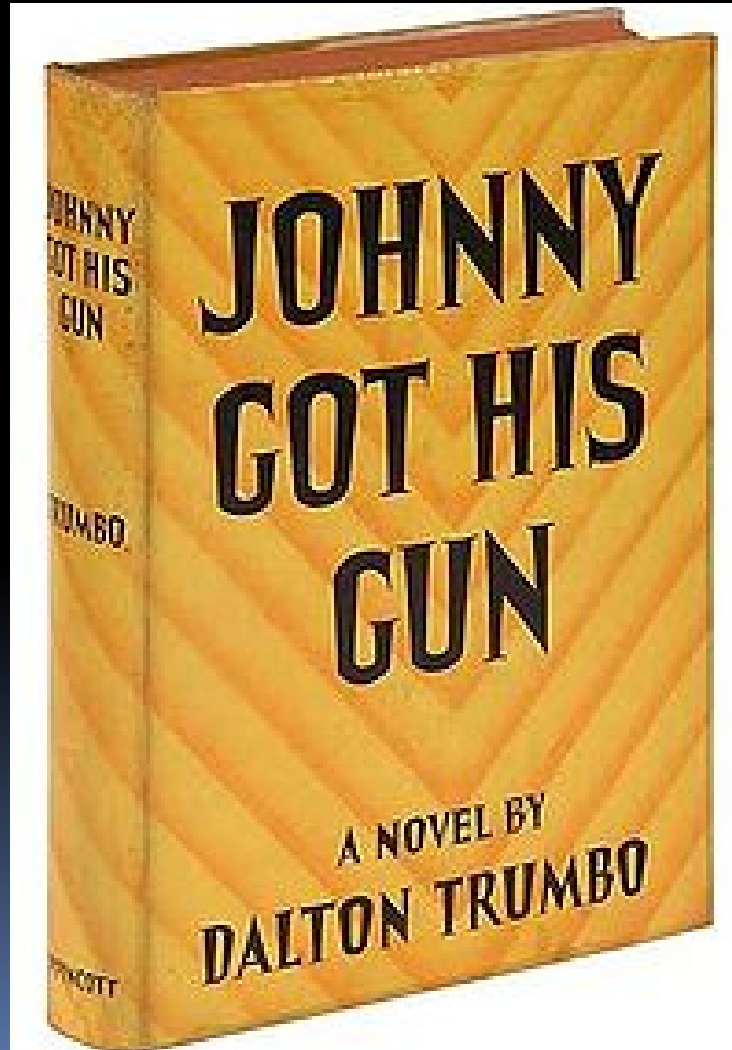


Johnny Got His Gun (1939): Discussion



Conflict: A soldier awakens in a hospital only to discover he is severely wounded.



Characterization: Joe Bonham



Characterization: Joe Bonham

- What's Joe's background?



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- How does he get into the war?



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Characterization: Joe Bonham

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- How does he get into the war?
- What are some of the things he sees while fighting?
- How does he get hurt?
- How has he changed?



The Structure



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- The incidents in the novel are organized almost randomly.



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- Flashbacks



The Structure



- The incidents in the novel are organized almost randomly.
- Flashbacks
- Stream-of-Consciousness

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- Lack of punctuation

The Structure



- The incidents in the novel are organized almost randomly.
- Flashbacks
- Stream-of-Consciousness
- Lack of punctuation
- What's Trumbo's point?

Allusion



Allusion

- Where does the title come from?



Allusion

- Where does the title come from? How does it provide ironic commentary?



Allusion

- Where does the title come from? How does it provide ironic commentary?
- Who is Lazarus in the book?



Allusion

- Where does the title come from? How does it provide ironic commentary?
- Who is Lazarus in the book? How is this biblical allusion ironic?



Joe's "Breakthrough"



Joe's "Breakthrough"

- How does Joe finally manage to communicate?



Joe's "Breakthrough"

- How does Joe finally manage to communicate?
- What does he want?



Joe's "Breakthrough"



- How does Joe finally manage to communicate?
- What does he want?
- What do they tell him?

Joe's "Breakthrough"



- How does Joe finally manage to communicate?
- What does he want?
- What do they tell him?
- What is his reaction?

Mood and Tone



Mood and Tone

- What is the mood of the book?



Mood and Tone

- What is the mood of the book? What elements contribute to this mood?



Mood and Tone

- What is the mood of the book? What elements contribute to this mood?
- What is the tone of the book?



Mood and Tone

- What is the mood of the book? What elements contribute to this mood?
- What is the tone of the book? How does Trumbo indicate this tone?



The Last Lines

“If you make a war if there are **guns** to be aimed if there are bullets to be fired if there are men to be killed they will not be us...if you try to range us one against the other we will know what to do....We will use the **guns** you force upon us we will use them to defend our very lives....You plan the wars you masters of men and point the way and *we will point the **gun**.*” How does this tie in to the title of the book?

Theme(s)



Theme(s)



- What is the meaning of the book as a whole?

Theme(s)



- What is the meaning of the book as a whole?
- Is there more than one theme?

Theme(s)



- What is the meaning of the book as a whole?
- Is there more than one theme?
- Is there a place in the book where Trumbo explicitly makes clear his theme, or are you left to infer it from the novel's action, dialogue, and details?

Perspective

Critic Ronald L. James writes, "Anyone who picks up this novel, especially teachers who present this powerful piece of fiction to young readers, need to be aware that Trumbo was a Communist. The ulterior motive for writing Johnny Got His Gun was to support the insidious and despicable non-aggression pact between Nazi Germany and Stalin's USSR...The novel is not only propagandistic and manipulative, it is also simplistic in its attitude towards war." **Is the novel propaganda?**



Further Discussion

Author George Orwell said in 1941, "The choice before human beings is not between good and evil, but between two evils. You can let the Nazis rule the world; that is evil. Or you can overthrow them by war, which is also evil."

Compare this to the message of Johnny Got His Gun. Is war ever justified?

