

Writing an Analytical Body Paragraph

Integrating Examples from Your Novel and Support from Literary Criticisms

Directions: Below is an outline showing how to organize your ideas for your analytical body paragraph. There is also a sample analytical paragraph that flows from the outline, so that you can see how the outline helps to create the paragraph. Once you get used to the structure of the paragraph and explanation of your ideas, you can discard this outline and just write.

Thesis:

In *All Over Creation*, Ozeki reveals the continuation of environmental racism through historical inaccuracies that pervade the classrooms, exposing the modern day exploitation of indigenous peoples for self-benefit.

Topic Sentence:

Although the school holds the play, the teacher Mr. Elliot Rhodes disagrees with its degrading, fairy-tale representation of American Indians and white settlers because the play dis-services those who experienced the anguish and their families who still suffer from the devastation of racism, racism which has recently been manifested in environmental exploitation.

Example(s) from the Text:

“It’s revisionist bullshit! It was genocide – we *stole* their land, and then we exterminated them. And now we call it Thanksgiving?” (22).

“Don’t you know anything about the Shoshone and the Bannock who’ve lived on this land for thousands of years, before there even was an Idaho?” (22).

Literary Criticism (paraphrased):

Elliot exposes several forms of injustice suffered by native peoples through explicit language (Johnson 12).

Sample Paragraph:

Although the school holds the play, the teacher Mr. Elliot Rhodes disagrees with its degrading, fairy-tale representation of American Indians and white settlers because the play dis-services those who experienced the anguish and their families who still suffer from the devastation of racism, racism which has recently been manifested in environmental exploitation. In his rant, he acknowledges society’s ignorance of American Indians’ past and explains how society benefits from the continuation of such historical fabrications: “It’s revisionist bullshit! It was genocide – we *stole* their land, and then we exterminated them. And now we call it Thanksgiving?” (22). His crude language, emphasized words, and exclamatory tone reveal how passionately Elliot feels about society’s attempts to hide the unsettling injustice of the past and re-create a more pleasant and comforting history. And, by using

“bullshit,” to refer to the play, and, on a larger scale, to main stream culture’s acceptance of “the first Thanksgiving” as a joyous feast among American Indians and white settlers, Elliot acknowledges society’s misrepresentation of history through its nonsense and lies. He exposes several forms of injustice suffered by native peoples through strong language (Johnson 12). “Genocide” and “extermination” refer to the violence and systematic murder of indigenous peoples. “Stole” indicates that American Indians did not foolishly give or squander land for trinkets, but white men deceived and took advantage of them. And in his outrage, Elliot poses a rhetorical question, daring anyone to disagree with him. His frustration surmounts when he asks Yumi: “Don’t you know anything about the Shoshone and the Bannock who’ve lived on this land for thousands of years, before there even was an Idaho?” (22). Despite the historical glossing of Thanksgiving and indigenous peoples, Elliot cannot fathom how people who live near reservations, interact among natives peoples, and contaminate tribal land through hazardous farming practices, do not acknowledge the past and current marginalization of American Indians. But, in his effort to redeem the integrity of indigenous peoples by exposing the actual interactions between tribes and whites, he unleashes his angst on a fourteen year old girl who has been continually fed misinformation by adults not much different than him. Although Elliot recognizes society’s ignorance and indifference, he fails to take pre-emptive measures to prevent the misrepresentation of native peoples or to confront those who dispel the propaganda to others. Instead, Elliot shrinks from confrontation and empowers himself by degrading and belittling a powerless girl, mirroring the way in which society benefits by repressing indigenous peoples.