Spring 2015

Research Poster Sample

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

Follow this and additional works at: https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/celia_ten_years_dlpp_class
Part of the Education Commons

Repository Citation
https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/celia_ten_years_dlpp_class/18

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Accords: Peace, War, and the Arts at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ten Years of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Class Materials by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact corescholar@www.libraries.wright.edu, library-corescholar@wright.edu.
Historical Context: The Winter Line

Richard Bausch’s World War II novel Peace is set during a troubling, difficult moment in the Allied campaign to drive German soldiers out of Italy during the winter of 1944. Allied troops had landed in Salerno in September 1943, and had moved steadily up the Italian peninsula throughout the fall of 1943, with the eventual goal of reaching and taking Rome. (“Fifth Army”). But this drive was stopped by German reinforcements, at what became known as the Winter Line, a line of reinforcements running across the mountainous territory of central Italy. The official Army history describes the problem concisely: “Each mountain had to be taken, each valley cleared, and then there were more mountains ahead and still another main defense line to be broken.” In his comprehensive history of the campaign, The Day of Battle, historian Rick Atkinson describes how this campaign became bogged down by rainy weather in the winter of 1944. (“Beginning in late February, rain fell day after dreary day.” [Fifth Army meteorologist David Ludlum] studied his weather charts from dawn until midnight only to report yet again: more rain. A week passed, then another” (45)). This rain became a particular problem around the key site of Cassino, where the Allies had bombed a monastery earlier in the winter. Here, the mountains became nearly impossible to pass in the rain, even as the Germans maintained machine guns and other armaments in the mountains.

Bausch captures the tedious, difficult, and paranoia of the ground soldier’s position in this conflict. He repeatedly calls attention to the tenacious weather, delivered in Bausch’s minimalist style: “On the side of the mountain in the rain, Marston and Moir were awake” (46) and “Corporal Marston, the only one awake in the freezing darkness” (61). “On the cold hillside—or mountain—Corporal Marston at the freezing hour pass, dreaming of home.” (73). Peace attempts to convey the tedious and disoriented this difficult moment in the war. It’s possible to hear the rain, but he seems to have chosen this historical moment deliberately because of its stasis. Tactically, the winter weather delays the bombing of Cassino: psychologically, the steady rain symbolizes the relentlessness and entrapment of combat. The mountains also posed problems for the army as a whole, but came, in Bausch’s narrative, to depict the difficulty of moving forward in wartime.

According to Atkinson, though not without losses, the Allied forces made relatively rapid progress in southern Italy, particularly on the island of Sicily and the lower part of Italy. Atkinson observes that by September 1943, only 8,000 Germans occupied “the foot of the Italian boot” (178). While Salerno was a difficult battle, the Germans retreated from Naples after losing that city (Atkinson 239). Throughout 1943, then, the Allied forces moved up Italy quickly, but were stalled at the Winter Line. Bausch emphasizes the deadliness of both progress and winter by contrasting the mountain with Palermo (albeit ironically): “Corporal Marston, halfway up the mountain, being rained on, stopped at Cassino, remembered how hot it had been in Palermo, and how much he liked it” (44). Bausch captures the awkwardness of the men’s position by contrasting the scene with flashbacks to Palermo, where Marston and the other men relax and socialize with locals. In particular the energetic Mario, who brings the men “the best wine. Primitivo” (52). Bausch also shows Marston attending mass at Palermo (49) and talks with them about baseball (57). Bausch’s novel, then, reflects the historical sense of stasis that greeted Allied forces at the Winter Line.

Polish soldiers on the mountain leading to Cassino

Day 1
- 7:30 am: Troops begin to move uphill
- 9:30 am: Troops reach the summit of Mount Cassino
- 11:30 am: Troops reach the summit of Mount Cassino

Day 2
- 10:30 am: Troops reach the summit of Mount Cassino
- 11:30 am: Troops reach the summit of Mount Cassino

Day 3
- 7:30 am: Troops reach the summit of Mount Cassino
- 9:30 am: Troops reach the summit of Mount Cassino

Mountainous terrain of the Winter Line

Peace’s Intervention into History

If the Italian campaign was designed, according to Winston Churchill, to pierce the “soft underbelly” of the Axis, Bausch depicts this undertaking as anything but straightforward (“The Bombing of Monte Cassino”). Taking rich advantage of his historical setting, Bausch uses the historical moment of the assault on the Gustave line to depict the terror and horror of war. Marston and the other men are continually reflected on their entrapment.

He stood against a big tree, breathing the odor of its heavy bark, and thought of the pain in his heel. It hurt worse all the time, and yet he could not quite get his mind around it as pain. This that he felt now, stalking the morning forest, was the pain of his heel. Breathing the odor of its heavy bark, and thought of the pain in his heel. It hurt worse all the time, and yet he could not quite get his mind around it as pain. This that he felt now, stalking the morning forest, was the pain of his heel.

Bausch focuses on Marston’s bodily pain here, even as he experiences a psychological strain that “overmasters” his physical pain. While he doesn’t depict malformed bodies or widespread bloodshed, Bausch works in what literary critic Searna Cole calls the “disenchanted” mode of the campaign, citing: “The war of 1943” (163). In favor of “homogenizing in on a moment of bodily injury, stressing the force of that irruptive violation and intimating ghastly consequences for the future” (1638). There is nothing purifying or cathartic about Marston’s pain: it’s ghastly. It’s terrible in its stasis. Few readers coming across this passage will be in the poem of soft underbellies of the Axis. Instead, they are likely to be repulsed at the awfulness of this situation. Peace as a whole trades in this stasis. Very little time passes, and very little ground is covered throughout the novel’s 171 pages. Of course, Bausch accomplishes this disenchanted effect in part through his narrative choices. He tells us little about the larger arc of the war, and then the atrocities committed by German soldiers are heard from a distance. This makes it difficult for readers to balance the terror of war with its larger purposes. It’s interesting, in this sense, to contrast the tone of Peace with a tone of the novel, in which the author’s present is heard from a distance. This makes it difficult for readers to balance the terror of war with its larger purposes. It’s interesting, in this sense, to contrast the tone of Peace with a tone of the novel, in which the author’s present is heard from a distance. This makes it difficult for readers to balance the terror of war with its larger purposes. It’s interesting, in this sense, to contrast the tone of Peace with a tone of the novel, in which the author’s present is heard from a distance.

Bausch employs the “disenchanted” mode in his account of the battle of Cassino, depicting the battle as a brutal, grinding affair, in which the Allies suffer heavy casualties before finally taking the city.

Works Cited

To search for copyright-free images of the right size:
1.) Search for an image on Google Images
2.) At top of search results, choose Search Tools
3.) Choose Usage Rights > Labeled for reuse (any one of the settings is fine)
4.) Choose size > Larger Than > 640 x 480

This sample is 18 x 24". Your poster should have the same dimensions.
To use this sample as a template:
1.) Save it with a new name
2.) Delete this notes slide

You may use the layout of the template as is. Please change colors and the like to suit your material.

Timeline was created with PowerPoint shapes. These are available on the Home toolbar.

To change the background:
View > Slide Master > Background Styles

There's lots more you can do, obviously—see PowerPoint help and Google for more info.

Text boxes do not need to follow MLA format (Works Cited does).
Text boxes should look neat, however.