Senior English

Explication Practice

As part of this unit, we’re going to return to explication. While we spent some time working on explications during our *Splendid Suns* unit, I think that it will be helpful for all of us to do some practice explicating and review.

We are going to work through the following passages in two ways—as a small group and individually. You will submit your individual passage at the end of the period for feedback. Carefully read the first two passages with your small group. Look closely at the words Martel uses. Annotate your passage. Make a note of any literary devices that Martel uses. Which are the strongest or most effective? Are there words that stand out? Why? What do these words convey? Once you have determined the literary devices and words Martel uses, begin to draw some conclusions about these choices. How do these choices help to create meaning in the piece? Then, as a group, work to craft a couple paragraphs analyzing these choices. Move through the passage **sentence by sentence** addressing the literary devices as they occur and discussing how the sentences are arranged and how this contributes to the meaning of the passage.

When you have finished your group work**, the third passage is for you to complete individually.** This is the one that you’ll submit for feedback. Like the first two passages, you should annotate the third passage noting the literary tools, word choices, etc. **After you’ve finished annotating, craft a paragraph or two analyzing the choices. Use our class work from Friday to guide your response. When you have finished, please upload your document to Schoology.**

**Passage One**

“Life is so beautiful that death has fallen in love with it, a jealous, possessive love that grabs at what it can. But life leaps over oblivion lightly, losing only a thing or two of no importance, and gloom is but the passing shadow of a cloud” (Martel 6).

**Passage Two**

“Darkness came. There was no moon. Clouds hid the stars. The contours of things became hard to distinguish. Everything disappeared, the sea, the lifeboat, my own body. The sea was quiet and there was hardly any wind, so I couldn't even ground myself in sound. I seemed to be floating in pure, abstract blackness. I kept my eyes fixed on where I thought the horizon was, while my ears were on guard for any sign of the animals. I couldn't imagine lasting the night” (Martel 118).

**Passage Three**

“For fear, real fear, such as shakes you to your foundation, such as you feel when you are brought face to face with your mortal end, nestles in your memory like gangrene: it seeks to rot everything, even the words with which to speak of it. So you must fight hard to express it. You might fight hard to shine the light of words upon it. Because if you don’t, if your fear becomes a wordless darkness that you avoid, perhaps even manage to forget, you open yourself to further attacks of fear because you never truly fought the opponent who defeated you” (Martel 162).