

Cultural Daily

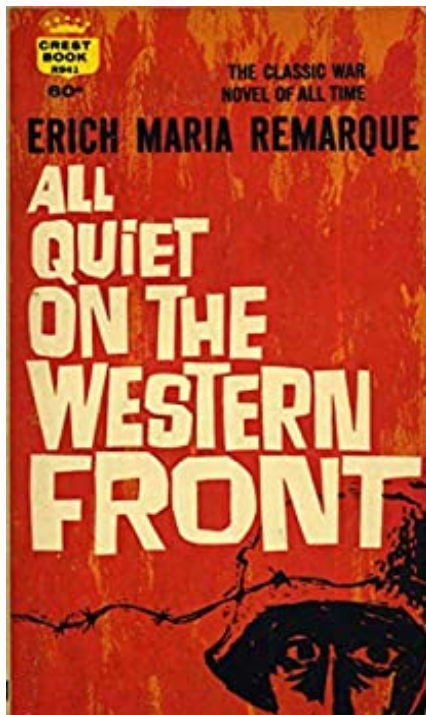
Independent Voices, New Perspectives

I Must Protest Too Much

Bill Cushing · Wednesday, January 25th, 2023

First, allow me to congratulate Netflix for its recent rendition of *All Quiet on the Western Front* being nominated for an Oscar in the category of Best Adapted Screenplay.

Now I'd love to learn what novel it was adapted from because it sure wasn't the 1928 publication written by Erich Maria Remarque, an actual veteran of the war it depicts.



Let me start where it does relate or touch base with its source material: The two main characters are Paul, a young student enamored with the idea of attaining glory in battle, and Kat, a veteran with an uncanny ability to locate and acquire food from an environment of want. It does show the soldiers spying some French ladies and one soldier fantasizing about a female model depicted on a travel poster although those scenes hardly develop as originally written (or shown in the 1930 film). There is the scene with Paul trapped in a artillery crater with a French soldier, and I think they might have included the butterfly scene.

However, beyond those conjunctions, as tenuous as they are, I didn't see anything that connects this film with its source material.

In fact, with its many scenes showing the politicians, diplomats, and generals as the movers and shakers of its action, I'd contend that almost half of this is more *Paths of Glory* than the title the studio attached to it. I can barely even bring myself to label this as it's sold given how little of *All Quiet* is present here.

Don't get me wrong. Netflix presents a powerful movie in terms of both its cinematography and acting, as well as coming up with a well-written story. I just wish the studio hadn't appropriated the name (and this is one time I believe "appropriation" is absolutely appropriate as a charge) in order to garner interest in potential viewers.



All Quiet on the Western Front

As it is, however, this film may actually be less rooted in its novel or earlier film versions than was Demi Moore's *The Scarlet Letter*.

It's a classic bait-and-switch to my mind.

Yet, I have to hand it to them. It worked like a charm. Critics, reviewers, and now award shows are falling all over themselves, salivating over it.



All Quiet on the Western Front
(1930)

Am I the only one who's noticed this? I hope not. And for those who'd like to experience the real story, read [the novel](#) or see either [the 1930 film](#) or even [the 1979 version](#) (with John Boy as Paul).

But trust me, this one ain't it.

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