefield. This is the worst condition that has tried their senses, making them lose "all feelings for one another" and turning them into "insensible, dead men" (p. 55). Clayton, too, terms WWI soldiers "muted or stuttered" and "numb[ed]" due to the shocks they received (p. 17). She further states that it is actually "psychological

automatizations" which lead to "paralysis and numbness" symptoms (p. 17). Paul Baumer is just in the midst of this situation where the earth is background, and they are a "gloomy world of automatons" with "pierced and shattered souls" placed where "it can't be helped" (Remarque, p. 55). This paralysis and numbness Elizabeth Clayton mentions is oozing out of every organ of the comrades of Baumer as well as Baumer himself. This paralysis and state of numbness often lead victims to excessively self-reflective isolation where relationships become almost non-existent to them outside the circle of their friendship and camaraderie.

#### **4.3. Impacts of Trauma on Baumer's Relationships With People**

The PTSD impact on Baumer regarding relationships occurs on three levels; his relationship with his family, his relationship with other members of the village, and his relationships with his comrades. Where Baumer's relationship with family is concerned, it is intimate. He enters the battlefield even before passing his teenage years. Although he talks intimately about his family members, he is speechless as well as "powerless" when he sees his sister first time after he returns from the front (p. 74). This shows numbness and psychological transformation in his relationships. Harold Bloom, in his analysis, says that within ten weeks after fighting on the fronts and their encounter with death, shells, and bullets, the soldiers have been feeling "bereft of meaningful human relationships" (p. 25). Baumer stands "miserable, helpless, paralyzed" (p. 74). He knows he is a victim of a nervous breakdown of war and cannot cope with it alone. Writing about the impacts of war on the generation, Isaac Finn says war impacts personal relationships and that Baumer is unable to cope with this new phenomenon. He argues that Baumer's "personal relationships are strained" to the point of silence when confronting his paternal queries (Finn, 2016). He cannot express "envy and despise" with his "own family members" (Finn). The time spends at home shows he is hardly at home with them. "There is a distance, a veil between us," he says (Remarque, p. 75). Bloom argues that it happens in just a ten-week course (p. 25). David Kinchin also seems to indicate the same that it is impossible to maintain relationships within a family when a person has a close encounter with such a trauma (p. 57). Even his father could not detect his traumatic condition. It shows it has impacted his family. The second impact is manifested in his relations outside the family.

His relations outside his family are also not good although they are not very "demonstrative" (Remarque, p. 75). His meeting with a German master is not good either. The master expresses jingoistic emotions that he demands Baumer to support with his bravado about annexing Belgium (p. 78). However, when Baumer tries to clarify things, the master merely silences Baumer saying he does not know big things which makes him realize, "I find I do not belong here anymore" (p. 79). At this stage, he feels disenchanting and longs to live in loneliness (p. 79). This loneliness is the worst sign of PTSD. With his comrades, Baumer forms a good company, following the disassociation of their personalities through parades and salutes, Baumer knows the erasure of their individualities through salutes, making them "hard, pitiless, vicious, tough" (p. 13). In the comradeship, their language changes. They do not find anything to express themselves "clearly and pithily" (Remarque, p. 05) which is a "delayed effect" of LaCapra's disarticulation (p. 626). It could be a memory loss (Reisman, p. 627), but Baumer implicitly refutes it saying "Our families and our teachers will be shocked when we go home, but here it is the universal language" (Remarque 05). He means it is not for the general populace but for only them. Another thing is when they are separate from each other, the relationship ends there. This is clear from Muller's desire for boots instead of pity for Kemmerich's imminent death (Remarque, p. 32). The worst of this relationship is the othering of the enemy. Baumer is conscious of how they would meet civilians, referring to himself as 'we' saying "Our knowledge of life is limited to death" (p. 125). This shows his battlefield transformation.

Baumer's relationship and communication with family, village people, and his comrades show the feelings of "abnormal experience" Kinchin expresses in his personal memoir (p. 02). It, however, still seems strange that he does not stay at home; rather, he prefers to go to the war front which seems Baumer feels that "bearing witness is an aggressive act" (p. 07) which has not left him with anything except "despair, death, fear and fatuous," leading to the people to "slay one another" (Remarque 125). This is Baumer's conscious effort to diagnose his PTSD and cope with it without showing experiences of nightmares. In some way, there are short episodes of this nightmarish experience of participating in the war, which is not as explicit as it is in Siam Siatta's episode (Chiver).

#### **4.4. Nightmares, Desire for Sleep and Alienation**

Baumer has been so sensitive from the beginning that he takes Kantorek's words literally. Bloom (2008) also confirms that he is not a fighter but a temporary soldier (p. 107). Soon he faces, Bloom says, gas, tanks, guns, grenades, cries, and shrieks, feeling unable to cope with this real nightmare (p. 108). When Baumer sees these horrors, he takes his own life as a nightmare (p. 33-35). He feels that the war "remained a blurred nightmare" for him, showing his restlessness and uselessness (Trommler, 2010). The first sign of a nightmare that Baumer shows happens when he falls in the pit with the man dying with whom he stays during his final hours. Then he feels "powerless to move," which becomes a nightmare in that situation (Remarque, p. 104). As Trommler suggests that the novel has become a therapeutic weapon for Remarque, Baumer does not see any therapeutic weapon but feels "powerless" (p. 104). Ultimately, he has to kill that person. This killing or murder becomes another nightmare -- a type of recurring memory. He thinks that this memory haunts him, "come[s] back and stand[s]" for him (p. 106). When he discusses this affair with his friend, Albert, he tells him about their helplessness as "war is war" (p. 109). Compared with Siatta of Chivers to evaluate his mental state, it seems both are the same. Baumer seems a bit stable, for Siatta knows they are going to kill the killers (Chivers) while Baumer takes all others as "devils" like him (Remarque 106). Whereas Baumer seems wise to see nightmares and sense them, Siatta feels remorse for having "blood of so many on [his] hands" (Chivers). Two psychiatrists, Campbell and Germain (2016), experts in PTSD nightmarish experiences argue that such type of PTSD nightmares involve "themes and sensory input" related to events victims go through (p. 74).

Although Miriam Reisman also mentions shocks and battle fatigue for possible nightmarish experiences and sleeplessness or insomnia, it is strange Baumer shows not only flexibility but also toughness. He mentions it a hospital where they could not sleep (Remarque, p. 116) then he tells about Deterring who complains that he cannot sleep (p. 130). His desire for sleep has been expressed at several other points which may indicate the insomniac feature. It also indicates battle fatigue and his capability to cope with this problem. In the entire novel, he is either getting "good sleep" and short sleep "a little more sleep", or in the interrogative sense whether they will be able to sleep or not, (p. 02) or he is not getting any sleep at all. He asks the same question to his comrades whether they would take some "sleep" (p. 16) or might "sleep" (p. 19) or even go to get "a wink of sleep" (19). Such wistful desire for sleep, a little bit of complaint about the sleep, and finally Baumer's calm death as if in sleep, indicates his desire to have some sleep. This is also an indication of PTSD which he tries to suppress. This is an indication of his sleeplessness which sometimes transforms into "half-sleep" (p. 46). This shows that the desire for sleep has its nightmares of having no time and place to sleep. Another argument is even if Paul Baumer demonstrates his toughness, other characters show extreme despair and depression. This leads him to experience repressed traumatic signs. Some episodes of alienation demonstrate his mental condition. For example, he divulges gory details of the battlefield showing a "generational shift" that has taken place (Sollars & Jennings, 2008). The second example of alienation is of Himmelstoss whom Baumer dislikes -- a sign of the antipathy for putting the younger generation in war (p. 21). This atmosphere has impacted all the characters among which only Baumer holds his head high due to his tough mental condition. However, the situations of other characters suffering from this battle stress and fatigue seem bad.

#### **4.5. Flashbacks and Intrusions**

Flashbacks indicate severe PTSD. Elizabeth Clayton, commenting on Baumer, says the traumatic impact is obvious in his language showing "the constricted effect of those suffering from PTSD" (p. 31) and disarticulation (LaCapra, 2014). She goes on to say that Baumer describes every comrade that is indicative of the constriction of the use of language (p. 32). She further adds that Baumer uses constrictions in the battlefield description. Even memory, is repressed, argues Clayton, adding that it happens with Baumer when he feels himself helpless (p. 33). Miriam Reisman states that intrusion simply does not mean flashbacks, it means spontaneous memories of the traumatic event a soldier experience. This could also include "recurrent dreams" or "psychological stress" (p. 625). This stress is evident in Paul Baumer in several instances. For example, at one-point Baumer clearly says, "I make no decision – I strike madly at home" (103). Its physical impact is clear in his convulsions (p. 103). This loss of control over mental faculty leads to flashbacks and thoughts of nature as a metaphorical womb (p. 104). Elizabeth Clayton comments on his homecoming and his thinking about the battlefield

saying that this, too, is a sign of a "traumatic flashback," which makes Baumer "uncomfortable" (p. 36). Chivers (2014) has also stated the same thing about Siatta, his hero of "The Fighter," adding that at times he seems "distracted" and expresses his desire to go home (Chivers). This is psychological distress that Reisman has listed as a result of flashbacks, while Herman terms it an "intrusion" (p. 39). Its worst case comes a little before the end of the novel where Baumer remembers the first victim of the war, Behm, and his prophetic words. "Many a man has said this," Joseph once told him about the war adding that once you enter it, nobody comes out of it (Remarque, p. 123). Joseph means that if they enter the war, they will not stay the same and he means that they would suffer from the recurring memories of this abnormal event.

#### **4.6. Paul Baumer: A Creation of a Tough PTSD Author**

A PTSD victim is prone to be antisocial, says Chivers, adding that his living PTSD victim, Sam Siatta, could not cope with this antisocial behavior until his relationship with Ashley Walk, his classmate, becomes intimate (Chivers). This symbolic behavior of a PTSD victim does not resemble the behavior of Baumer. His comparison, however, with his creator, could cast a different light on his PTSD persona, provided Remarque himself fought the war from the German side, which is a fact that Jane Robinett has discussed in her article "The Narrative Shape of Traumatic Experience," that Remarque's experience in the war corroborates his narrative (p. 293). Robinett (2007) claims that the narrative structure of *All Quiet on The Western Front* resembles that of a PTSD victim (p. 293). He even cites Hermon and his three commonly described signs found in PTSD victims (p. 296). It shows that though Baumer also has not shown such violent signs demonstrated by Siam Siatta of C. J. Chivers, he has demonstrated some of the signs that seem as if he has been struggling to suppress PTSD. In fact, Baumer repressed all those signs like his creator, Remarque, who led a normal life after fleeing Germany. Discussing Remarque, Eksteins (1980) says that he had a troubled childhood and played with Goethe's romantic pieces along with his idea of suicide (p. 348). He continues saying that Remarque even went into a war -- a proof of his being a likely PTSD victim (p. 394). However, it is surprising that Modris Eksteins has quoted Remarque saying that this novel became a reason for him for not committing suicide, for he was a "deeply disconsolate man, searching for an explanation for his dissatisfaction" (p. 349). This could be the PTSD spasms that he went through in the post-war period. The difference between him and his character seems clear that Remarque flees war, while Baumer finds himself fighting to death (p. 129). Remarque testifies this in the epigraph that this generation has been "destroyed by war" (p. 01). Commenting on the epigraph, Modris Eksteins argues that the intention of Remarque seems to be that the war has destroyed "the ties, psychological, moral, and real between the front generation and the society at home" (p. 351).

Therefore, he quotes Remarque to point to his "personal disorientation" but does not clarify whether it has dulled his senses (p. 359). Perhaps, that is why Remarque shows Baumer suffering from disorientation to become unfit for civilian life. Therefore, when he sees that all his comrades have left him one by one and even Kat, the last one is killed, he breaks down saying "We are not related" (p. 138) and it is at this moment that the author makes him die in peace so that Remarque could live in peace. The end of the novel given by Remarque in the third person is a clear reminder that he has emphasized the words "quite" and "still" (Remarque 140). Even at this moment, the hero expresses his ambivalence toward sleep lying on the earth which is a reference to his earlier longing to lay in its lap, "as though sleeping" (p. 140). The person turning over Baumer sees calmness and happiness on his face. This is an indication of his awareness of his uselessness; an awareness of his creator too, who fled Germany to have rebirth in the United States and made Baumer die and be happy and calm. The difference between Remarque, Baumer, and Siatta as PTSD victims lies in the fact that all three are aware; however, the first two were highly reflective and did not enjoy access to modern psychiatric treatments and therapies, while the third one presented by Chivers found it very easy to adjust in the society. Remarque and Baumer found their own therapies; first treated it by writing his memories in fiction and second by laying down his life peacefully.

## **5. Conclusion**

Concluding the argument whether Baumer suffered from PTSD after his confrontation with the abnormal event, this analysis proves after reviewing his case through the personal views of David Kinchin, the literary review of LaCapra (2014) and Judith Herman, and the psychiatric theoretical framework of Miriam Reisman that Baumer suffered from PTSD during the war of trenches. His entire life of war spanning over three years on the front shows that

after the initial shock of shells and blasts and then another shock of the death of Joseph Behm, he becomes the victim of PTSD. Furthermore, the constant war and constant presence on the front numbs his senses. He is aware of the disorientation but his self-reflection and mild disarticulation into military jargon work for him as an immunity that saves him from collapsing in or during the war and transforms him into a hero by dying as the last man on the front. Paul Baumer's first confrontation instantly turns him into an adult as he faces the shocks and shells and then guides his comrades into the war. The further impact of the shocks and trench warfare transforms his articulation into simple military jargon that is the universal language they use on the front. His relationships with his family also get strained. Although his association with his mother and sister stays the same, he does not feel comfortable at his own home, and ties with his father stay strained. His visit to the village people and conversation with them shows that he is entirely cut off from civilian life. This leads to severe depression which causes him to have some short nightmarish situations but not complete nightmares though recurring memories and a desire for sleep keep haunting Baumer until the end of his life. He occasionally suffers from mild flashbacks and intrusions of memories. However, despite all these signs of PTSD, Baumer keeps his calm due to the fact that his creator was also a war-victim and must have gone through the same. Had Remarque made him kill in the middle of war suffering from disorientation and PTSD, Baumer might not have stood with the other fictional war heroes such as Hemingway's Fredrick Henry and Chivers's Siam Siatta. It is this quality of death in peace and display of a happy smile on his face in the face of the worst in Paul Baumer that has won him accolades of being the best fictional war hero.

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