

In western front is the
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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the words of Otto Von Bismarck, Anyone who has ever looked into the glazed eyes of a soldier dying on the battlefield will think hard before starting a war. Many of the preceding war novels to All Quiet on the Western Front, misrepresented or overlooked the anguish of war, in favor of more resplendent ideals such as glory, honor, or nationalism. The predominant issue of All Quiet on the Western Front is the terrible atrocities of war.

The reality that is portrayed in the novel is that there was no glory or honor in this war, only a fierce barbarity that actually transformed the nature of human existence into irreparable, endless affliction, destroying the soldiers long before their deaths. The novel is narrated by Paul Bumer, a young man who fights in the German army on the French front in World War I. Paul along with a number of his friends from school enlisted into the army voluntarily after being subjected to the continual insistence of their teacher, Kantorek. However, shortly after experiencing the grim brutality of war, Paul and his friends have realized that the ideals of nationalism and patriotism for which they enlisted are simply empty clichs. They no longer believe that war is glorious or honorable, and they live in constant physical terror. Throughout the novel, Pauls inner personality is contrasted with the way the war forces him to act and feel. In order for any soldier to survive the extreme emotional distress that is inflicted by the brutality of war, the soldier is obligated to disconnect his mind from his feelings. This emotional disconnection has an extremely destructive impact on a soldiers humanity; for example Paul becomes unable to imagine a future without the war.

While the disconnection allows the soldier to adapt to the brutal war environment, it inhibits them from re-entering society. When he takes his

leave, he is unable to feel comfortable at home. Even if Paul had survived the war physically, he most likely would not have integrated back into society suitably. The emotional disconnection inhibits soldiers from mourning their fallen friends and comrades.

However, Paul was somewhat less than able to completely detach himself from his feelings, and there are several moments in the when he feels himself pulled down by emotion. These rush of feelings indicate the magnitude to which war has automated Paul to cut himself off from feeling, as when he says, with unbridled understatement, Parting from my friend Albert Kropp was very hard. But a man gets used to that sort of thing in the army (p. 269) . World War I was viewed as a new sort of war.

Before World War I, wars generally did not involve nonstop fighting over a period of years. In the past the armies mostly consisted of hired mercenaries, or professionals who fought seasonally. However, the soldiers in this novel are volunteers. For Paul and his classmates, the army has become an expression of patriotic duty; they do not perceive it as a career. Outside the classroom, young men of their age faced condemnation from society if they did not join the war effort as volunteers.

There were also several new advancements with weapons developed in World War I, such as, machine guns, airplanes, submarines, poison gas, tanks, and trench warfare. Due to the new method of trench warfare World War I quickly became characterized by battles of attrition, in which neither side gained any ground on the other. The major battles of attrition in World War I as well as the technological advancements resulted in hundreds of

thousands of casualties, making them among the bloodiest battles in human history. The modernized weapons also eliminated the necessity for hand-to-hand combat, causing the primary method of killing in the war to be generally anonymous and conducted from far away, which is one of the reasons that the war, as the novel demonstrates, has such a dehumanizing effect. At this point in history World War I was the bloodiest in human history. Because of the wars severe brutality the soldiers as well as the general world population simply wanted to forget the war ever happened.

The carnage and gore