

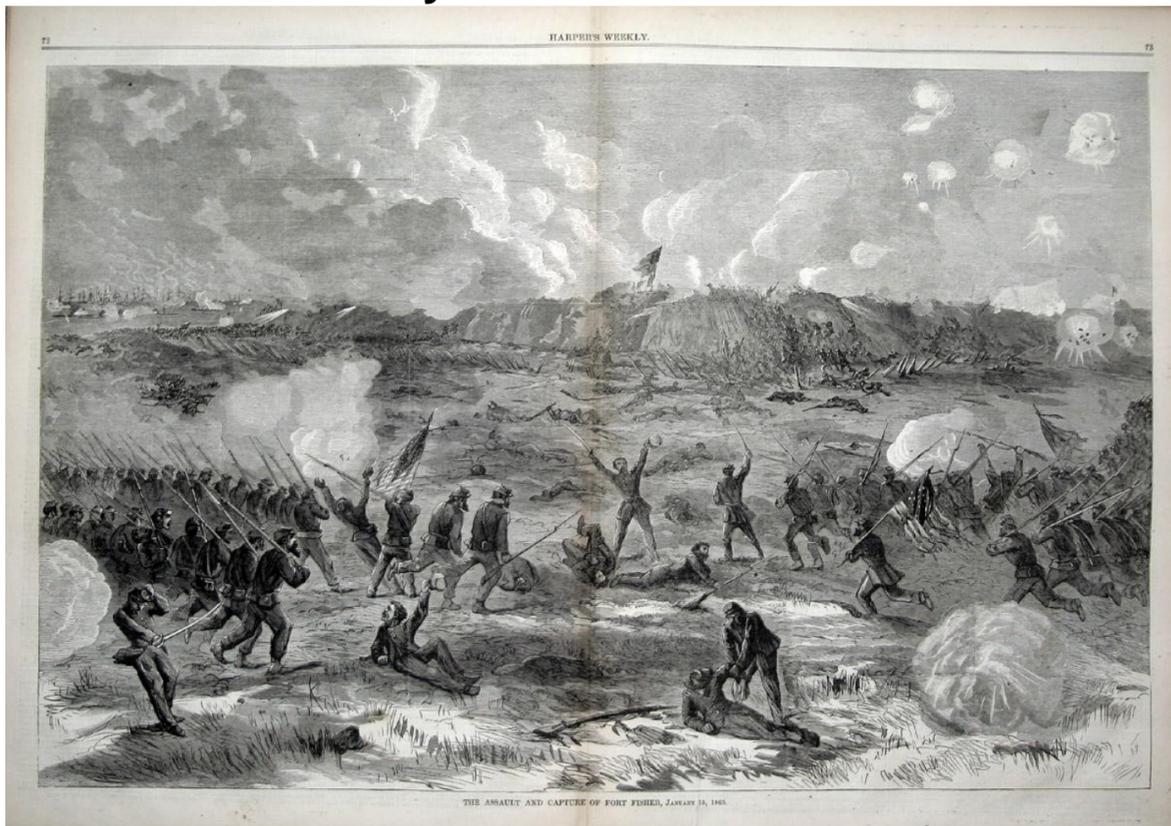
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## An analysis of five war novels



I would like to focus on how literature can portray the strong effects of war. I will begin with the novel *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) by Stephen Crane. A story of a young man named Henry Fleming maturing because of battle, the novel shows that the Civil War society held a very romantic and noble view of war, honor, and courage. I will use these concepts of courage and honor, as well as the theme of the loss of innocence, both to analyze this novel and to set the terms for examining four other war novels from subsequent eras. I want to see how the philosophies, perspectives, language, and societies changed over time as result of war as portrayed in the novels. Further, I will analyze whether Stephen Crane's lack of experience in war influenced his romantic views of it and how the views of the authors to follow, who did experience war, differ.

I will then analyze the novel *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839) by Stendhal, a novel based on the Napoleonic wars. It is about a young man named Fabrizio who romanticizes Napoleonic France and wants to join this great force in its conquests. I will see how Fabrizio's time in battle affected his life after it. Unlike Crane, Stendhal did experience war, fighting in Russia in 1812 for Napoleon. The most important section of this novel would be Stendhal's portrayal of the Battle of Waterloo, which I can compare to Crane's description of battle.

The First World War may be the most important war to influence literature. It showed a change in philosophy and attitude towards war, from romantic to cynical. The attitude held by the main character of Stephen Crane's novel of glory and honor in war was gone forever in literature. The influence of what was once called "the war to end all wars" on the society, more specifically the United States, is well portrayed in the trilogy *U.S.A.* by John Dos Passos. From this trilogy I will use only one novel, *Nineteen Nineteen* (1930) which consists of stories of twelve different characters in free indirect speech, several *Newsreels*, stream-of-consciousness sections called *Camera Eye*, and several biographies, including that of the "Unknown Soldier" called *The Body of an American*.

For the Second World War, I will read Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948). In this novel Mailer goes back and forth between war with the Japanese and the lives of the American soldiers before it. The novel shows how war has changed the lives of these soldiers and the ways in which their lives before war affect how they act during it. Norman Mailer served in the Philippines mainly as a cook. Though he did not see much, he saw enough battle to influence his novel, and more, he saw the effects of war on men and how it changes them.

Lastly I would like to analyze the novel *The Sorrow of War* (1994) by Bao Ninh which concentrates on the Vietnamese perspective of what we call the Vietnam War. Originally named *The Destiny of Love* (1991), this novel is about a man looking back on his past during the war as well as his relationship with his first love. I am extremely interested in seeing how Bao Ninh balances these two subjects, and see how love and war play off of one another. The author fought with the Glorious 27<sup>th</sup> Youth Brigade, which originally consisted of 500 men, and ended with ten survivors, including Bao Ninh.