

1) theme, not only on  
lives and



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

1) The Destructiveness of War A major theme, not only on lives and property, but also on the human spirit.

Men are subject to physical torment-eyes are blinded, limbs are blown off, blood flows everywhere, and innocent men die in agony. When soldiers take shelter in the graveyard, bombs explode all around them, the living hide in coffins and the dead are thrown from their graves. The destructive power is so great that even the fundamental differences between life and death become blurred.

The impact of war on the spirit is subtle. They find themselves less able to return to civilian life-friends die all around them. 2) The Lost Generation This theme is an offshoot of the destructiveness of war. Paul's generation grew up too fast, its perceptions of life grossly distorted by the horror of war. The youthful idealism that might someday have blossomed into constructive maturity has been nipped in the bud. Unlike earlier generations, Paul can never again hope to find comfort and inspiration in the hollow rhetoric of politicians and generals. The war has shattered their illusions.

Their innocence is gone, and only aimless skepticism is left to fill the void.

3) Comradery The theme of comradery occurs constantly in the novel. The comradery that exists in Paul's company keeps them from being driven insane by the horrors all around them. In a sense, the comradery among Paul's friends can be seen as a last desperate clinging to the innocence of youth.

These young men were transported almost directly to the battlefield from the schoolyard. The adolescent pranks of Paul and his classmates can be seen in

their “adult” behavior, as in their attack on Himmelstoss. If the social responses of Paul and his friends seem at times childish, it is essential to remember that these are young men whose experience of life took them directly to the barracks from the classroom. If they seem immature, it may be because they weren't given the chance to grow up normally. The best example of this theme is when Kat and Paul shared their roasted goose with Kropp and Tjaden. They were taking care of each other.

4) Alienation The theme of alienation develops as the novel progresses. At first, Paul and his friends still behave as if their lives will someday return to normal. In the middle of the book, Paul goes home on leave, only to discover that his real home is now with his friends on the front. By the time Kat dies, Paul feels that his own life no longer has meaning. The process of alienation is now complete. 5) Shared Humanity The theme of shared humanity takes the theme of comradeship one huge step forward.

Just as Paul comes to look upon his comrades almost as brothers, he also comes to recognize that all men are brothers under the skin. The irony of war is that brothers are forced to kill one another. Paul's compassion for the captured Russian soldiers and the French soldier he kills in the trench are examples of this theme. English