Spring 2015

Research Poster Sample

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

Follow this and additional works at: http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/celia_ten_years_dlpp_class

Part of the Education Commons

Repository Citation
http://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.
Richard Bausch’s World War II novel Peace is set during a stifling, 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 fortifications 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 Ludlam] studied his weather charts from dawn until midnight only to report yet again: more rain. A week passed, then another” (457). 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 tedium, difficulty, and paranoia of the ground soldier’s position in this conflict. He repeatedly calls attention to the tenuous weather, delivered in Bausch’s minimalist style: “On the side of the mountain in the rain, Marson and Moir were awake” (46) and “Corporal Marson, the only one awake in the freezing darkness” (61). “On the cold hillside—or mountain—Corporal Marson of the freezing hour pass, dreaming of home” (73). Peace attempts to convey the tedium and discontent of this difficult moment in the war. 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, on the backburner. In Bausch’s novel, then, reflects the historical sense of stasis that greeted Allied forces at the Winter Line.

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” (179). 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 Marson, halfway up the mountain, was seeing the morning rays of Cassino, remembered how hot it had been in Palermo, and how much he hated it” (46). Bausch captures the awfulness of the men’s position by contrasting the scene with flashbacks to Palermo, where Marson and the other men relax and socialize with locals, in particular the energetic Mario, who brings the men “the best wine. Primitivo” (43) and talks with them about baseball (52). Mario also attends mass at Palermo (49) and talks endlessly about home (57). Bausch’s novel, then, reflects the historical sense of stasis that greeted Allied forces at the Winter Line.

Historical Context: The Winter Line

Richie Bausch's World War II novel Peace is set during a stifling, 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 fortifications 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 Ludlam] studied his weather charts from dawn until midnight only to report yet again: more rain. A week passed, then another” (457). 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 tedium, difficulty, and paranoia of the ground soldier’s position in this conflict. He repeatedly calls attention to the tenuous weather, delivered in Bausch’s minimalist style: “On the side of the mountain in the rain, Marson and Moir were awake” (46) and “Corporal Marson, the only one awake in the freezing darkness” (61). “On the cold hillside—or mountain—Corporal Marson of the freezing hour pass, dreaming of home” (73). Peace attempts to convey the tedium and discontent of this difficult moment in the war. 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, on the backburner. In Bausch’s novel, then, reflects the historical sense of stasis that greeted Allied forces at the Winter Line.

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” (179). 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 Marson, halfway up the mountain, was seeing the morning rays of Cassino, remembered how hot it had been in Palermo, and how much he hated it” (46). Bausch captures the awfulness of the men’s position by contrasting the scene with flashbacks to Palermo, where Marson and the other men relax and socialize with locals, in particular the energetic Mario, who brings the men “the best wine. Primitivo” (43) and talks with them about baseball (52). Mario also attends mass at Palermo (49) and talks endlessly about home (57). Bausch’s novel, then, reflects the historical sense of stasis that greeted Allied forces at 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 Gustav line to depict the tedium and terror of war. Marson and the other men continually reflect on their entrapment:

If the Italian campaign was designed, according to Winston Churchill, to pierce the “soft underbelly” of the Axis, Bausch departs from this notion of quick breakthroughs andInstead, the tides of the slaughter were too strong. For Marson, the position was “a moment of bodily injury, stressing the force of that irruptive violation and intimating ghastly consequences for the future” (43). There is nothing purifying or cathartic about Marson’s pain: if not “ghastly,” it is terrible in its particulars. Few readers coming across this passage will revel in the piercing of soft underbellies of the Axis. Instead, they are likely to be repulsed at the awfulness of the men’s position.

Bausch focuses on Marson’s bodily pain here, even as he experiences a psychological strain that “overmasters” his physical pain. While he doesn’t depict the visual horror of mauled bodies or widespread bloodshed, Bausch works in what literary critic Susan Cole calls the “disenchanted” mode of the “campaigning soldier of war” (163). Bausch, works in what literary critic Susan Cole calls the “disenchanted” mode of the “campaigning soldier of war” (163). In fact, he accomplishes this by contrasted the scene with flashbacks to Palermo, where Marson and the other men relax and socialize with locals, in particular the energetic Mario, who brings the men “the best wine. Primitivo” (43) and talks with them about baseball (52). Mario also attends mass at Palermo (49) and talks endlessly about home (57). Bausch’s novel, then, reflects the historical sense of stasis that greeted Allied forces at the Winter Line.

To the reader, this can be a jarring disjunction, as the reader is likely to be more sympathetic to the suffering of the “unarmed woman” than to the suffering of a soldier. This is especially true when the reader is considering the events of World War II, with its legacy of the concentration camps and the Holocaust. Bausch’s novel, then, reflects the historical sense of stasis that greeted Allied forces at the Winter Line.

Bausch tackles the issue of purging violence in his novel, focusing on the human cost of war. While unsparing in its accounts of casualties, the novel is far more interested in a view of the war from a general’s point of view than the from an enlisted soldier’s point of view. As a work of narrative literature, Peace provides a useful companion to the straight history of a work like Rick Atkinson’s The Day of Battle, forcing readers to consider the plight of those who bore the brunt of the war.
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.

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

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.