

# **“Tim O’Brien’s Works and Related Criticism: An Annotated Bibliography”**

by  
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My objective in this project is to succeed to Steven Kaplan’s annotated bibliography in his *Understanding Tim O’Brien*, a thorough study on O’Brien’s six novels. Though the Kaplan book is published in 1995, his bibliography deals chiefly with the 1976-89 items; some of the 1990-92 items and most of the 1993-95 items are excluded--the major concern of his work is, of course, not to compile all of O’Brien’s items. This bibliography of mine thus includes 1976-2002 items that Kaplan’s misses.

What follows consists of ten sections: O’Brien’s books (8), essays (3), interviews (14), and speeches (1) in “Primary Sources”; books and parts of books (86), journal articles (22), dissertations (8), reviews (9), bibliographies (3), and dictionaries and encyclopedias (3) in “Secondary Sources.” Those 157 entries are listed author-alphabetically and chronologically.

I collected them partly for the writing of my dissertation so that this bibliography contains some items that are not related specifically to O’Brien. Since my dissertation is an overall, interdisciplinary study of historical, autobiographical, psychoanalytic, and aesthetic facets in

Tim O'Brien's works, references to socio-historical and psychological sources and other Vietnam fiction and nonfiction are entered into this bibliography.

The bibliographical providers for searching items are as follows: *MLA International Bibliography*, *Book Review Digest*, Catherine Calloway's two valuable bibliographies, Tobey Herzog's *Tim O'Brien*, Mark Heberle's *A Trauma Artist: Tim O'Brien and the Fiction of Vietnam*, Amazon (amazon.com), New York Times (nytimes.com), Powell Books (powells.com), and Marilyn Knapp Litt's "Tim O'Brien Newsletter" (obriennews@yahoogroups.com).

## Primary Sources

### Books

O'Brien, Tim. *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*. 1973. New York: Broadway, 1999.

This memoir shows O'Brien's earliest fascination with fragmentation between chapters and his signature themes of reality and fantasy, guilt and trauma, agony and compassion, endeavor and survival, and memory and narrative.

- - -. *Northern Lights*. 1975. New York: Broadway, 1999.

His debut novel portrays the relationship between two brothers, one who goes to Viet Nam and the other who stays at home, demonstrating his narrative tension that later earned him appraisal with *Lake and July, July*.

- - -. *Going After Cacciato*. 1978. New York: Broadway, 1999.

This classic of the Vietnam War literature tells the story of a young soldier who narrates about men fleeing in fantasy and fighting the war in reality. National Book Award winner.

- - -. *The Nuclear Age*. New York: Knopf, 1985.

His first tragicomedy chronicles the anti-war activist's life-long crusade of an attempt of rescuing his family and the world from the nuclear annihilation.

- - -. *The Things They Carried*. 1990. New York: Broadway, 1998.

This collection of twenty-two episodic stories not only carries emotional burdens experienced by a group of grunts but also challenges the impossibility of telling war stories. Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

- - -. *In the Lake of the Woods*. Boston: Houghton, 1994.

O'Brien links the dark secrets of the human heart with the historical event of the My Lai Massacre in 1968, alluding to America's abuse of history and memory.

- - -. *Tomcat in Love*. New York: Broadway, 1998.

This second tragicomedy in the war between the sexes has trauma narrative and brings together Vietnam-generational crisis of love, marriage, Vietnam, and survival.

- - -. *July, July*. Boston: Houghton, 2002.

College classmates in this ensemble novel reassure their old dreams have turned to disappointment at their thirty-first class reunion.

## **Essays**

O'Brien, Tim. "We've Adjusted Too Well." 1980. *The Wounded*

*Generation: America After Vietnam*. Ed. A. D. Horne.

Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1981. 205-07.

Criticism against veterans and non-veterans who had lost the energy to recall Vietnam. Originally appeared in *The Washington Post*.

- - -. "The Magic Show." *A Bread Loaf Anthology: Writers on Writing*. Ed. Robert Pack and Jay Parini. Hanover: UP of New England, 1991. 175-83.

Sharing his childhood experiences as a hand magician, O'Brien concludes that a fiction writer, like a magician, should extend the boundaries of the mysterious in writing.

- - -. "The Vietnam in Me." *New York Times Magazine* 2 Oct. 1994: 48-57.

Memoir of O'Brien's 1994 return to Quang Ngai Province in which his Alpha Company was once based in 1969-70. His experiences are painfully repeated as he remembers the war and the breakup with his girlfriend.

## ***Interviews***

O'Brien, Tim. Interview with Larry McCaffery. "Interview with Tim O'Brien." 1982. *Dictionary of Literary Biography Documentary Series: American Writers of the Vietnam War*. Ed. Ronald Baughman. Detroit: Brucoli, 1991. 153-64.

This source focuses on his first three books, on the structure of *Cacciato* in particular.

- - -. Interview with Eric James Schroeder. "Tim O'Brien: Maybe So." 1984. *Vietnam, We've All Been There: Interviews with American Writers*. By Eric James Schroeder. Westport: Praeger, 1992. 124-43.

This deals chiefly with his writing of *If I Die* and *Cacciato*. O'Brien says that the fiction writers today are not doing their job--"to let your imagination add to memories." and to

- - -. Interview with Dave Wood. "Words of War." *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* 10 Mar. 1990: B8+.

Valuable source to reveal O'Brien's involvement with a revenge against one VC hostage.

- - -. Interview with D. J. R. Bruckner. "A Storyteller for the War That Won't End." *New York Times* 3 Apr. 1990: C15+.

This interview-review successfully points out O'Brien's central task in writing: resurrection of the dead and redemption of a human soul through narrative.

- - -. Interview with Debra Shostak and Daniel Bourne. "Artful Dodge Interviews Tim O'Brien." *Artful Dodge* 22/23 (1991): 74-90.

This long interview covers O'Brien's narrative techniques, criticism against the U. S. foreign policies, the Midwest's ignorance of different cultures and patriotism, and so on.

- - -. Interview with Martin Naparstek. "An Interview with Tim O'Brien." *Contemporary Literature* 32.1 (1991): 1-11.

This contains O'Brien's analysis of human memory and its nature of forgetting, fragmentation, and reordering of the events. The intertwining process of memory and imagination is "the key to finding truth" in fiction.

- - -. Interview with Steven Kaplan. "An Interview with Tim

O'Brien." *Missouri Review* 14.3 (1991): 93-108.

Material for his 1995 book solely on O'Brien. On differences in two sexes under extreme danger and trauma, O'Brien says, "I think that way too much has been made of gender by both sides. We're not *that* different."

- - -. Interview with Michael Schumacher. "Writing Stories from Life: Tim O'Brien on Writing Fiction." *Writer's Digest* 71.4 (1991): 34-39.

As revealing his writing techniques displayed in *Things*, he says that what he cares the most is not plot but story and its "aboutness."

- - -. Interview with Dave Edelman. "My Full Interview with Tim O'Brien." *dave edelman*. 19 Oct. 1994. 5 Aug. 2001 <<http://www.dave-edelman.com/reviews/obrien-full.cfm>>.

Unlike other interviews, this unfolds his views on current political and military affairs.

- - -. Interview with David Streitfeld. "The Writer Wounded by Friendly Fire: Vietnam Vet Tim O'Brien, Still at War with Himself." *Washington Post* 25 Nov. 1994: B1+.

Report of O'Brien's on-going mental depression as he celebrates the writer's latest success with *Lake*.

- - -. Interview with Scott Sawyer. "In the Name of Love: An Interview with Tim O'Brien." *Mars Hill Review* 4 (1996): 117-26.

This deals with O'Brien's use of memory, imagination, and

chronology in his writing.

- - -. Interview with Tobey Herzog. "Tim O'Brien Interview."

*South Carolina Review* 31.1 (1998): 78-109.

Material for his 1997 book solely on O'Brien and the most satisfactory resource for O'Brien's biographical study.

- - -. "Tim O'Brien: An Interview by Anthony Tambakis." *Five*

*Points: A Journal of Literature & Art* 4.1 (1999): 94-114.

Another long material to understand O'Brien's guilt over the war and his views on the current issues: Bush and the Gulf War victory, Americans' ignorance about world cultures, McNamara's confession, and his 1994 return to Viet Nam.

One of the most valuable interviews ever conducted.

- - -. Interview with Lynn Wharton. "Journeying from Life to

Literature: An Interview with American Novelist Tim

O'Brien." 11 Apr. 1999. 9 Apr. 2001 <<http://www.wkac.ac.uk/s98/lwart/webpages/LW2.htm>>.

This covers O'Brien's use of memory and trauma in *Things* and *Lake*. His resurrecting of the dead in writing is "to keep the ghosts with us."

## **Speeches**

Tim O'Brien. "Writing Vietnam." Brown University, Providence. 21

Apr. 1999. 1 July 2000 <<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WritingVietnam/obrien.html>>.



War stories are not “always about bombs and bullets and military maneuvers” but “finally about the human heart” to “console and to inspire and to help us heal.” Parts of “On the Rainy River” and “Ambush” were read.

## Secondary Sources

### ***Books and Parts of Books***

Adams, Leslie Kennedy. "Fragmentation in American and Vietnamese War Fiction." *America's Wars in Asia: A Cultural Approach to History and Memory*. Ed. Philip West, et al. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998. 84-99.

One of few studies focusing on this war as a subject of chaos and fragmentation. *Cacciato* and *Things* are discussed.

Anderson, David L. *Shadow on the White House: Presidents and the Vietnam War, 1945-1975*. Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 1993. Collection of essays by seven historians, examining how the six presidents grew into the unpopular war.

Anisfield, Nancy. "Words and Fragments: Narrative Style in Vietnam War Novels." *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Films of the Vietnam War*. Ed. William J. Searle. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State U Popular P, 1988. 56-61.

One of the first studies on U. S. soldiers' confusion and alienation in a war without definite objectives.

Baritz, Loren. *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did*. New York: Morrow, 1985.

Critical examination on America's illusive moral supremacy and idealism, heavy reliance upon high-tech firepower, and arrogance of power within the White House.

Baskir, Lawrence M., and William A. Strauss. *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation*. New York: Knopf, 1972.

First comprehensive statistical study of young men who evaded the service in Viet Nam.

Bates, Milton J. *The Wars We Took to Vietnam: Cultural Conflict and Storytelling*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.

Perfect interdisciplinary study of the Vietnam War, treating this war as a product of American culture in the 1960s. *If I Die*, *Cacciato*, *Things*, and *Lake* are discussed.

Beidler, Philip D. *American Literature and the Experience of Vietnam*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1982.

Pioneering study of Vietnam authors and their reconstruction of a new Vietnam. *If I Die* and *Cacciato* are discussed.

- - -. *Re-Writing America: Vietnam Writers in Their Generation*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1991.

Beidler resumes his discussion on how the Vietnam authors have projected their memory possible redemptory myth.

Five books from *If I Die* to *Things* are discussed.

Bilton, Michael, and Kevin Sim. *Four Hours in My Lai: A War Crime and Its Aftermath*. 1992. New York: Penguin, 1993.

Thorough resurvey of the massacre by the two British historians, beating Seymour Hersh's earlier account.

Broyles, William, Jr. *Brothers in Arms: A Journey from War to Peace*. New York: Avon, 1986.

Memoir of his 1984 return to Viet Nam. Broyles was one of the first American veteran-returnees to Viet Nam.

Bryan, C. D. B. *Friendly Fire*. New York: Putnam, 1976.

Acclaimed piece of nonfiction on one draftee's tragic death in Viet Nam and his parents' crusade against the U. S. government's cover up of the truth.

Caputo, Philip. *A Rumor of War*. New York: Holt, 1977.

Highly acclaimed memoir by the ex-Marine, one of the first U. S. troops who landed at Da Nang in March 1965.

- - -. *Indian Country*. 1987. New York: HarperPerennial, 1991.

One of few novels on a destructive marital relationship in the post-Vietnam of the 1980s.

Christopher, Renny. *The Viet Nam War, the American War: Images and Representation in Euro-American and Vietnamese Exile Narratives*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1995.

Christopher attacks O'Brien's limited sense of history and his perpetuating Asian stereotypes in *Cacciato*, which, she says, is typical in American white male combat narratives.

Davis, Walter T., Jr. *Shattered Dream: America's Search for Its Soul*. Valley Forge: Trinity, 1994.

Most powerful Vietnam study ever done by a socio-theologist,

inspecting the hidden causes of the Vietnam veterans' trauma. *Cacciato* is quoted.

Del Vecchio, John M. *The 13th Valley*. 1982. New York: St. Martin's, 1999.

Highly realistic, detailed novel, reminiscent of Webb's account.

Edelman, Bernard, ed. *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam*. 1985. New York: Pocket, 1988.

Collection of 208 letters written home by 125 U. S. soldiers during the war.

Egendorf, Arthur. *Healing from the War: Trauma and Transformation after Vietnam*. Boston: Houghton, 1985.

Jungian's masterwork on America's collective shift from war to peace.

Fallows, James. "What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?" 1975. *The Wounded Generation: America After Vietnam*. Ed. A. D. Horne. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1981. 15-29.

Widely cited article and one earliest lament for the socially unfair war.

Foster, Dennis A. *Confession and Complicity in Narrative*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Unique theory of the writer-reader relationship, stating that readers enter into complicity with writers and they also see themselves as masters over meaning.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams (First Part)*. 1900. Trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth, 1986. 48-65. Vol.

4 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.

Outline of his revolutionary theory of unconscious forces in the context of dream analysis.

- - -. *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis (Part III)*. 1917.

Trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth, 1986. 273-85.

Vol. 16 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.

Collection of his lectures on terms and theories of the neuroses.

Fulbright, J. W. *Against the Arrogance of Power: My Personal History*. Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 1991.

Toughest Vietnam dissenter's autobiography. This former Arkansas senator's investigation on the Tonkin Gulf conspiracy made U. S. public furious and ruined Johnson's liability and his political career.

Greene, Bob. *Homecoming: When the Soldiers Returned from Vietnam*. 1989. New York: Ballantine, 1990.

Collection of letters from the returnees recalling how they were treated by the Vietnam dissenters at the airports.

Halberstam, David. *One Very Hot Day*. Boston: Houghton, 1967.

Nonfiction novel on one platoon's typical day fighting the war. One earliest account to convey a sense of the war's complexity and hopelessness.

- - -. *The Best and the Brightest*. New York: Random, 1972.

Acclaimed as the best journalistic work revealing miscalculations and arrogance of power of America's top advisors' in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

- - -. *The Next Century*. New York: Morrow, 1991.

Alert to America's Reaganized political paralysis.

- - -. *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*.

New York: Scribner, 2001.

Another fine report of post-Cold War foreign policy and top advisors' dilemmas.

Hasford, Gustav. *The Short-Timers*. New York: Harper, 1979.

Novel on violence, brutality, and surrealism of Vietnam, better known later as Kubrick's film *Full Metal Jacket*.

Hearden, Patrick F, ed. *Vietnam: Four American Perspectives*.

West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 1990.

Collection of four essays by historians and former generals.

Heberle, Mark A. *A Trauma Artist: Tim O'Brien and the Fiction of Vietnam*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2001.

Heberle considers O'Brien as a fabricator of memory and trauma through the prisms of PTSD and post-modernist metafiction. First study to focus on O'Brien's representation of trauma.

Heinemann, Larry. *Close Quarters*. 1977. New York: Penguin, 1986.

His first novel on brutality and reality of Vietnam.

- - -. *Paco's Story*. 1986. New York: Penguin, 1989.

Haunted life story of a platoon's sole survivor with guilt,

nightmares, and hell. National Book Award winner.

Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. 1992.

New York: Basic, 1997.

Freudian's masterwork on traumatic events and treatments.

*Things* is the only account from Vietnam War literature discussed here.

Herr, Michael. *Dispatches*. 1977. New York: Vintage, 1991.

Collection of magazine articles recapturing the chaos of the war. Acclaimed as the best nonfictional work of Vietnam.

Herr later co-wrote the scripts for *Apocalypse Now* and *Full Metal Jacket*.

Herzog, Tobey C. *Vietnam War Stories: Innocence Lost*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Survey of Vietnam narratives within the context of cultural and literary themes. *If I Die*, *Cacciato*, and *Things* are discussed.

- - -. *Tim O'Brien*. New York: Twayne, 1997.

Herzog unravels the function of memory and imagination in six books from *If I Die* to *Lake*. First study on O'Brien as an autobiographical writer.

Johnson, Haynes. *Sleepwalking through History: America in the Reagan Years*. New York: Norton, 1991.

Chronicle of the Reagan legacy, the "ethical wasteland of the eighties" when America fell from dominant world power



to a debtor nation.

Kaplan, Steven. *Understanding Tim O'Brien*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1995.

This considers O'Brien as a fiction writer rather than as a Vietnam writer. Six books from *If I Die* to *Lake* are discussed. Brief annotated bibliography.

Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*. 2nd ed. New York: Penguin, 1997.

Acclaimed as the best work of the Vietnam War history. *If I Die* is quoted.

Kawamoto, Saburo. *Field of Innocence: Landscapes of American Literature*. 1991. Tokyo: Kawade Bunko, 1993.

Critical collection on contemporary novelists and singers.

Kattenburg, Paul M. *The Vietnam Trauma in American Foreign Policy, 1945-75*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1980.

Former foreign service officer's attack against "the best and the brightest" with no combat experiences who preferred military to diplomacy.

Kearns, Doris. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. New York: Harper, 1976.

Widely accepted as the best LBJ biography by his former aide.

Kolko, Gabriel. *Anatomy of a War: Vietnam, the United States, and the Modern Experience*. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

This second-most frequently cited work on the war's history

points out the U. S.'s inability of creating a relationship to all of the Third World countries.

Kovic, Ron. *Born on the Fourth of July*. New York: Quality, 1976.

Painful memoir by the ex-Marine who came home paralyzed from the chest down and later joined the anti-Vietnam activities.

Kroll, Barry M. *Teaching Hearts and Minds: College Students Reflect on the Vietnam War in Literature*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1992.

One of few accounts on the experience of teaching Vietnam novels and memoirs. Excerpts from students' assignments.

Kulka, Richard A., ed. *Trauma and the Vietnam War Generation: Report of Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study*. Levittown: Brunner/Mazel, 1990.

First statistical report of Vietnam theater and era veterans meeting with PTSD criteria of the APA's *DSM-III*.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. 1973. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin, 1991.

Introduction of his fundamental concepts--the unconscious, transference, drive, and repetition; notions--the gaze, the Name-of-the-Father, etc.

LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001.

Critical inquiry into post-traumatic writing and testimonies, focusing on Holocaust literature.

Levy, David W. *The Debate over Vietnam*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1995.

Examination of the debate by contrasting Republican consensus with Democratic division, and the split between intellectuals of the left and the right.

Lifton, Robert Jay. *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima*. 1967.

New York: Vintage, 1969.

Study of survivors of Hiroshima and Nazi concentration camp. Lifton first discovered “death imprint,” the survivor’s shame and complex attachment for death.

- - -. *Home from the War: Vietnam Veterans, Neither Victims nor Executioners*. New York: Touchstone, 1973.

Most influential study in psychoanalysis of Vietnam veterans, which became the basis for diagnosis and treatment of the Vietnam veterans’ PTSD and a contributor to the APA’s acknowledgment of the term “survivor guilt.”

Lyons, Paul. “Clinton, Vietnam, and the Sixties.” *The United States and Viet Nam from War to Peace: Papers from an Interdisciplinary Conference on Reconciliation*. Ed. Robert M. Slabey. Jefferson: McFarland, 1996. 69-75.

Lyon’s mixed feelings toward Clinton’s appearance at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1993.

MacPherson, Myra. *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1984.

Probably the only comprehensive study of Vietnam’s impact

on the generation, containing interviews of returnees, protesters, deserters, evaders, and draft-dodgers. O'Brien's early *Post* article is quoted.

Mason, Bobbie Ann. *In Country*. New York: Harper, 1985.

Daughter's quest for the understanding of her GI father's death in Viet Nam. Best novel depicting the war's aftermath and veterans' PTSD.

Matsakis, Aphrodite. *Survivor Guilt: A Self-Help Guide*.

Oakland: New Harbinger, 1999.

One of few works specializing in the survival guilt suffered by Vietnam veterans and victims of crime, abuse, disasters, and other traumatic events.

McNamara, Robert S., and Brian VanDeMark. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*. New York: Times, 1995.

Former Defense secretary's admission of his mistakes over "the tragedy." His controversial confession--"We were wrong, terribly wrong"--added more confusion to the issue and did little to rebuild his reputation.

McNamara, Robert S., et al. *Argument Without End: In Search of Answers to the Vietnam Tragedy*. New York: PublicAffairs, 1999.

Only valuable piece of information here is former North Vietnamese general Giap's remark on the Tonkin Gulf incidents, in which he says there was no second attack by the North on August 4.

Moïse, Edwin E. *Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1996.

Moïse concludes that there was no North Vietnamese attack and the original report was not a lie but a genuine mistake.

Morse, Wayne E. *Lyndon B. Johnson's Vietnam Papers: A Documentary Collection*. Ed. David M. Barrett. College Station: Texas A&M UP, 1997.

Memoranda, unofficial remarks, and telephone conversations regarding the war.

Nixon, Richard. *No More Vietnams*. 1985. New York: Avon, 1986.

His proclamation of war in the mid 1980s against world Communist takeover.

O'Nan, Stewart, ed. *The Vietnam Reader: The Definitive Collection of American Fiction and Nonfiction on the War*. New York: Anchor, 1998.

Best Vietnam collection of excerpts from fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, film, photos, and song lyrics.

Powell, Colin L., and Joseph E. Persico. *My American Journey*. 1995. New York: Ballantine, 2003.

This two-tour Vietnam veteran questions the uncertainty of Vietnam and recalls bitterly the government's inequality in its draft system.

Prince, Gerald. *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative*. Berlin: Mouton, 1982.

Outline of the narratological model that consists of three

components of the narrator, the narrated, and the narrating.

Reagan, Ronald. *An American Life*. New York: Simon, 1990.

Autobiography on his eight years in the White House.

Ringnalda, Don. "Doing It Wrong Is Getting It Right: America's Vietnam War Drama." *Fourteen Landing Zones: Approaches to Vietnam War Literature*. Ed. Philip K. Jason. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1991. 67-87.

Excellent argument on the relationship between Vietnam's unconventionality and its unique narrative.

- - -. "Tim O'Brien's Understood Confusion." *Fighting and Writing the Vietnam War*. By Don Ringnalda. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1994. 90-114.

Detailed study of O'Brien's creativity and symbolism appeared in *If I Die, Cacciato*, and *Things*.

Safer, Morley. *Flashbacks: On Returning to Vietnam*. New York: St. Martin's, 1990.

Nonfiction on the CBS reporter's 1989 revisit to Ha Noi, Trung Son Cemetery, and Sai Gon.

Schell, Jonathan. *The Real War*. 1988. London: Corgi, 1989.

Collection of an essay and two *New Yorker* articles on the notorious Ben Suc operation and the major air strikes over Quang Ngai and Quang Tin.

Scholes, Robert. *Fabulation and Metafiction*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1979.

Analysis of the major characteristics of the self-conscious

fiction.

Schroeder, Eric James. "The Past and the Possible: Tim O'Brien's Dialectic of Memory and Imagination." *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature & Films on the Vietnam War*. Ed. William J. Searle. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State U of Popular P, 1988. 116-34.

Fine study of O'Brien's use of the past, the present, and the imagined in the mind of the narrator Paul Berlin in *Cacciato*.

Shatan, Chaim F. "Stress Disorders among Vietnam Veterans: The Emotional Context of Combat Continues." *Stress Disorders among Vietnam Veterans: Theory, Research and Treatment*. Ed. Charles R. Figley. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978. 43-52. Study of the sanctions and systems of violence in Viet Nam and veterans' symptoms of post-combat syndrome.

Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*. 1994. New York: Touchstone, 1995. Transcendent challenge of examining the psychological devastation of war by comparing the soldiers of Homer's *Iliad* with Vietnam veterans suffering PTSD. *Things* is quoted.

Sheehan, Neil. *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*. 1988. New York: Vintage, 1989.

UP correspondent's biography of Lt. Vann who tried and failed to convince his unique strategy to his superior officers. Pulitzer Prize winner.

Smith, Julian. *Looking Away: Hollywood and Vietnam*. New York:

Scribner, 1975.

Study of how the American film industry has shown images of the Vietnam War.

Stephanopoulos, George. *All Too Human: A Political Education*. Boston: Little, 1999.

Former White House spokesperson's chronicle on the glorious and the shadowy of his five years with Clinton.

Strauss, William, and Neil Howe. *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*. New York: Quill, 1991.

Nationally acclaimed statisticians' bold theory of the American history as a succession of generational biographies.

Tal, Kali. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Unique work of reading narratives of Holocaust, Vietnam, and incest as trauma literatures.

Turner, Fred. *Echoes of Combat: Trauma, Memory, and the Vietnam War*. 1996. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001.

Exploration of the parallels between the healing of Vietnam veterans and America's collective recovery from the war.

Unger, Irwin, and Debi Unger. *Turning Point: 1968*. New York: Scribner, 1988.

Survey of the fall of traditional, idealistic liberals and the rise of new, violent radicals.

VanDeMark, Brian. *Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the*



*Escalation of the Vietnam War*. New York: Oxford UP, 1991.

Revelation of Johnson's lack of strength to overrule the hawkish counsel of Rusk, McNamara, Bundy, and others.

Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. New York: Methuen, 1984.

Examination of contemporary novelists' ways of regaining a wide readership by telling a story and the making of that story at the same time.

Webb, James. *Fields of Fire*. 1978. New York: Bantam: 2001.

Realistic bestseller on a Marine infantry platoon in An Hoa in 1968. Acclaimed as one of the best Vietnam novels.

Williams, Roger Neville. *The New Exiles: American War Resisters in Canada*. New York: Liveright, 1971.

Only volume of interviews with Americans who fled from fighting in Viet Nam to Canada.

Wyatt, David. *Out of the Sixties: Storytelling and the Vietnam Generation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

Study of the cultural legacy of the 1960s. "How to Tell a True War Story" is discussed in Michael Herr's chapter.

### ***Journal Articles***

Bates, Milton J. "Tim O'Brien's Myth of Courage." *Modern Fiction Studies* 33.2 (1987): 263-79.

Discussion of O'Brien's uniquely philosophical treatment of

courage in his first three books.

Bonn, Maria S. "Can Stories Save Us? Tim O'Brien and the Efficacy of the Text." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 36.1 (1994): 2-15.

Analysis of O'Brien's reconstruction of a creative connection of experience and art without any conclusions or lessons.

Calloway, Catherine. "'How to Tell a True War Story': Metafiction in *The Things They Carried*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 36.4 (1995): 249-57.

First study to place *Things* in the representation of contemporary metafiction. "Spin," "On the Rainy River," "How to Tell," "Speaking of Courage," and "The Lives of the Dead" are discussed.

Chen, Tina. "Unraveling the Deeper Meaning: Exile and the Embodied Poetics of Displacement in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*." *Contemporary Literature* 39.1 (1998): 77-98.

Chen asserts that *Things* serves not only as the experience of alienation and displacement but also as metonymic substitutions for the idea of Vietnam as home.

Epstein, Renée. "Talking Dirty: Memories of War and the Vietnam Novel." *Massachusetts Review* 34.3 (1993): 457-80.

Survey of how Vietnam is remembered and what can be learned from Vietnam novels. *If I Die*, *Cacciato*, and *Things* are quoted with other Vietnam novels.

Fertel, R. J. "Vietnam War Narratives and Myth of the Hero." *War, Literature, and the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities* 11.1 (1999): 268-93.

Fertel finds "the odd heroism" and symbolism hidden in "Rainy River."

Hendin, Herbert, and Ann Pollinger Haas. "Suicide and Guilt as Manifestations of PTSD in Vietnam Combat Veterans." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 148 (1991): 586-91.

Findings of the suicide rate among 100 Vietnam combat veterans who meet the *DSM-III* criteria for PTSD.

Horner, Carl S. "Challenging the Law of Courage and Heroic Identification in Tim O'Brien's *If I Die in a Combat Zone* and *The Things They Carried*." *War, Literature, and the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities* 11.1 (1999): 256-67.

Study of O'Brien's treatment of courage and masculinity in *If I Die* and *Things*.

Jarraway, David R. "'Excremental Assault' in Tim O'Brien: Trauma and Recovery in Vietnam War Literature." *Modern Fiction Studies* 44.3 (1998): 695-711.

First analysis of trauma and recovery in the characters of *Things*: Mary Anne Bell in "Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong," "Tim O'Brien" in "Ghost Soldiers," and Norman Bowker in "Speaking of Courage."

Jason, Philip K. "The Noise Is Always in My Head: Auditory

Images in the Vietnam War." *Midwest Quarterly* 37.3 (1996): 243-55.

First study of the auditory imagery experienced by traumatized characters in the Vietnam War novels. *Cacciato* and *Things* are discussed.

Loeb, Jeff. "Childhood's End: Self-Recovery in the Autobiography of the Vietnam War." *American Studies* 37 (1996): 95-116.

Loeb states that O'Brien's return to the past in *Things* and *Lake* is "a way of coping with memory" as he regards his Vietnam experience as his other memories.

Matney, Jan. "The Myth-Shattering Courage of Tim O'Brien."

Metropolitan State College of Denver. 2 Dec. 1999. 9 Apr. 2001 <<http://clem.msdc.edu/english/3230/matney.htm>>.

Matney asserts that O'Brien's objective in *Things* is to shatter the traditional image of war that typically acknowledges readers of the process of myth-making.

Robinson, Daniel. "Getting It Right: The Short Fiction of Tim O'Brien." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 40.3 (1999): 257-64.

Robinson states that O'Brien tries to make sense of the new order is in his writing and the point of the war is all in his telling. *Things* is discussed.

Schumacher, Michael. "Writing Stories From Life: Tim O'Brien on Writing Fiction." *Writer's Digest* 71.4 (1991): 34-39.

This interview contains Schumacher's comparative study of

the two versions of "Speaking of Courage."

Smith, Lorrie N. "The Things Men Do: The Gendered Subtext in Tim O'Brien's *Esquire* Stories." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 36.1 (1994): 16-40.

Accusation of O'Brien's instrumenting the female characters in *Things*, which she finds typical of most American Vietnam War narratives by male writers.

Taylor, Mark. "Tim O'Brien's War." *Centennial Review* 39.2 (1995): 213-30.

Analysis of O'Brien's quest for the truth of war in the "Speaking of Courage" trilogy in *Things*.

Timmerman, John H. "Tim O'Brien and the Art of the True War Story: 'Night March' and 'Speaking of Courage.'" *Twentieth Century Literature: A Scholarly and Critical Journal* 46.1 (2000): 100-14.

Comparative study of Paul Berlin in *Cacciato* who tries to escape the reality of war in Viet Nam and Norman Bowker in "Speaking of Courage" who cannot escape the memory of war in America.

Volkmer, Jon. "Telling the 'Truth' about Vietnam: Episteme and Narrative Structure in *The Green Berets* and *The Things They Carried*." *War, Literature, and the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities* 11.1 (1999): 240-55.

Volkmer discusses how presumptions about the nature of truth-telling affect the fictive shaping of those two books.

Wilhelm, Albert E. "Ballad Allusions in Tim O'Brien's 'Where Have You Gone, Charming Billy?'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 28.3 (1991): 218-22.

Comparative study of ballad allusions in the short story and its revised story-chapter in *Cacciato*.

### ***Dissertations***

Fudge, Dennis Keith. "Questioning Truth: War and the Art of Writing in Ambrose Bierce, Stephen Crane, Michael Herr, and Tim O'Brien." Diss. U of Mississippi, 1996. *DAI* 57 (1997): 3019A. Abstract No. ACC 9640312.

Fudge addresses how the depictions of truth by the four writers have changed over the course of the century between the Civil War and the Vietnam War.

Kennedy, Leslie Carol. "Ghosts through the Looking Glass: The Vietnam War and Its Narrative Representation in the Novels of Heinemann, Herr, O'Brien, and Wright." Diss. Texas A&M U, 1995. *DAI* 56.6 (1995): 2237A. Abstract No. AAC 9534359.

Kennedy examines the way those writers employ a narrative strategy of unreliable narrators and fragmentation to fragment their text to recreate the chaos of the atmosphere of the Vietnam War and the veterans' memories of the war.

Kingstone, Lisa Simone. "Dreaming the Unspeakable: Hemingway and O'Brien's Soldier Narratives and the Traumatic

Landscape.” Diss. U of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1999. *DAI* 60.5 (1999): 1560A. Abstract No. AAC 9932322.

Kingstone searches for a path to bridge the gap between trauma survivors and the non-traumatic by examining the soldier dream-narrative depicted by the two authors and by using sociological and psychiatric studies of the combat PTSD.

Neilson, James J. “Warring Fictions: Cultural Politics and the Vietnam War Narrative.” Diss. U of North Carolina, Greensboro, 1995. *DAI* 56.6 (1995): 2239A. Abstract No. AAC 9531847.

Neilson criticizes the Vietnam narrative that has failed to reveal the U. S. imperialism and ignored the suffering of the Vietnamese suffering. *The Quiet American*, *The Things They Carried*, *A Rumor of War*, and *In Country* are discussed.

Radelich, Michael A. “Imagining the Truth: Narrative Structure and Technique in the Works of Tim O’Brien.” Diss. U of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1998. *DAI* 59.8 (1999): 2987A. Abstract No. AAC 9903782.

Radelich analyzes O’Brien’s deliberate fragmentation and arrangement of the chapters that has become the central task to his art. Six books from *If I Die* to *Lake* are discussed.

Versaci, Rocco Lawrence. “Extreme Histories: Fictionalizing the Past in Contemporary American Literature.” Diss. Indiana U, 1997. *DAI* 58 (1998): 3138A. Abstract No. AAC 9805440.

Versaci argues that some writers have successfully recreated the extreme past and their metafictional historical narratives. *The Chaneysville Incident*, *Maus I* and *Maus II*, and *The Things They Carried* are discussed.

Ward, Samantha Jayne. "Reddening the Hearts and Minds: The Frontier Myth and American Identity in Vietnam War Literature." Diss. U of Oklahoma, 1999. *DAI* 60.6 (1999): 2033A. Abstract No. AAC 9934636.

Ward analyzes how Caputo and O'Brien and Herr have invoked and altered myths and myths of the American frontier.

Williams, Donna Glee. "The Stylistic Mechanics of Implicitness: Entailment, Presupposition, and Implicature in the Work of Ernest Hemingway and Tim O'Brien." Diss. Louisiana State U, 1994. *DAI* 55.9 (1995): 2814A. Abstract No. AAC 9502155.

William's examination of texts by the two writers reveals controlled use of implicitness to suspend meaning between and behind the fixed points of the words on the page.

## **Reviews**

Bawer, Bruce. "Confession or Fiction? Stories from Vietnam." Rev. of *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O'Brien. *Wall Street Journal* 23 Mar. 1990: A11.



One of few unfavorable reviews on *Things*. Bawer condemns O'Brien's playing "too many such fact-or-fiction games" in the book, preferring to straightforward story-chapters "Rainy River," "The Man I Killed," and "In the Field."

Franklin, H. Bruce. "Plausibility of Denial." Rev. of *In the Lake of the Woods*, by Tim O'Brien. *Progressive* Dec. 1994: 40-44.

This review-essay points out that O'Brien's concealment and exposure mirrors those of America's own.

Harris, Robert R. "Too Embarrassed Not to Kill." Rev. of *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O'Brien. *New York Times Book Review* 11 Mar. 1990: 8.

Placing the book "high up on the list of best fiction about any war," Harris celebrates O'Brien's strife to "get beyond literal descriptions of what these men went through and what they felt."

Kakutani, Michiko. "Slogging Surreally in the Vietnamese Jungle." Rev. of *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O'Brien. *New York Times* 6 Mar. 1990: C21.

This acclaim considers the book as "a vital, important book" that "matters not only to the reader interested in Vietnam, but to anyone interested in the craft of writing as well."

- - -. "Shell Shock on the Battlefields of a Messy Love Life." Rev. of *Tomcat in Love*, by Tim O'Brien. *New York Times* 15 Sept. 1998: E7.

Kakutani is dissatisfied with its narrator, "a big bore." O'Brien

eventually “mocks the wonderfully nuanced delineation of the Vietnam experience set down” in *Cacciato* and *Things*.

Krist, Gary. “Innovation Without Tears.” Rev. of *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O’Brien. *Hudson Review* 43 (1991): 691-98.

Krist welcomes O’Brien’s narrative as “fearless in his determination to talk explicitly about truth, emotion, and psychic pain.”

Lewis, Clayton W. “Chronicles of War.” Rev. of *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O’Brien. *The Sewanee Review* 99.3 (1991): 296-302.

Savage of O’Brien’s fascination with artifice and metafiction that “does not satisfy one’s appetite to hear what happened rendered as it was experienced and is remembered.”

Mort, John. Rev. of *In the Lake of the Woods*, by Tim O’Brien. *Booklist* Aug. 1994: 1992.

Mort considers O’Brien’s theory in the novel--not solving the mystery but offering hypothesis--as a “ambitious, inventive technique,” although he finds the mystery of Kathy Wade “almost irrelevant” to the context.

Smiley, Jane. “Catting Around.” Rev. of *Tomcat in Love*, by Tim O’Brien. *New York Times Book Review* 20 Sept. 1998: 11-12.

Smiley says O’Brien has finally “lightened up” and praises him being one of few Baby-Boomer novelists who care about the generational issues of drugs, divorce, and ideology.

## ***Bibliographies***

Calloway, Catherine. "Tim O'Brien: A Checklist." *Bulletin of Bibliography* 48.1 (1991): 6-11.

The O'Brien items published from August 1972 to July 1989. Entries are 4 books, 21 short stories and published excerpts, 7 essays, 3 audiovisual materials, 2 biographies, 4 interviews, 24 reviews on *If I Die*, 15 on *Northern*, 43 on *Cacciato*, and 31 on *Nuclear*, and 44 articles.

- - -. "Tim O'Brien (1946-): A Primary and Secondary Bibliography." *Bulletin of Bibliography* 50.3 (1993): 223-29.

Supplement of her 1991 bibliography, covering the 1972-92 items. Sections of Essays, Nonfiction, Audiovisual Materials, and Interviews are updated; new editions of *Things* and *Things*-related articles are also added.

Newman, John, and Ann Hilfinger. *Vietnam War Literature: An Annotated Bibliography of Imaginative Works About Americans Fighting in Vietnam*. 2nd ed. Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1988.

Valuable compilation of novels (429), short stories (192), poetry (73), drama (19), miscellaneous (35), written in 1964-88. Author/title index.

## ***Dictionaries and Encyclopedias***

The American Psychoanalytic Association. *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*. 1990. Ed. Burness E. Moore and Bernard D. Fine. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994.

Widely accepted volume of definitions based primarily upon Freudian theories.

Summers, Harry G., Jr. *The Vietnam War Almanac*. 1985. Novato: Presidio, 1999.

Earliest almanac on militaristic and strategic terms by the highly decorated former colonel of infantry, who believes the U. S. won the battle but lost the war. Photos.

Tucker, Spencer C., ed. *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History*. 1998. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

Best of all Vietnam encyclopedias, covering every facet of the war. No photos.

The annotated bibliography is the same as a works cited page except that it has some annotation under it. The annotations help in creating the works cited, and they also help in the process of seeing which article to use or not. This article is an analysis on Tim O'Brien's work, which talks about the war.. (This article is helpful for the psychological section of the paper). The article talks about Randall Jarrell's use of empathy and how it relates to other writings. There are many other writing that Jarrell's work is compared to, at times it became a bit confusing, but not so much.(This article is helpful for my Literary Criticism section of the essay). Derricotte, Toi. (This is helpful for the psychological and the Literary Criticism sections of the essay). Stein, Kevin. No comprehensive critical bibliography of Oscar Wilde exists. Stuart Mason's Bibliography of Oscar Wilde (1914), though concerned mainly with primary works, contains also much useful critical material. This, however, is marred by the fact that the Bibliography, in addition to the numerous errors it contains, is ill arranged, inadequately indexed, deficient in some important matters, and with much material that is of little use to Wildeian scholars. Almost every work I have consulted during the preparation of this work, whether books on Wilde. to handling the huge outpouring of books and periodicals relating to Oscar. Wilde, I have had the opportunity of examining the celebrated collections of Wildeiana: namely, the Library of William Andrews Clark, Jr: Wilde and.