

The things they
carried critical essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. Tim O'Brien feels he is a coward for going to the Vietnam War because he might be confused about what courage is, as is every other man that went to the Vietnam War. Once he is out of the war, he realizes that the only reason he went into the Vietnam War was to prove to himself and others that he wasn't a coward, making him a coward for doing that. 2.

The way to tell the difference between a true story and a lie is when the story changes and goes back and fourth between one thing then changes to the other. Tim O'Brien includes the section of how to tell a true war story because he wants you to look for the truths and be able to separate reality from a lie. 3. O'Brien explains that story-truth is sometimes truer than happening-truth because stories make things present. "' Daddy, tell the truth,' Kathleen can say, ' did you ever kill anybody?' And I can say, honestly, ' Of course not.' Or I can say, honestly, ' Yes.

" (180) What is being expressed through this quote is that both of them could be the truth, depending on how it is looked at. 4. In the book, other random men were given voices, both through dialogue and actions and being observed through it all. One of the men was Henry Dobbins. He asked a simple question about morals and the reaction the response he got showed a lot about his character.

It showed that he was somewhat careless, because he at first didn't understand and when it was explained to him, he responded with a careless remark. All of the voices combine to give a picture of the war because you get to see the way the soldiers really are. 5. O'Brien imagines the life and

personality of the man he killed because maybe he feels bad, or full of regret. This would cause him to tell a story to in a way, keep him alive.

He looks at the man laying dead, and sees certain features about him that might mean he's a certain type of person. " His chest was sunken and poorly muscled - a scholar, maybe. His wrists were the wrists of a child." (124) He sees things in the man that would show that he was either gentle, a communist, or what thoughts he carried in his mind throughout the war and in the past in his life. 6.

O'Brien might have shifted the events in the book because that's how he sees it while he's in the moment of being in the war. There are times when he would remember something about Linda, and then the next minute he shoots a man. It is told through the eyes of a soldier in the present, although it goes to the past and after the war. 7.

According to O'Brien, stories can save us because it keeps a person in that memory alive, even if the person in that memory is dead. When you remember something about someone when they were talking, you hear them talking again which brings them back to life while you're remembering it all. The book ends with a story of Linda because he's still in love with her, and he was bringing her back to life for the period of time that he was telling a story. 8. This book is an anti-war book because Tim O'Brien is almost constantly talking about the negative happenings of the war from a soldier's point of view.

It makes it in a way an anti-war book because the reader learns what goes through the soldiers' heads throughout a war. It is also a book about love

because Tim talks about the woman he loves, and is always thinking in the back of his mind if she's with another guy. He carries the rock that she gave him around with him everywhere. It is also a love story in the sense of a brotherly love, with the men he is in the war with. 9.

The significance of the title of the book, *The Things They Carried* has a meaning more than what they literally carried. Not only did they carry guns, weapons, and personal belongings, but they also carried memories and regret. " He remembered kissing her good night at the dorm door. Right then, he thought, he should've done something brave. He should've carried her up the stairs to her room and tied her to the bed and touched that left knee all night long.

He should've risked it," (5) The memories cause the regret stay in his mind the whole time he's gone, which makes it something he carries with him.