Student 1

Sample Student

English 11

Ms. Sabatino

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Sample paper proposal: Truth and Memory in *The Things They Carried*

In Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*, the author explores the experiences of a group of American soldiers during the Vietnam War. Through harrowing accounts of the violence (and sometimes, the beauty) of war, O’Brien calls into question the patriotic rhetoric surrounding war and highlights the fuzzy morality surrounding the actions of men during wartime. On another level, though, O’Brien’s narrative explores the nature of stories themselves, suggesting that the storyteller, paradoxically, both creates and *negates* truth.

For my research paper, I’m interested in exploring the question “how does one’s perspective shape or alter truth and experience,” in a sense. I’m interested in looking at O’Brien’s nebulous and complicated definition of “truth” in the novel and connecting it, if possible, to the concept(s) of truth developed in the other texts we’ve studied this semester. In particular, I think that *Siddhartha* and *The Metamorphosis* raise doubts about the existence and utility of “objective truth,” and I think that I could use these as a starting point for making these connections. The obvious relationship between *All Quiet on the Western Front*, moreover, in terms of the idea of war itself, is also a possible connection that I see emerging.

My plan is to begin by researching “truth” in O’Brien’s fiction, to see what others have written and explored on the subject, and to branch out from there regarding the other books from the course. Thus far, I’ve done some preliminary research related to O’Brien and postmodernism, and convincing connections have emerged for me.