Smith 1

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English 11

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Sample analytical paragraph

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| Tina Chen explores the postmodern tendencies of *The Things They Carried*, attributing them to the failure of the Vietnam War to meet expectations that “an American story would unfold… provoking a crisis in the very narrative of the nation” (78). She describes the war as a “wound, a metaphysic fracture in the body politic that refuses to heal completely…” (79). O’Brien demonstrates that this wound and the world which caused it is not governed or explained by the old rules and dichotomies that are epitomized in the hollow patriotism of the “polyestered Kiwanis boys, the merchants and farmers, the pious churchgoers, the PTA and Lions club and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the fine upstanding gentry of the Country Club” (O’Brien 45) from whom the young O’Brien in the novel fears judgment upon his near draft-dodging experience. They are a vestige of the old way of looking at wars, of the world of glory and clear boundaries between right and wrong, enemy and ally. They are part of the world that cannot understand and does not listen to the stories of the soldiers sent to Vietnam in the novel. It seems that the soldiers shared this naïve belief in glory and clear-cut morality, only to arrive in Vietnam unequipped to deal with the dark ambiguity of their surroundings. It is the shock of not being able to clearly understand their experiences that thrusts the men into confusion, outrage, sadness, joy, and sometimes all of these feelings at once. It is the multiplication of these emotions simultaneously that results in the postmodern ‘true war story’ that O’Brien and his war brothers are obsessed with portraying through their accounts of their experiences. | 🡨Topic sentence that states the argument for the rest of the paragraph **and** introduction of argument from one of the writer’s secondary sources.  🡨Well-chosen quote from the novel itself (evidence)—woven seamlessly into the rest of the sentence!  🡨Explanation and evaluation of evidence  .  .  .  .  .  .  .  .  .  .  🡨Concluding sentence that wraps up the argument in this paragraph, but also signals the next topic |