

Tim o'brien

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



This paper examines the life of the American born, Tim O'Brien and affirms how his life influenced his writing techniques. William Timothy, the first of three children, well known as Tim O'Brien is an American Veteran writer, born on October 1, 1946, in Austin, Minnesota, United States of America (Herzog 14).

He grew up in Worthington, a small shielded community near the borders of Iowa and South Dakota. He described himself as a vivid reader when he was young and had a thrilling interest in books and magic trick were evident realities on his storytelling power.

This can also be linked to his parents who were enthusiastic readers. In other words, O'Brien must have learned some reading secrets from his parents when he was young. Some of his short and electrifying stories include, "The things they carried" as well as other classic novels like the war novel, going after Cacciato produced in 1978, which indeed made him known best for his writing experience about Vietnam War (Raymond 102).

Worthington town similarly played a significant role in nurturing his thoughts while developing the artistic sensibility of his life as an author. He attended Macalester College in 1968 and awarded bachelor's degree in Political Science. During his time in the institution, he was elected and served as the president of the student's union in college.

Contrary to his criticisms against war, Tim O'Brien was recruited into United States Army and then sent to Vietnam where he served for two years.

Following his return from the military service, he resumed his studies and

graduated from Harvard University. He then worked shortly as an intern, national affairs reporter at Washington Post up to May 1974.

The war experience he gained from his two-year combat inspired his chief publication, titled *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me up and Ship Me Home*. O'Brien's history clearly reveals the depression and misery wrecked on soldiers by the Vietnam War. His mythical work, *The Things They Carried* (1990, (O'Brien 816)) is a combination of memoirs and fictitious stories in which he used the philosophical concepts of Verisimilitude to blur the distinctions between two realms of the facts and the fictions in a unique way (Conan 2010).

He incorporated the metaphysical approach attribute in his writing that flavored the quality of his stories. In his story, he discusses the distinction between 'story-truth', the truth of fiction and 'happening-truth', the truth of facts. From his works, Timothy suggests story truth is emotional truth thus the feelings generated by a fictional story is at times truer than what results from reading the facts thus making the literature more meaningful.

Additionally, O'Brien wrote numerous novels based on the war experience he obtained in the US Army. He earned the 1979 National Book Award for his works on *Northern Lights* published in 1975 and *Going after Cacciato* of 1978. The *Northern Lights* novel discusses two brothers against each other as foils in which one brother went to Vietnam and the other failed to. (Raymond 99) Through this, the brothers learned to struggle and comprehend each one's values and motives.

Following his extraordinary influence of Joseph Conrad's works, he modified Conrad's concepts of human aptitude for good and evil in his literary works. In his works, O'Brien propounded timeless matter of the subject and its thematic range. He believed in his introversive idea, that literary works not only focus on the current affairs but also anticipates what the future holds for humankind, (Smith 34).

Nuclear Age, which was published in 1985 was the third O'Brien's novel of his literary works and describes much from his personal experience. His expertise in creating an amusing look at the serious subject protagonist, a middle-aged man who grew under an atomic umbrella, and suffered severely from paranoia over the prospect of nuclear war and finds comfort in digging a hole in his backyard attempting to burry and quiet all the imaginations that antagonized him.

O'Brien demonstrated this being the real fear and threat of the bomb. His creativity in writing approach of war blending fact and fiction is comparable to other technical war writers like Michael Herr and inspired eminent figures such as Truman Capote, Norman Mailer and Tom Wolfe.

However, key elements of his works encompass the categorization and fascination of emotional subject matters. Owing to this traits, his fictional works are therefore considered to have made an immense impact on the readers of his novels. Other O'Brien's electrifying works are The Nuclear Age, published in 1985, In the Lakes of The Woods of 1994, Tomcat in Love of 1998 and July, July that was published in 2000, which took the world of literature with a storm.

In a period of two years, O'Brien's short stories *The things they carried*, was first published in *Esquire* and in return, it received the 1987 National Magazine Award Fiction. The short story was again selected for 1987, best American Short story. *The lake of Woods* forms another interesting novel written by O'Brien and published in 1994.

It took O'Brien's works into greater heights by agitating much on guilt, culpability, complicity and the moral courage, (Bates 265). He invents his protagonist John Wade, who is also a Vietnam veteran, aspiring to win a senatorial election seat. He later lost slightly as charges on his complicity in the Lai massacre became known during his campaign trail.

O'Brien raises larger inquiries about the fallouts of war and its consequences after the fighting has ceased and the participants returned home. He won James Fenimore Cooper Prize from the Society of American Historians and was selected as the best novel of 1994 by *Times Magazine*.

His most recent Novel, *Tomcat in Love*, O'Brien generated a Veteran Vietnam protagonist, Tom chippering through a love subject contrary to war. O'Brien describes this as a comic novel about a politically incorrect hero, who was sexy.

He strongly believed that his lovers will love the book, and his fans, the so-called junkies, the people who appreciate his writings liked it. He alludes that this was his best book ever and it stole the hearts of many who could not do without reading the novel.

In conclusion, O'Brien has won several prestigious awards in his many fictional works and worth being called a veteran in the writing field. His experience in writing the short story novels are highly acknowledged. He is a master of creative storytelling, a manipulator of literary form and one of the most challenging authors in his time with an ample content.

His major contributions include the Nuclear Age, In the Lake of Woods, Tomcat in Love and July, July of 20000 More recently, he received \$100, 000 with the Pritsker Military Library Literature Award. Currently, he teaches at the Texas State University-San Marcos.