Beyond the Fields of Fire:
Lessons from Ambrose Bierce's War Memoirs and Narratives

Carl Nelson

Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce (1842-1914?) held no academic post, but he defined his own literary field with a distinct brand of witticisms, newspaper exposés, and macabre short stories. As a young topographical engineer officer[1] in the American Civil War, Bierce observed and sketched land features that were an important reconnaissance measure for his superiors. Often he fought on the fields that he had drawn only hours before. Bierce was understandably marked by these bloody contests that did so much to inform his later writings.

Indeed, war was something that defined and divided Ambrose Bierce. He reveled in the camaraderie that he shared with his fellow soldiers, but he also derided the politicians and generals whose poor leadership led to the slaughter of thousands on the western theater battlefields from Tennessee to Georgia.[2] After the war, Bierce directed much criticism toward his former commanders who seemed to embrace the war in their memoirs. In particular, Bierce attacked Union General Oliver Otis Howard for his incompetence that led to the near-decimation of his brigade at the battle of Pickett's Mill.[3] Bierce sought to correct the war record so that the common soldiers' sufferings – not the generals' glories – appeared foremost in the accounts about the fighting.[4]

Sometimes a critic, often a writer, always a veteran who

is concerned with memory; this is the Bierce that we would do well to remember. As this Nation defined the ultimate purposes of the American Civil War in the post bellum period, Bierce arrived at another meaning that he demanded that his readers understand – that a violent past is soon forgotten to a Nation that is involved in present conflict.[5] Bierce's writing output bears strong evidence of a troubled psyche that, no doubt, stems from his own war experiences. As he edited the minutiae of regimental histories, and composed verse refutations in his newspaper columns to self-promoting veterans, Bierce also recorded his personal sufferings in memoir sketches and short stories where he confronts his audiences with the brutal nature of combat.

Bierce forces us to realize the battlefields of the past as a warning to avoid similar contests in the future. As Bierce educates his reader about his war experiences, so educators ought to seek out these perspectives from students and encourage a similar literary dialogue in the classroom. One approach is asking students what they perceive and know about war literature and asking them to compare their assumptions to Bierce's work.

Throughout this article I offer interpretive insights on how Bierce's autobiographical sketch, "What I Saw of Shiloh" (1881), and his comparable short story, "The Coup de Grâce" (1889), offer readers the visual and visceral connections that make his literary lessons hard to forget. Harvard President and Historian Drew Gilpin Faust adds further context to the literary and historical contributions of Bierce's work that helps readers understand that, beyond the circumstances of the Civil War and current conflicts, the brutality of war is universal.

Even though academics *should* turn their thoughts and energies toward peaceful notions, Bierce challenges us all to see the War before us. There is a pertinent discussion today in academia about how best to engage returning veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq who, like Bierce, frequently revisit their troubling war experiences. While Bierce's war works do prompt unease for veterans who long to forget their fighting, I see this literary approach as something like Dr. W.H.R. Rivers's (1864-1922) *talking cure*[6] that encouraged World War I soldiers to

share their fears and find some closure and resolution in their former conflict.

I have introduced my composition students to Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" to help them explore, among other topics, the importance of close reading, the question of a reliable narrator, narrative time and structure, and the ethical concerns of Bierce's main character, Farquhar; an Alabama planter who finds that war is not a game that he can manipulate, but a naïve pursuit of glory that leads to his hanging.

One of my former writing students identified closely with Farquhar because he had found himself in a similar fight for his life. A non-traditional student (whom I will refer to here as "Will") mentioned to me that he had served with a local Minnesota National Guard in Iraq. Will had entered service to pay for school, but he also enlisted because he felt a strong sense of service. While he had developed a considerable connection with his comrades during his tour, he had no desire to return to combat. Although Will said he recognized the inner-motivations that Farquhar had to serve his own country, he felt compelled to relate his experiences because, unlike Bierce's main character, Will was comparatively fortunate to walk away from his war (although his hearing loss from near-miss rocket-propelled-grenades is a constant reminder to him of his close calls).

When I suggested that Will read Bierce's memoir sketch, "What I Saw of Shiloh," he considered the work outside of class. He later said that Bierce seems the typical veteran who remembers what happened, if only to try to rationalize and remove these thoughts from his mind. Indeed, we both agree that Bierce may have used his writing as an exercise to work his own sordid war details out of his mind. I suggested to Will that he write about his own experiences at some point, but he thought that more time should pass before he makes his writing contributions. For now, he is relating his experiences to others, and he has formed an important connection with Bierce's literature as a point of expression – maybe even as a way to help himself understand his own time of conflict. I'm hopeful that Will finds the time and place to commit his accounts to record so that we can learn from

his experiences as we do from Bierce.

Bierce's memoirs are every bit journalistic in his sights-and-sounds account of the events on the battlefield. He establishes truth in his work through his own eye-witness accounts, but Bierce also probes the greater psychological depths through his treatment of soldiers in his short stories. In "What I Saw of Shiloh," Bierce applies his considerable military knowledge to convey the soldierly dispositions that he encounters in the field. His account includes brief reflections about the rank-and-file soldiers who ponder their preparation before an engagement, and the staff officers who demand action even if they are themselves uncertain about the outcome of their decisions in battle.

Of particular interest in this memoir are Bierce's vivid snapshots that set the scenes for the reader from the movements of an awakening camp, to the awkward formations of the men who await their individual fates, to the electrical energy along the battle line before the fighting that brings about a gruesome aftermath. During these intense moments, Bierce reveals something of his personal thoughts as a soldier, and the similar thought progressions and pre-battle psyches that his comrades may have shared with him through his narrative device of rhetorical questions:

> A few inaudible commands from an invisible leader had placed us in order of battle. But where was the enemy? Where, too, were the riddled regiments that we had come to save? Had our other divisions arrived during the night and passed the river to assist us? or were we to oppose our paltry five thousand breasts to an army flushed with victory? What protected our right? Who lay upon our left? Was there really anything in our front? (Joshi and Schultz, *Sole* 17) [7]

This pensive soldier, Bierce, grows unnerved by the lack of information about his purpose on the field. He moves from the calm and collected *we have come to reinforce* to the question of *who will reinforce us?* Bierce is concerned with his soldier's mental and physical positions in his work, and as he thoroughly locates them by offering abundant description, he does not lose

his audience in excess military jargon. Bierce makes his writings clear and accessible to many readers, but there is still much to consider below the surface, and I often asked my students why he may have chosen to include certain details, and why he may have chosen to omit others.

Even as Bierce clearly situates the reader on his battlefield, the educator should consider how to place Bierce in context for students. Clearly, the divide between the Civil War and the Afghanistan and Iraq war is wide, but there is always a bridge. I agree with Faust's assertion that soldiers are trained to overcome their instincts not to kill. While some soldiers embrace warfare for a time, this still does not keep these same warriors from questioning the ultimate purpose of their conflict. Faust informs readers about perceptions of death in the mid-19th century in her recent book, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*. Within the corpus of Bierce's war work, Faust relates that "deaths – executions, suicides, battle casualties – constitute the central theme of Bierce's war writing, and indeed he saw death, not glory or political purpose, as the fundamental reality of war itself" (198).

Faust also explores the soldier's redefinitions of mortality in the wake of a life-threatening engagement. Her revealing look at the Nation's changing attitudes toward what constitutes a good and bad death provides a better interpretive context for Bierce's literary mechanisms in his war writings. Faust calls attention to the prevailing concerns among soldiers about dying a *good death*:

> As men saw themselves mirrored in the faces of those expiring around them, they struggled to come to terms with the possibility and the significance of their own annihilation. Dying assumed clear preeminence over killing in the soldier's construction of his emotional and moral universe. (6)

Bierce leads his reader through the woods and into the fields of combat through his description of the frontal assaults and flanking movements at Shiloh.[8] He concerns himself and his reader with the tactical considerations and possibilities when

he accompanies his men in line of battle on the battlefield, but as Faust relates about the common soldier, Bierce seems more anxious about the carnage and death when he advances as a skirmisher[9] before the general engagement. Consider an instance where Bierce orders his platoon toward a wood-concealed Confederate battle line:

> …in the exercise of my discretion [I] deployed my platoon, pushing it forward at a run, with trailed arms,[10] to strengthen the skirmish line, which I overtook some thirty or forty yards from the wood. Then – I can't describe it – the forest seemed all at once to flame up and disappear with a crash like that of a great wave upon the beach – a crash that expired in hot hissings, and the sickening "spat" of lead against flesh. A dozen of my brave fellows tumbled over like ten-pins. Some struggled to their feet, only to go down again, and yet again. (*Sole* 19-20)

Now it is the reader's time to wince at the proximity of Bierce's soldiers to an armed enemy presence; his men are less than forty yards from scores of muzzles that appear to be fired in a volley. There is little error in the accuracy of these "hissing rounds" that maim and kill as Bierce's simile of a "great wave" forces the reader to see the dead and wounded pitching backwards and forwards in their uncertain footing. Just as some soldiers realize the adrenaline rush of the advance and escape of the unwounded, others reel when they are hit, and after falling they try helplessly to aright themselves, but their bloody transformations to battle casualties are nearly complete.

Through his grotesque descriptors, Bierce has his reader ponder these men who are reduced to a sprawling, bloody mass. Even more visually compelling is his shifting consideration from the distance and intervals of his soldiers to the proximity of the dead and dying, especially Bierce's emphasis on the sufferings of a mortally-wounded Federal sergeant that he and his fellow skirmishers nearly fall over on the field. The psychological resonance, for the reader, speaks to the residual horrors and tortures that Bierce and other survivors will likely ponder well after the fight.

> Men? There were men enough; all dead, apparently, except one, who lay near where I had halted my platoon to await the slower movement of the line – a Federal sergeant, variously hurt, who had been a fine giant in his time. He lay face upward, taking in his breath in convulsive, rattling snorts, and blowing it out in sputters of froth which crawled creamily down his cheeks, piling itself alongside his neck and ears. A bullet had clipped a groove in his skull, above the temple; from this the brain protruded in bosses, dropping off in flakes and strings. I had not previously known one could get on, even in this unsatisfactory fashion, with so little brain. One of my men, whom I knew for a womanish fellow, asked if he should put his bayonet through him. Inexpressibly shocked by the cold-blooded proposal, I told him I thought not; it was unusual, and too many were looking. (19)

Again, Bierce's battlefield exposure is in focus for the viewer. His picture is that of a once-healthy and sterling lad whose breaths are now numbered. Yet it is Bierce's treatment of sound and sight descriptors—"convulsive, rattling snorts," "froth crawl[ing] creamily down his cheeks," and his "brain protrud[ing] in bosses, dropping off in flakes and strings"—that moves the reader from the visual to the visceral. Bierce's writing moves the reader because it is so graphic, so strong, and so definitive. His word choice connotes something about this man's baser presence – like the helpless bull that is stunned in a slaughter shop by a maul blow to the head – both are incapable of expressing pain except through inarticulate and uncoordinated expressions.

That Bierce's subordinate wants to end this man's lingering and suffering is clear to the reader, but his choice of a bayonet is highly objectionable. Bierce has reason to be shocked by his subordinate's willingness to kill his fellow soldier in such an agonizing way, but then the man is already experiencing great pain. That Bierce does not delineate the Federal sergeant's final outcome makes the reader uneasy about the consequences of war and its lingering effects.

If Bierce refuses to dwell on the extent of his own mental

anguish over the fighting in this memoir sketch, the reader might do well to consider Bierce's short stories as a ground for his unrestrained contemplations about war. Quite often the narrative topics in his memoirs and select short stories bear a striking resemblance. From his descriptions of "What I Saw of Shiloh," Bierce establishes truth and an imagery investiture for the reader from his personal experiences as a warrior, but he also pauses to consider the wounded. Bierce is uncharacteristically concerned with the Federal sergeant's condition in his memoir, but Bierce explores a harsher reality through the imagery in his short story "The Coup de Grâce."

This war tale is an exploration of the unconscionable choices that a soldier is forced to make on the battlefield, and the psychological consequences that he faces because of his choices. Bierce observes the ethical dilemma that Captain Madwell faces as he reflects on the mercy-killing of his friend – a similar action that Bierce forbids of his subordinate in "What I Saw of Shiloh." While Sergeant Bierce is hesitant and even antagonistic toward his comrade for suggesting such a notion, he continues to explore this concern in a fictional genre where he does not have to be concerned with the repercussions of his battlefield actions, and where Bierce has the complete authority to control his characters and arrange their final outcomes.

"The Coup de Grâce" plot involves two former civilian friends, Captain Downing Madwell and Sergeant Caffal Halcrow, who serve in the same infantry company. The two remain on amiable terms despite their need to obey the military protocol that divides officers from non-commissioned officers. While Madwell and Caffal share a fraternal bond, Caffal is a biological brother to Major Creede Halcrow. Bierce describes Creede as saturnine in temperament and disdainful toward Madwell long before the war's opening salvos (Bierce 320).[11] These two harbor grudges toward each other on the field, but Sergeant Halcrow manages an uneasy peace between his brother and his good friend.

Following battle, Captain Downing Madwell finds his friend mortally wounded and far from aid. Unable to comfort

his friend, Captain Madwell decides he must euthanize Sergeant Halcrow – to free him from additional suffering.

A number of passages are worthy for consideration in a comparison, with additional excerpts from "What I Saw of Shiloh." Bierce crafts a panorama image through his use of intricate detail about the battle-spoiled fields that relates a broader destructive contest before he focuses his reader on the personal conflicts between the main characters. An excerpt from "The Coup de Grâce" appears first:

> As far as one could see through the forests, among the splintered trees, lay wrecks of men and horses. Among them moved the stretcher-bearers, gathering and carrying away the few who showed signs of life… (319).

A parallel exists in Bierce's memoir sketch about Shiloh:

> Dead horses were everywhere; a few disabled caissons, or limbers, reclining on one elbow, as it were; ammunition wagons standing disconsolate behind four or six sprawling mules. (*Sole* 19)

The details diverge a bit, but there is truth in these works about the universal destruction of men and animals on the Civil War battlefields. This storm-tossed landscape of lead and iron and the heated determination of both sides bring about the grim landscape that Bierce has his reader see, and one that he himself saw.

Bierce condenses his war experience into a snapshot of the final outcomes of one battle in "The Coup de Grâce." The narrator explains that even the wounded who have suffered the most are neglected and left to linger on the battlefield:

> Most of the wounded had died of neglect while the right to minister to their wants was in dispute. It is an army regulation that the wounded must wait; the best way to care for them is to win the battle. It must be confessed that victory is a distinct advantage to a man requiring attention, but many do not live to avail themselves of it. ("Coup" 319)

Often there were far too many casualties to be cared for and still others lay wounded and obscured from view. Bierce's vision could well inform Faust's grisly finding that "bodies hidden by woods or ravines, [were] left to the depredations of hogs or wolves or time..." and at Shiloh, nearby inhabitants informed one U.S. official charged with soldier burials that their free foraging hogs "were no longer fit to be eaten 'on account of their living off the dead' " (102, 225; Ward 120).

Bierce's "The Coup de Grâce" forces readers to reconsider their conceptions of war and what it entails. Bierce places the Captain and the reader in a ravine not far from the open field:

> Sergeant Halcrow was mortally hurt. His clothing was deranged; it seemed to have been violently torn apart... […] The only visible wound was a wide, ragged opening in the abdomen. It was defiled with earth and leaves. Protruding from it was a small loop of small intestine. In all his experience Captain Madwell had not seen a wound like this. He could neither conjecture how it was made nor explain the attendant circumstances – the strangely torn clothing, the parted belt, the besmirching of the white skin. He knelt and made a closer examination. When he rose to his feet, he turned his eyes in different directions as if looking for an enemy. Fifty yards away, on the crest of a low, thinly wooded hill, he saw several dark objects moving about among the fallen men – a herd of swine. […] The sufferer moaned and his lips moved convulsively. The froth that ran from them had a tinge of blood. (321-23)

Bierce introduces the civilian reader to a host of ethical concerns that attend Captain Madwell's actions. First Bierce introduces the disparity in rank – effectively placing Madwell above Halcrow in military and mortal terms. As a captain, a line-officer who directly commands Halcrow, Madwell leads his company into battle and his men's lives are *in his hands* metaphorically speaking, and this continues now in a literal sense. Even as a friend, Madwell sees that he must do something for the dying Halcrow at his feet.

Bierce locates, for the reader, the sufferings and misery of these two men on a portion of a field that is part of a greater landscape. He also illustrates for the reader that the physical and psychological sufferings of the soldiers do not end the moment the battle is over. Consider what Madwell feels he must do to end the sufferings for his friend Caffal:

> Captain Madwell rose to his feet and drew his sword from the scabbard […] He stooped and with his left hand tore away the dying man's shirt, rose and placed the point of the sword just over the heart. […] Grasping the hilt with both hands, he thrust downward with all his strength and weight. The blade sank into the man's body – through his body into the earth… […] At that moment three men stepped silently forward from behind a clump of young trees which had concealed their approach. Two were hospital attendants and carried a stretcher. The third was Major Creede Halcrow. (323)

Although Bierce hides his true feelings when he orders his subordinate to leave the Federal sergeant alone, he does the opposite in this short-story. He encourages his reader to see the emotional strains that Captain Madwell faces in his private moments before he overcomes his sorrow just long enough to dispatch his friend, Sergeant Halcrow. Indeed, Madwell has recourse to be emotional, and this speaks to his genuine concern for his soldiers, and the return of a human condition that has been stripped of him in the course of his duties, now that his *men* are no longer standing at his shoulders, but lying at his feet.
The irony is that Captain Madwell's murder of Sergeant Halcrow is the equivalent to Major Halcrow's orders that Madwell and his company should hold the ravine. The order is clearly a death sentence for Captain Madwell and his men, and one wonders if Major Halcrow considers his hand in his own brother's fate, beyond his loathing for his subordinate as he says:

> Captain, the colonel directs that you push your company to the head of this ravine and hold your place there until recalled. I need hardly apprise you of the dangerous character of the move-

> ment, but if you wish, you can, I suppose, turn over the command to your first-lieutenant… (321)[12]

Despite the ultimate order that comes from the regimental colonel (presumably via courier to his subordinates), the major has the right to refuse the order that will place his men in an inordinate amount of danger, or appeal to the colonel for a clarification of his tactical intentions. Bierce does not allow these possibilities in his narrative, and he has his Major Halcrow send Captain Madwell and his unit on this dreadful movement. While the mutual disdain between the major and the captain is apparent, the major also brings his sergeant-brother under direct fire. While passing the war burden up or down the chain of command is not a new concept, it has a personal consequence for both the major and the captain by the narrative's conclusion. Both lose a dead brother-in-arms, and Bierce affords his characters and his reader little consolation in his short story. The reader, at this point, wonders whether the major saw the captain's actions, and whether the sergeant would have had an opportunity to survive his grievous wounds.

Bierce leaves us hanging in the end with a number of difficult questions. We assume that Downing might himself be killed for euthanizing Caffal if Creede saw the act. Yet, does Creede enter the scene expressly to help his dying brother, or to appear as Bierce's literary portent of Downing's demise? Even though Creede does not directly dispatch Caffal as Downing does, he is just as guilty of fratricide for committing Madwell's unit (in which Caffal serves) to certain death. Perhaps as Caffal cries out in Bierce's work, so do we because we are so uncertain about what the end of the story means.

Perhaps Bierce cannot relate the full details of the war experience in any one story or through all of his war writings, but he offers crucial insights that cut through the propagandistic notions and rhetoric that push soldiers toward war. As a newspaperman, Bierce is famous for berating his editor-employer William Randolph Hearst for promoting the U.S. involvement in the 1898 Spanish-American War. Although this *not-so*-splen-

did-little-war[13] soon disappeared from the global scene, we are in the midst of a similar, but more involved conflict today.

Admittedly, Bierce defined his own life and works by his soldiering in the American Civil War, but he had difficulty reconciling his war experience for the rest of his life. If Bierce's literary intent is to shake some sense into his readers, then he has done so through "What I Saw of Shiloh" and "The Coup de Grâce". Bierce rejects the rhetoric of *a war for emancipation*, or *a war to bring democracy to nations* so that readers see that war is a convenient construct for politicians and profiteers to benefit from the soldiers' sufferings.

This is precisely why Bierce ought to be revisited in secondary and post-secondary classrooms. He informs both the peaceably inclined and the war-prone of what lies ahead in the contest of arms, and he also provides non-combatants with some estimation of the loss that many veterans face. The purpose of my recommendation of Bierce's work is not to dredge up the horrific images of conflict, but rather to suggest that educators seek out the veteran's voices in the classroom that they do not always hear, even prompt them to contribute what they are hesitant to relate, so that we might better understand their struggles and how to avoid future conflicts.

While students may not always freely offer their positions on war, they will see that Bierce is a willing teacher who demands that his students shed their prejudices[14] to better understand what war is and what it will always be.

Notes

1. Topographical Engineer Officers during the American Civil War observed and reconnoitered the area of a contested region or battleground to sketch maps and determine *the lay of the land* for the general staff. Bierce acted in this capacity for General William B. Hazen until the author received a serious head-wound at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, in 1864 (Fatout 391).

2. At Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, in 1864, Bierce re-

ceived a near-mortal gunshot wound to the head. The ball was never extracted from his temple, and his recovery from such a grievous wound is no less than miraculous. Despite his recovery, Bierce suffered from serious headaches for the rest of his life (Morris 88).

3. See Bierce's memoir sketch, "The Crime at Pickett's Mill" (1888) (*Sole* 37-45).

4. Michael Schaefer considers Bierce's treatment of the official military record and the biographies of high-ranking generals in his excellent essay, "Ambrose Bierce on the Construction of Military History."

5. For more on the residual sufferings of a Nation in the wake of the American Civil War, read Drew Gilpin Faust's excellent history, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*.

6. See "'The Blameless Physician': Narrative and Pain, Sassoon and Rivers" by Robert Hemmings.

7. This study refers to Ambrose Bierce's memoir sketches that are edited and collected by S.T. Joshi and David E. Schultz in *A Sole Survivor: Bits of Autobiography* (1998), and Bierce's personal letters as edited and collected by the same editors in *A Much Misunderstood Man: Selected Letters of Ambrose Bierce* (2003). Subsequent references will be by book title.

8. The Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee (April 6-7, 1862), was a particularly gruesome contest in the western theater that resulted in a combined Confederate/Union casualty figure of 23,746 killed, wounded, and missing (United States).

9. Skirmishers are a varied group of soldiers that take wider intervals than the shoulder-to-shoulder formation of troops in the main battle-line. These soldiers often see heavy fighting as an advance element probing an enemy line. Commanders deploy skirmishers to reconnoiter the enemy presence before committing a larger body of troops (Hardee).

10. "Trail Arms" is the command for a soldier to grasp his musket in his right hand and hold it parallel to the ground with his arm nearly outstretched (Hardee).

11. All of Bierce's short stories in this study appear in

The Complete Short Stories of Ambrose Bierce that is compiled and edited by Ernest J. Hopkins (1970).

12. That Major Halcrow details the danger of Captain Madwell's position in the ravine speaks to his disdain for his superior and subordinate in the same instance. The colonel's judgment is poor because he ought to foresee that a coordinated Confederate attack will lead to a reversal of Madwell's unit. As the Confederates force Madwell's unit from the crest of the ravine to the bottom, and to an elevation disadvantage, the attackers will have fire superiority over Madwell's unit that must follow the ravine bottom to their only obvious line of retreat.

13. From a quote by Ambassador John Hay to Theodore Roosevelt about the brevity of the Spanish-American War (Bethel).

14. Bierce offers some measure of his world view in an excerpt from his treatise, "To Train a Writer" (1899):

> Happiness should disclose itself to his enlarging intelligence as the end and purpose of life, and love as the only means to happiness. He should free himself of all doctrines, theories, etiquettes, politics, simplifying his life and mind, attaining clarity with breadth and unity with height. To him a continent should not seem wide, nor a century long. And it would be needful that he know and have an ever present consciousness that this is a world of fools and rogues, blind with superstition, tormented with envy, consumed with vanity, selfish, false, cruel, cursed with illusions – frothing mad! (*Sole* 248)

*There is a renewed interest in Bierce studies, and his works are available in a host of printed and e-text editions. Arguably the best online collection of Bierce's works and related writings is through the *Ambrose Bierce Project* edited by Craig A. Warren and hosted by Penn State, Erie; the Behrend College: www.ambrosebierce.org.

Works Cited

Bethel, John T. "A Splendid Little War: Harvard and the Commencement of a New World Order." *Harvard Magazine* 8 March 2008. <http://harvardmagazine.com/1998/11/war.html>.

Bierce, Ambrose. "The Coup de Grâce." Hopkins 319-23.

---. "What I Saw of Shiloh." Joshi and Schultz *Sole* 10-26.

Fatout, Paul. "Ambrose Bierce, Civil War Topographer." *American Literature* 26 (November 1954): 391-400.

Faust, Drew Gilpin. *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War.* New York: Knopf, 2008.

Hardee, William J. *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics: For the Exercise and Maneuvers of Troops When Acting as Light Infantry or Riflemen*. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: U.S. War Department, 1855.

Hopkins, Ernest J., ed. *The Complete Short Stories of Ambrose Bierce*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1970.

Joshi, S. T. and David E. Schultz, eds. *A Sole Survivor: Bits of Autobiography*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1998.

Morris Jr. Roy. *Ambrose Bierce: Alone in Bad Company.* New York: Crown Pub., 1995.

United States Department of the Interior. National Park Service. *Shiloh National Military Park: NPS Historical Handbook*. 2 Dec. 2002. 8 March 2008. <http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/hh/10/hh10e.htm>.

Ward, Geoffrey C. and Ric and Ken Burns. *The Civil War: An Illustrated History.* New York: Knopf, 1991.

Works Consulted

Berkove, Lawrence I. *A Prescription for Adversity: The Moral Art of Ambrose Bierce*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2002.

Schaefer, Michael W. "Ambrose Bierce on the Construction of Military History." *War, Literature, and the Arts* 7 (Spring-Summer 1995): 1-13.

Excerpt from *Capturing the Dead: The Visual Imagery and Cross-Continuities of Ambrose Bierce's Civil War Memoir and Short Stories and Mathew Brady's Photography*