

# Analysis of the writings of ambrose bierce essay sample



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War is an inspiration for many writers, and many writers feel great agony and horror at the atrocities of war. Of all American writers, Ambrose Bierce is considered by many to be one of the greatest writers of war stories ever. His blunt, yet descriptive stories certainly put forward strong feelings about war, and how he feels about it while still maintaining an interesting storyline that keeps the reader interested. None of his stories, however, have a happy ending.

It seems to me that all of the stories by Ambrose Bierce that we read in class have sad endings because they all have the same message, and Bierce tries to make war sound as horrible as possible through all of his stories. By the subjects of the stories and the way they were written, it seems very obvious that Bierce did not like war at all, for good reason. During his tenure in the military during the civil war, he witnessed some of the bloodiest battles of the entire war. It seems as if he is speaking of war as so bad simply to denounce all of the former beliefs about the "glory" of war. Many people in the nation before the war believed war to be an honorable thing in which young men could obtain fame and die bravely, rather than a place where many people died for no reason as Bierce obviously did.

Many of his stories however, do talk about "bravery," and "honor," such as the stories "A Horseman in the Sky" and "A Son of the Gods." Both of these stories speak of brave individuals who do as they believe duty calls. I believe, however, that Bierce had subtle meanings to some of the wording he used, making his stories seem to be at almost a sarcastic tone. One example is how he writes about "the blood of the truest and bravest heart that ever beat" in "Killed at Resaca," yet still talking about how "

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detestable" the woman was, and the letter she wrote to Lieutenant Herman Brayle telling him to be courageous and that she would rather him die in battle than be a coward. This gives the message that Brayle died for a bad cause when the reader sees how ungrateful and uncaring the woman is in the end even though a man died all because of one letter that she wrote to him.

Ambrose Bierce's stories all also have in common the fact that they are descriptive, yet right to the point. Rather than using flowery language to tell the story in undertones and symbols, he says exactly what he means, while still writing very well and provoking thought. One example of this is a passage from arguably his best story, Chickamauga, when he writes about "a face that lacked a lower jaw - from the upper teeth to the throat was a great red gap fringed with hanging shreds of flesh and splinters of bone." This really gives a great description of one of the soldiers, but then later he speaks very simply, not hiding anything, but still remaining descriptive when he writes, " he uttered a series of inarticulate and indescribable cries - something between the chattering of an ape and the gobbling of a turkey - a startling, soulless, unholy sound, the language of a devil. The child was a deaf mute." I believe that the way he writes so honestly, and almost innocently, is why he is considered to be such a great writer whose stories will last throughout the ages. People may attempt to look in his writing for symbolism in the way he talks, but I believe that if there is any at all, it is a miniscule amount.

Ambrose Bierce's stories all seem intertwined even when the storylines have nothing to do with each other. This is because they all speak of the horrors of <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-the-writings-of-ambrose-bierce-essay-sample/>

war, and many of the same topics such as false heroism or dying needlessly. They also are all written in the same type of descriptive, straightforward, writing. That is why they can all relate to each other in one way or another, and all can be considered masterpieces.