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"Dama Ninao" est une revue scientifique interdisciplinaire qui accepte et publie tous les articles relevant des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines. A cet effet, elle s'intéresse aux études et théories littéraires, linguistiques, sociologiques, philosophiques, anthropologiques et historico-géographiques. La Revue "Dama Ninao", entendu "L'Entente" en langue kabyè du Nord Togo, est créée dans l'intention de matérialiser la mondialisation ou la globalisation qui s'opère avec l'esprit d'équipe et d'échanges et la désuétude du monde autarcique. Le monde scientifique universitaire ne peut échapper à cet esprit d'équipe qui fonde un creuset où « le fer aiguisé le fer », les échanges se croisent, puis s'entremêlent pour aboutir à une reconstruction des connaissances scientifiques individuelles dans la collectivité.

La Revue Dama Ninao nous renvoie à la Civilisation de l'Universel du poète sénégalais Léopold Sédar Senghor, qui prône la porosité des âmes avec l'acceptation de l'autre, de ce qu'il dispose d'utile pour mon avancement : sa civilisation, sa culture, sa langue ... Elle se fonde notamment sur la philosophie de Paul Ricœur qui préconise la perception de Soi-même comme un autre. Considérer soi-même comme un autre aux yeux de l'autre, nous amènerait à faire taire nos distensions et ressentiments afin de redimensionner notre espace, reconstruire notre histoire et notre société.

La Revue Dama Ninao s'est inspirée de la nature. Des insectes en miniature nous produisent de bels chefs-d'œuvre architecturaux, conjuguent leur génie créateur et leur force dans la patience et dans la tolérance. Ils créent des œuvres monumentales qui dépassent l'entendement humain, les termitières. A cet effet, la nature semble nous parler, nous guider, nous instruire dans le silence. Seules ces créations nous interpellent sans autant faire de nous des disciples. Comme la termitière qui, pour la plupart du temps, est une composante de maillons surgissant de la même matière, la Revue Dama Ninao se veut une termitière scientifique dont les enseignants-chercheurs en sont les maillons.

Au confluent de diverses sciences, la Revue Dama Ninao se propose de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

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Volume : 10 à 15 pages ; interligne 1.5, police 12 pour le corps du texte et les courtes citations ; police 11 pour les longues citations, Times New Roman, les références des citations doivent être incorporées dans le texte. Exemple : Guy Rocher (1968, p. 29), pas de référence en foot-notes à l'exception de quelques commentaires.

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- Un **TITRE** en caractère d'imprimerie et en gras. Le titre ne doit pas être trop long ;
- **Nom et prénom(s)** du contributeur ou des contributeurs, **nom de l'institution** d'appartenance, **adresse mail**
- Un **Résumé (Abstract)** de 8 lignes en français et anglais, en interligne simple, suivi de 6 **Mots clés (Key words)**
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- Un **Développement** : les articulations du développement du texte doivent être titrées comme suit :

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1-2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième sous-section

2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième section

2-1-Pour le **Titre** de la première sous-section

2-2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième sous-section

3- Pour le **Titre** de la troisième section (si l'auteur de l'article le souhaite)

-Une **Conclusion** : elle doit être courte, précise et concise en mettant en relief l'authenticité des résultats de la recherche.

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Objectifs et portée

La revue Dama Ninao, de par son nom qui signifie « entente », a pour objectifs :

- de matérialiser le monde universitaire qui est un creuset où « le fer aiguise le fer », les échanges se croisent, puis s’entremêlent pour aboutir à une reconstruction des connaissances scientifiques individuelles dans la collectivité ;
- de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

La revue Dama Ninao a une portée scientifique et sociale. A cet effet, elle publie tous les articles relevant des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines et s’intéresse aux études et théories littéraires, linguistiques, sociologiques, philosophiques, anthropologiques et historico-géographiques sur appel à contribution thématique (colloque) ou varia. Elle est un espace de rencontre, de construction et de reconstruction des réseaux relationnels et scientifiques.

Professeur Koutchoukalo TCHASSIM

Université de Lomé

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PRESTIGE: A TRIGGER TO COMBAT IN MARLANTES' *MATTERHORN*

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Abstract: The question of causation of war has always been intricate to understand because war can be analogously pictured as a befuddled puzzle requiring many pieces in the fixing. While political decision-makers have the final say on when to start and end a war, on the one hand, it is important, on the other, to delve amidst soldiers to grasp the intrinsic incentives to the army that thrill soldiers to keep the fighting momentum active and dynamic. In *Matterhorn*, Marlantes examines how prestige and the search for reputation can trigger combat. This essay investigates the internal impetus driving the army for war. Grounded on psychoanalytic theory, it underscores the inner motives of men and women in uniform to engage combat.

Key words: Prestige, reputation, war, combat, army.

Résumé: La question de la causalité de la guerre a toujours été complexe à comprendre parce que la guerre peut être représentée de manière analogue comme un puzzle embrouillé nécessitant de nombreux paramètres pour être résolu. Si les décideurs politiques ont le dernier mot quant au déclenchement et à l'arrêt d'une guerre, d'une part, il est important, d'autre part, de scruter les soldats pour saisir les motivations intrinsèques à l'armée qui poussent les soldats à maintenir l'élan de combat actif et dynamique. Dans *Matterhorn*, Marlantes a examiné comment le prestige et la recherche de la réputation peuvent amener les soldats à engager un combat. Cet essai exhume les motivations internes de l'armée à faire la guerre. Fondé sur la théorie psychanalytique, il explore les motivations internes des hommes et femmes en uniforme à engager un conflit.

Mots clés : Prestige, réputation, guerre, combat, armée.

Introduction

The question of causation of war has long confounded scholars and policymakers, akin to a complex puzzle requiring meticulous assembly. While the decision to initiate or conclude a conflict rests with political leaders, delving into the motivations of soldiers adds layers to the understanding of warfare dynamics. This inquiry is particularly crucial in deciphering the internal impetus that propels armies into sustained combat. Karl Marlantes' novel, *Matterhorn* (2010), serves as a captivating exploration of this internal drive, specifically highlighting how the pursuit of prestige and reputation becomes a compelling force behind soldiers' engagement in combat.

In exploring the motivations of soldiers in war, a multifaceted examination emerges from various scholarly works. Investigating the functions and causes of war in his essay "Human Aggression," Andrew Vayda (1967) highlights two hypotheses, namely the constant redistribution of economic variables within the society, on the one hand, and the need to deter enemies from repeating prior offenses or insults, on the other. Dave Grossman's work, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (1995), scrutinizes the psychological toll of war and the factors influencing soldiers, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of soldiers' behavior, including their pursuit of recognition. Marlantes, drawing from his Vietnam experiences, provides a first-hand account in *What It Is Like to Go to War* (2011), adding depth to the understanding of soldiers' motivations, which he further explores in his fictional work, *Matterhorn*, the corpus text under scrutiny in this essay.

From a historical perspective, the above insights are complemented by Samuel Lyman Atwood Marshall's *The Soldier's Load and the Mobility of a Nation* (1950) – which offers insights into the impact of reputation on military units – and Samuel L. Adams' "The Impact of Combat on the Officer and the Man" (1960) – which delves into the psychological consequences of combat and soldiers' aspirations for recognition. Furthermore, Andrew Roberts' *Leadership in War: Essential Lessons from those Who Made History* (2019) provides a historical examination of the role of reputation in military leadership, while Stephen E. Ambrose's *Citizen Soldiers: The*

U. S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany (1997) offers a historical account of soldiers' experiences in World War II. Simone Weil's philosophical essay, "War and the Iliad" (1939/2005), broadens the discourse by exploring the glorification of war and the pursuit of prestige by warriors.

Despite a profusion of scholarship on soldiers' motivations to engage combat, there is still a room for writing on the matter, given the perpetual recrudescence of armed conflicts in our times. Because society is not only designed to be observed by humans but rather to be acted upon for improvement, "literature very often invites thinking by presenting the reader with conditions in which thinking is called for (...) The aesthetics of literature work by making a particular kind of appeal to the intellect" (Ogden, 2018, p. 43). Thus, creative literature paints social realities in order to promote change and enhance human existence. It is in this perspective that Marlantes' painting of the social phenomenon of war in *Matterhorn* vividly illustrates how the quest for prestige propels soldiers into the war theatre. His characters – especially Colonel Simpson, the battalion commander – epitomize the multifaceted aspects of prestige-seeking behavior. Simpson's relentless pursuit of recognition, often at the expense of his subordinates, serves as a microcosm reflecting the broader issue within military structures. The present essay seeks to unravel the nuances of this problematic, demonstrating how the insatiable appetite for prestige influences decision-making, leadership dynamics, and ultimately the perpetuation of armed conflicts.

Grounded on psychoanalytic theory, this essay probes beyond the surface narrative of *Matterhorn* to decipher the subconscious motivations that drive characters to war. Drawing on the works of Sigmund Freud (1962) and Jacques Lacan (2006), the essay scrutinizes the characters' innermost desires, fears, and conflicts that manifest in their actions. Freud's concepts of the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, coupled with Lacan's ideas on the mirror stage and the unconscious, provide a rich theoretical framework to interpret the characters' behaviors. By peeling back the layers of the characters' psyche, this literary lens unveils the intricate interplay of individual and

collective subconscious forces, bringing forth an understanding of the psychological underpinnings steering soldiers toward war.

This essay is structured around two main sections. While the first section explores the consequences of ambition by investigating the abuse of power and the subsequent retaliation, the second one scrutinizes the dynamics between ambition and combat actions, underscoring the drive for glory as a motivating factor.

1. Abuse of Power and Retaliation: The Consequences of Ambition

Initially from Latin *praestigiosis* and later on borrowed from French in the mid-17th century, *Prestige*, originally meant “a conjurer’s trick.” However, its sense has evolved to mean a “blinding or dazzling influence” in the 19th century (Mish, 1997, p. 923). Its etymology and current meaning illuminate its essence: the concept is all about influence, esteem or admiration. The search for the admiration by others is a determinant factor that has boosted the conflict depicted in *Matterhorn*. In fact, the soldiers portrayed in the novel are motivated by the admiration they will gain from their comrades in arms and from the American people back home if they engage a conflict or undertake an action that inflicts heavy casualties on the enemy. From the desire to please and be admired by other marines of the company to that of celebrity and political ambitions back in the United States after the war, various events related to the search for prestige have predominantly fueled the war. Indeed, Marlantes has abundantly depicted events whereby characters involved in the war make decisions motivated by prestige and honor. This is true for almost every soldier of the Bravo Company, from the highly ranked to the file and rank troop.

To begin with, Colonel Simpson, the battalion Commander, is the embodiment of the concept of prestige, fully standing for its various contours. Through many events, actions, and decisions, he profusely demonstrates how the search for prestige motivates the continuation of war. Marlantes has portrayed Simpson from the onset as a character who longs for prestige. His first appearance in the plot shows his yearning for prestige:

‘Big John Six went bugfuck over the radio again about the gook machine gun.’ Big John Six was Lieutenant Colonel

Simpson, the battalion commander and Fitch's boss. He'd promised his own boss, Colonel Mulvaney, the regimental commander, that Mulvaney could move a howitzer battery to a secure zone. Losing the supply chopper after he said the zone was safe was embarrassing enough, but he'd then promised he'd fix the problem pronto and it was now two full days after the promised date and the zone was still not secure.³

Here is a military officer who repeatedly promises his boss to achieve military goals that he always fails. One may assume that he did not holistically gauge the various aspects of the missions before promising to achieve them. That would be true if he were a rookie soldier; yet he is a Lieutenant Colonel, which is a higher rank in the military. We hold that he promises such apparently challenging and arguably unachievable goals, considering the time and conditions, to impress his boss and gain prestige, because "if Simpson said four days, then it would probably take eight" (MTH 184). In Colonel Simpson's pursuit of prestige, Freud's concepts provide a framework for understanding the dynamics at play. Simpson's relentless drive for recognition and medals can be seen as an expression of his *id*, the instinctual and pleasure-seeking aspect of his psyche. His *ego*, seeking to fulfill societal expectations and gain prestige, becomes entangled with the *id*'s pursuit of personal pleasure and recognition. This conflict within Simpson's psyche reflects Freud's theory of the constant interplay between these elements.

Accordingly, failure to meet Simpson's self-serving goals gets him angry with his subordinates as he proves it in one of his radio calls addressing Fitch, Bravo Company Commander. He howls:

This is Big John Six. I want to know why you deliberately disobeyed an order and are sitting on your ass at checkpoint Alpha a full day behind schedule. I want a fucking good explanation or goddamn it you can explain yourself to somebody on Okinawa, because by God I'll have any commander's ass that can't do the job. Over (MTH 204).

³ Karl Marlantes, *Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War* (Berkeley, El Leon Literary Arts, 2010), p. 35. Subsequent quotes are to this edition, parenthetically included and preceded by MTH.

Though the company is trapped in a gargantuan quagmire as Fitch reported that they were fogged in all day, they kept waiting for the chopper they requested because they have some bad cases of immersion foot, a body, and they are out of food. Thus, Fitch believed that the company could move faster if those problems are taken care of and he is ready to take full responsibility for the delay (MTH 205). Simpson does not seem to care about their plight but only about his prestige before his boss. Indeed, he replies to Fitch: “You bet your ass you will. But that don’t help me explain it to Bushwhacker Six. Over” (MTH 205). “Bushwhacker Six” is the radio call sign for Colonel Mulvaney, Simpson’s boss. It is noteworthy mentioning that the explicit mission of the company is not, so far, specified to the Marines. As a matter of fact, Fitch complains as follows: “I understand, sir. Perhaps if we knew what our mission was it would help the men move. Over” (MTH 205). To the complaint, Simpson replies: “Your mission is to find, close with, and destroy the enemy. That’s the mission of every fucking Marine. (...) Now goddamn it you get to finding and destroying or I’ll have you relieved for cause” (MTH 205). Simpson’s fury is only understandable while analyzing a conversation between Lieutenant Mellas and Lieutenant Goodwin, in the wake of Simpson’s intimidating radio call to Fitch. Mellas erupts: “Big John Six and his fucking Checkpoint Echo, that cocksucking son of a bitch. He’ll actually fucking kill some of us just to make his goddamned checkpoint.” Goodwin replies: “There it is, Jack. (...) You don’t make general if you don’t make checkpoints” (MTH 212). Goodwin’s utterance entails that the rationale behind Simpson’s order is primordially to allow him winning medals and making general through the performance of his men. This justifies his rage since the company is not acting to meet his personal expectations. Investigating the dynamics of military promotion in their “Military Advancement: The Visibility Theory of Promotion,” David W. Moore and B. Thomas Trout (1978, p. 453) observe that “the most important part of any military promotion system is considered to be the performance evaluation.”

Incidentally, Simpson shows his desire for reputation in his speech before all the officers of the regiment, including his boss during their intelligence briefing. As

he confesses to it, “enjoying the chance to show the other battalion commanders how ready his battalion was” was his utmost desire (MTH 184). As he takes the floor to brief the officers about his battalion’s upcoming operations, his conclusion displays his search to make himself a name. He avers: “all indicate that this area will soon be highly productive. I intend to be right on the spot when the shit hits the fan. That’s why I’ve already ordered my staff to begin planning for moving my headquarters to Matterhorn” (MTH 96). It is obvious that he represents the battalion. However, his using of singular pronouns “I” and “my,” instead of “we” and “our” as a team speaks volumes to his intense desire to have all merits of the battalion to himself and alone. His boss, Colonel Mulvaney’s reaction following his conclusion justifies this assumption. The sentence that follows the conclusion reads: “Mulvaney looked blankly at Simpson” (MTH 96). Even though Simpson does not really master what he is talking about (as illustrated in the following extract – “Mulvaney could see that, as usual, Simpson was nervous as hell. You could tell right away when Simpson didn’t know what he was talking about” [MTH 95]), he wants to appear as a Mister know-all to gain reputation as wondered by the narrator: “Who knew or cared if Simpson was going up there to control his men better or just get into the limelight?” (MTH 97). He always wants to get into limelight. The foregoing illuminates his search for prestige, triggering his decisions that keep the war going.

Simpson’s decision to be back on Matterhorn, the bush and chain of mountains, where he can engage his battalion into actual fighting operations (though he can do the same by radio from the division) demonstrates the extent to which he fights for his image. The following take of his assistant, Blakely, on Simpson’s decision to move to Matterhorn, sheds light on his central incentive:

‘I agree,’ Blakely said carefully, looking at the forward air controller with a sideways glance, ‘but with the goddamned political restrictions what can you do? But, I do agree, goddamn it. You go where the action is.’ Blakely didn’t ask the Colonel [Simpson] what the difference was between running four companies by radio from Matterhorn and running four companies by radio from VCB. He knew the real difference was psychological, at least for the people back at division. With One Twenty-Four’s command post on the map at Matterhorn – all by

itself, in the most exposed position – people back at division would constantly be reminded that the officers who ran One Twenty-Four were bush Marines, not staff personnel hidden in thick bunkers. Blakely knew the value of image. It wouldn't hurt at all if they got shelled every so often. He had to have real combat on his record, the kind with Purple Hearts and medals. It was the best route, maybe the only route, to the top. (MTH 201)

Clearly, Simpson's call to move to Matterhorn is purely for gaining reputation, a reputation that materializes with medals. Consequently, to achieve the goal, he engages his battalion into conflict and moves near to the combat zone in order to be labelled a "bush Marine" by the division. All this endeavor to reach the top and gain prestige as he thinks to himself while drinking a whiskey when the battalion is in real combat: "A battalion in combat. Hell, he was already thirty-nine. It was a godsend, a reprieve from the twenty-year final curtain. Now he'd have a chance to make full Colonel – get a regiment. He smiled at the warm glass" (MTH 203). In all likelihood, all that Simpson cares about is his promotion.

The extension of prestige is the bragging of pride. In fact, Simpson's search for prestige is disguised by a sermon on pride. For him, pride "is what the Marine Corps is built on" (MTH 228). He wants the file and rank troops to gamble their lives by being exposed to enemy's attack in the jungle for his own profit. His ambition for medals is conditioned by the extraordinary missions he assigns to his men. To conceal his self-interest in demanding so much from the Marines, he keeps preaching about their pride. He never fails to reiterate his solemn speech about pride to his officers whenever they meet as illustrated below:

Simpson, mildly and happily drunk, gave a quick official smile. He spilled a little of his wine as he leaned forward with his hands on both sides of his plate. Then he stood straight, bringing his glass up with him. 'Gentlemen. First Battalion Twenty-Fourth Marines has made a fine name for itself here in Vietnam. I am both humble and proud to address you, the officers who have contributed so greatly to that record. (...) And to remember those officers who contributed their most precious possession, sacrificing all they had, that the record might remain proud and noble.' (MTH 299-300)

He vociferously speaks about pride before the officers of the battalion. Certainly, his meaning of “contribution” entails “the ones that got wasted” (MTH 300). The whole sermon on pride aims at motivating his men to continue fighting so that he wins medals.

A perfect illustration of how the desire for prestige drives Simpson to demand his men to engage conflict is the situation whereby he asks the Bravo Company to launch an assault amid lack of ammunitions; the men are worn-out and weak because they have just got out of an attack. Here, again, he conceals his real interest by playing the pride card. He orders: “And I want an assault prepared for Matterhorn first thing in the morning.” Surprised by this senseless order, Blakely takes him to task, asking: “By who, sir? ” His response is unequivocal: “By Bravo Company. They need to redeem their honor and get their pride back” (MTH 458). Indeed, Blakely’s question shows his astonishment, considering the conditions in which Simpson wants the company to launch the imminent assault. Logically, faced with the unintelligibility of the order, some Marines in the company refuse to execute it, accusing Simpson of willing to use them to achieve personal goals. To the order, Connolly objects: ““Call me a chickenshit motherfucker, but I ain’t goin’ up no hill cause some crazy honky out to make general over my black ass. I ain’t goin’, man, and I won’t be the only one”” (MTH 462). Nobody blamed him because that is how they all feel. The illustration is perceived in Mellas as he wanted to shout “*I’m not going up there. I’m not going up there so some fucking Colonel can get a fucking medal*” (MTH 474; italics in the original). Unequivocally, Simpson’s decision about the fights in the war, specifically the above order, is motivated by his seeking of status through military medals.

Simpson’s power-hungry attitude has resulted in a clash between his superior (Mulvaney) and him. Indeed, to achieve his personal goals – building up a reputation – Simpson has excessively used the Marines of Bravo Company. After seeing the Bravo Company coming in, Mulvaney has the following extremely tense conversation with Simpson:

‘Did you look at Bravo Company when they came in today?’ Mulvaney asked. ‘I talked with their skipper, Lieutenant Fitch, sir.’ ‘Did you see them, Simpson?’ Mulvaney’s voice started to rise. ‘No sir.’ ‘They looked like shit.’ ‘Yes sir. I’ll get right on it, sir. I’ll talk with Lieutenant Fitch. I’ve been thinking of relieving him ever since he was on Matterhorn.’ ‘It ain’t Fitch, Simpson.’ Mulvaney took a deep breath and another drink. ‘They’ve been used. Badly. How long they been out in the bush?’ ‘By bush do you mean on a fire support base doing routine patrols or actually in the jungle on an operation?’ ‘I mean how long without regular food, regular sleep, safety, baths, *vitamins . . .*’ The last word was a dangling question and an accusation. (MTH 263; italics in the original)

Obviously, the results of Simpsons’ decisions are catastrophic. He has abusively used the Company to make himself a name, an irritating attitude to his boss.

The discussion continues:

‘I don’t care what the fuck you have to do to get it, but I’m going to inspect Bravo Company’s garbage cans tomorrow night, and I want them full of orange peels and apple cores.’ Simpson pulled out his green notebook and wrote something down. ‘Goddamn it, Simpson, put that away. If you can’t remember this . . .’ ‘Yes sir.’ Simpson put the notebook back in his pocket. Mulvaney turned from Simpson. When he spoke, he again addressed the photograph. ‘Simpson, I’m tired. I’m tired of being used. Killing for pay and politics is prostitution enough, but doing it this way sickens me. It sickens my soul, what’s left of it.’ He slowly turned and pointed a thick forefinger at Simpson; ‘But you, you and that fucking Three of yours, you’re one of the customers this time. But let me tell you something. I’ll be goddam if I’ll let my troops play the customers fucking game, even if the brass are.’ (MTH 263)

A rock-solid element that needs no question from the above excerpt is the real objective of Simpson – an objective that strongly influences the motion of the war. “Killing for pay and politics is prostitution” summarizes the morality of the war as seen by a high rank officer from within the army. What is more alarming is when officers like Simpson and his assistant Blakely become the customers of the whores for personal objectives. An unethical conduct that unfortunately energizes the war machine. Expanding on the metaphor of war as prostitution, Michael Walzer’s *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (1977) provides a philosophical foundation. Indeed, Walzer’s exploration of the moral dimensions of war draws parallels to Mulvaney’s condemnation of using soldiers as mere means to

an end. Walzer's arguments serve as a theoretical underpinning, reinforcing the idea that the exploitation of soldiers for personal or political objectives is morally unacceptable and intolerable. Similarly, this mirrors Andrew J. Bacevich's argument in his *Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed their Soldiers and their Country* (2013). Bacevich critiques the exploitation of the military by civilian leaders for personal and political gain, aligning with Mulvaney's assertion that "killing for pay and politics is prostitution."

Moreover, Simpson's longing for prestige which causes him to make decisions that fuel the war has resulted in murder attempts from his subordinates. Firstly, right after the unreasonable and unintelligible assault that Simpson ordered Bravo to launch notwithstanding the company's fragility after a previous assault, which results in many casualties within the company, "Mellas decided to kill him" (MTH 489). Mellas "pushed the selector to full automatic. With the tracers, Mellas was sure to get him (...) The Colonel turned away from him. Mellas waited. He wanted the bastard to see the tracers coming at him before they ripped him apart, so he'd know, just as Jacobs had known" (MTH 490). He wants to avenge those who died during the assault. Fortunately, Hawke prevents him from achieving the murder. Consequently, Mellas shrieks: "That bastard killed all of them. He sent us up here without air so he could watch a show. He watched us while we died. That bastard doesn't deserve to live. God damn you, Hawke" (MTH 490).

The bitterness that Mellas expresses in the foregoing shows the extent to which Simpson's using badly the company to fulfill his personal goals hurts. Mellas' desire for revenge against Simpson aligns with Freud's theories on punitive operations and the unconscious motivations behind such actions. Exploring the quintessence of actions of revenge – such as the one of Mellas – in his *Punishment, Revenge, and Retribution: A Historical Analysis of Punitive Operations*, Brandon Newton (2005, p. 3) observes that "using military force against an enemy to punish, avenge a wrong, as retribution is a timeless cause of armed conflict."

Similarly, anonymous Marines from the company, feeling the same hatred for Simpson, threw a grenade into his tent: "The clunk of the grenade on the floor startled

Simpson awake. He made a muffled, frightened grunt—and ran. He fell over the tents ropes and slipped in the mud in the dark, desperately trying to beat the explosion. He dived into the mud outside, covering his head” (MTH 528). Fortunately, it is a threatening warning rather than a real attempt of murder as the scene describes:

Lying on the floor was a grenade with the primer taken out. Wrapped around it was a sheet of paper. Simpson took the paper off and smoothed it out. It was a mimeographed company roster, with names, ranks, serial numbers, and tour rotation dates. It was Bravo Company. Names had been heavily crossed out with a ballpoint pen. Neatly typed next to them were words like murdered, crippled, maimed, blinded . . . (MTH 529)

Obviously, Simpson’s excessive drive for reputation and prestige through getting other people doing the dirty work angered more than one. The soldiers, feeling exploited and manipulated for personal gain, seek retribution as a response to the perceived injustice. Newton’s exploration of revenge as a timeless cause of armed conflict finds resonance in the soldiers’ attempts to retaliate against Simpson, who they perceive as using them for personal objectives. Undoubtedly, the exertion of dominance by soldiers in higher positions over subordinates to achieve to achieve their personal goals leads to resentment and a desire for revenge.. Bordin and Horowitz’s (2016, pp. 55-65) research on revenge in the military, among other studies, sheds light on the psychological characteristics of soldiers towards their superiors in such situations.

2. Ambition and Combat Actions: The Drive for Glory

Marlantes equally shows how ambition for prestige has kept the war effort up through Mellas, the protagonist. An analysis of various instances uncovers how the ambition for medals and a reputation back home have caused Mellas to undertake many combat actions in the context of the war.

The introduction of Mellas to the plot is right on the target. In fact, as a rookie officer in the company, Second Lieutenant Mellas sees himself being put by the company commander, First Lieutenant Fitch, under the orders of a lower rank soldier, Corporal Fisher. He has not challenged that order because of his ambition for promotion, for the officer who gave him that order is the person who could promote

him to the next level. Even more significant is Mellas' conceding the annoyance of Fisher solely to achieve his goal. Obviously, Mellas "had accepted the noise for two reasons, both political. Fitch had basically said Fisher was in charge, so why buck Fitch? Fitch was the guy who could promote Mellas to executive officer, second in command, when Second Lieutenant Hawke rotated out of the bush. That would put him in line for company commander unless Hawke wanted it" (MTH 3-4). This demonstrates Mellas' eagerness to make concession that would allow him to make himself a name.

An analysis of Mellas' psyche in another event sustains the thesis of him taking combat actions because of his ambition for prestige and reputation. His strong desire for reputation manifests itself in a daydream as follows:

He saw himself taking an NVA machine-gun team by surprise while they were eating their rice, surrounding them silently, and capturing the entire group. Then he was marching them back, finding out a great deal of information, and afterward being commended in front of the Colonel and his staff. Perhaps there would be a newspaper story at home about the exploit – name recognition was important – and a medal. He wanted a medal as much as he wanted the company. (MTH 56)

As Freud might theorize, the ambition for a name and a medal hunts Mellas as to be dived into a reverie where the ambition materializes. The same scenario is seen in a similar context as Mellas "saw himself telling people back home he had commanded a company in action, 212 men. No, 212 Marines" (MTH 139). In fact, Mellas' desires for prestige can be associated with Lacan's mirror stage. The yearning for recognition and fame becomes a reflection of Mellas' need to see himself as a hero in the eyes of others. This mirrors Lacan's idea that identity is shaped through external images and societal expectations. Mellas' daydream of capturing an NVA machine-gun team, has a distinct connection to Lacan's concept of the mirror stage, where Mellas envisions himself as a heroic figure, celebrated and acknowledged.

The reverie is just the first step in a more or less holistic process. Actually, confessing the ambition is the following stage in the displaying of the search of the glory by Mellas. Two times in the course of actions, he limpidly comes clean about

his ambition before his comrades. Firstly, discussing with the company executive officer, Lieutenant Hawke, about the possibility to grant one of his platoon medals about a job they did, he at first hides his genuine intention. Since Hawke uncovers his real intention, he has no choice but confessing, “Ok, I wanted a medal” (MTH 98). Secondly, in the first conversation that Mellas has with the company commander, Colonel Simpson, he clearly states the central reason why he stays in the Marine Corps: “[F]or me, there’s only one reason to stay in the Marine Corps – to lead men. That’s why I’m an oh-three” (MTH 120). Definitely, leading men is reserved to the top, and the top is where Mellas wants to be – this reason foregrounds his staying in the Marine Corps and in the war.

Moreover, the other stage in the process that presents how the search for prestige drives the war to progress is illustrated through the real actions of Mellas. For starters, though he fears being killed, the “thought of springing an ambush excited Mellas. Battalion would know immediately who had led it. He might even get a medal if they killed enough” (MTH 148). Once more, the appetite for reputation triggers Mellas to gamble his life in ambushing the enemy. A similar fact is related in the following:

Mellas forced himself to think more positively. They’d find a perfect ambush spot. The gooks would come down the trail, talking, unaware. Daniels would give the word and the artillery would erupt. They’d uncover intelligence that would alter the whole divisions strategy or foil an attack on Quang Tri. A medal. A story in the newspaper back home. (MTH 251)

So far, the yearning for reputation constitutes the premium motor spirit that triggers and energizes Mellas’ actions.

In addition, the most relevant event where the ambition of Mellas patently causes him to fight the war resides in the assault that Simpson commands them to launch on the NVA. At the climax of this purposeful violent assault, Mellas decides to emphatically gamble his life for a medal in getting a wounded comrade out of the fire zone. Though his sergeant deters him from engaging that suicide attempt, he resolves to carry it out:

Mellas turned to Bass and grinned. ‘What do you think, Sergeant Bass? Is it worth at least a Navy Commendation medal if I go get him?’ Mellas intended this as a joke but realized he was partially serious. Bass looked at him. He was not in a joking mood. ‘You’ll get killed up there, Lieutenant. Don’t do it.’ Mellas was suddenly determined to get a medal; moreover, it was his fault that Pollini wasn’t on KP duty back at VCB. He turned to Fredrickson. ‘Wait here until I get him down.’ Fredrickson was still catching his breath and didn’t respond. Bass said, ‘OK, sir, I’ll try and give you some cover. If you get killed I’ll put you in for a posthumous Bronze Star.’ ‘It’s a deal.’ (MTH 354)

Though a second reason is mentioned for the action undertaken, the sentence “Mellas was suddenly determined to get a medal” entails Mellas’ yearning for reputation. In fact, the central reason behind his decision to carry out the heroic action is the longing for glory. This is equally depicted later on with the repetition of the sentence “He’d [Mellas] wanted glory” (MTH 361) three times. Glory in the army comes from bravery, which itself is motivated by prestige. This mechanism is a prerequisite for a war to be fought or not.

Lastly, it is important to highlight that many other characters in the novel – including Blakely, the battalion operations officer, Fitch, Bravo company commander, Hawke, Bravo company executive officer, sergeant Cassidy, to mention but a few – equally yearn for prestige and reputation, triggering them to make decisions or undertake actions that provide impetus for the war to continue.

Conclusion

Summarily, Marlantes’ *Matterhorn* not only weaves a vivid portrayal of soldiers in the crucible of war but also unravels the complex motivations that propel them forward. Grounded on psychoanalytic theory and using *Matterhorn* as a primary source, this essay has investigated the intrinsic incentives to the army that thrill soldiers to keep the fighting momentum active and dynamic. It has underscored the internal impetus driving the army for war. Its analysis of the characters involved and their various actions has demonstrated that the pursuit of prestige remains the driving

force behind armed conflicts. Accordingly, the search for reputation and prestige by soldiers should be seen as a determinant factor to consider in assessing war causes.

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