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Class Materials

Accords: Peace, War, and the Arts

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Passage Analysis Assignment

Andrew Strombeck

Wright State University - Main Campus, andrew.strombeck@wright.edu

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Passage analyses/Length: 250-400 words

Throughout the semester, you will complete five passage analyses.

For these papers, you will do the following:

1. Choose a passage (2-4 sentences, 5-6 lines of poetry) that seems particularly rich, interesting, thorny, or meaningful.
2. Introduce the passage along the following lines:
Early in Richard Bausch's *Peace*, in the midst of a back story about Joyner's youth in Michigan, the narrator pauses to observe Marson's feelings about Joyner's storytelling abilities:
3. Provide a careful, detailed, close-reading of the passage, in which you tell us about the author's word choices, how this passage relates to the work's themes, how this passage works in terms of the work's formal choices, a pattern of imagery continued here, and so on. Please do not summarize the plot.

You do not need to include a Works Cited for this assignment, but please do put your name on the assignment. An example of what I'm looking for follows on the second page.

Grading

I will evaluate this paper on the following criteria.

- The thoroughness and thoughtfulness of your close-reading—how you attend to the passage and explain the passage to your readers, as well as the originality of your thought.
- The clarity and organization of your ideas—how sentences build one or two strong ideas, as opposed to listing ideas.
- The grammatical correctness, liveliness, and smoothness of your sentences.

For the first assignment, I will give you full comments on your writing. All later assignments will be graded with a rubric. In calculating your grade, the first category, thoroughness and thoughtfulness, counts twice, while the second two categories count once each.

The letter grade assigned goes according to the following scale. In cases where performance falls between grades, I will use decimals, such as 8.5

9 or above	A	7 or above	C
8 or above	B	6 or above	D

The thoroughness and thoughtfulness of your close-reading. (x2)	8
The thoroughness and thoughtfulness of your close-reading. (x2)	8
The clarity and organization of your ideas. (x1)	8
The grammatical correctness, liveliness, and smoothness of your sentences. (x1)	8
Total	28
Divided by 4 (rounded to nearest decimal)	8
Letter grade	B

Posting Your Assignment:

- 1) Log on to [the class blog] using your account.
- 2) Post passage with your name included.

Prompt for Short Analysis One: Bausch's *Peace* and Storytelling

For your first passage analysis only, please respond to the prompt below.

For your first short assignment, please choose a passage (2-3 sentences) from *Peace*.

Explain how you think this passage theorizes storytelling in relation to war and/or violence.

Please point to specific details from the passage, and explain to us what "theory" the passage expresses about storytelling. What key terms would you use (terms not from the passage itself) to express this theory? (Such as "process," "scrutinize," "evaluate," "remember," "transmit," and so on.) Better papers (high Bs and As) will do more than simply rehash analysis covered in class, extending and reworking this analysis or showing how this analysis connects to other moments in the book.

Sample Paper

Jane Q. Liu

Early in Richard Bausch's *Peace*, in the midst of a back story about Joyner's youth in Michigan, the narrator pauses to observe Marson's feelings about Joyner's storytelling abilities: "[Joyner] could be more expressive in that way, too, which made him all the more troublesome to Marson, who was himself expressive and liked what his mother called *picture speech*, words and phrases that took you somewhere other than where you were" (28-29). This statement neatly applies to both the novel itself, which attempts to "take" the reader to "somewhere other than where they are," 1944 Italy, as well as the practices of the soldiers, particularly Marson, who almost continually work to make sense of the atrocities they've witnessed, in particular the shooting of the unarmed prostitute from the novel's beginning. At first glance, such storytelling seems of little use to a soldier: Joyner's skill will do little to help him get off the novel's freezing mountain, nor will it help him spot German soldiers. But Bausch suggests that the very act of narrative helps the men manage the barrage of feelings they have about the atrocities they witness. It's not entirely clear why Marson finds this tendency of Joyner's "troublesome," except that perhaps Marson, from the relatively sophisticated environment of Washington D.C., can't quite grasp how the farm boy Joyner has come by this skill, and it perhaps makes Marson identify with the often repulsive Joyner more than Marson would like. In a way, then, Bausch suggests that storytelling has the capacity to connect disparate personalities, and to help individuals build connections with each other even in the direst circumstances. Storytelling, it would seem, makes the nearly unbearable circumstances of the mission slightly more manageable: the rain still falls, the cold still holds, enemy bullets still fly, but characters are nevertheless able to hold onto, if not hope, at least their human qualities.