

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English Language



Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Master's Degree in English Language and Literature

Major: Literature and Civilization

# A House Divided: Historical and Literary Approaches to

*"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and  
"A Horseman in the Sky"*

presented publicly and defended by

**Chaima BENATALLAH  
Soumia BELMAZOUZI**

Supervised by

**Dr. Abderrahim CHEIKH**

Jury

Dr. walid MESSAUDI	KMUO	Chairperson
Dr. Abderrahim CHEIKH	KMUO	Supervisor
Dr. Ahmed NAFNOUF	KMUO	Examiner

**Academic year : 2022 /2023**

## **Dedication 1**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the light of our life, my parents, for their unconditional support and encouragement throughout my life. To my brothers **Toufik** and **Abdelwahab** who were beside me throughout my journey in university. To my sister, **Zoulika**, thank you for sharing with me the good and bad moments. To all my friends your friendship made a wonderful journey in my life. ( Benatallah)

## **Dedication 2**

I am deeply grateful to my father for his unwavering support. To my dear mother, words cannot express my love and appreciation. I pray to depart before you, as living without you is unbearable.

Gratitude fills my heart for my grandmother's radiant spirit. To my exceptional siblings, Nour, Hind, Fathi, Amal, and Maryam, I am fortunate to have such wonderful brothers and sisters. My love for you knows no bounds.

To my dear friends, Amina, Asmaa, Salma, and Halima, thank you for bringing joy and vibrancy to my life. Your support enriched my journey. And to my dear Chaima, your sacrifices touched me deeply.

With love and gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to those who profoundly impacted my life. (Belmazouzi)



## Acknowledgments

All Praise is to **Allah** Who has guided us to complete this humble dissertation for giving us the strength, audacity, and endurance to realize this work. We would like to express our deepest sincere gratitude to our supervisor Dr. Abderrahim CHEIKH for his guidance and encouragement. We are deeply thankful for his efforts in revising and correcting this work and all the pieces of advice that he provided. We would also take this moment to express our gratitude to all our teachers during our academic study. Special thanks go to the jury members who devoted their precious time and efforts to reading and evaluating our dissertation.



# Abstracts

## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the historical and literary approaches in two short stories, "Horseman in the Sky" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," written by Ambrose Bierce. By exploring Bierce's use of historical context and literary techniques to shape the themes and meanings of the stories, this study sheds new light on the complexities of the human experience during the Civil War era. Through a close analysis of the texts, this dissertation highlights Bierce's mastery of the short story form and his ability to capture the social and cultural tensions of the time. By demonstrating the interplay between historical context and literary technique in Bierce's work, this study offers new insights into the broader cultural and intellectual history of the United States. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that Bierce's innovative approach to the short story genre remains relevant and influential to this day, and continues to inspire contemporary writers and scholars alike.

**Keywords:** Civil war Historical and Literary Analysis An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Horseman in the Sky.

## مستخلص

تدرس المذكرة النهج التاريخي و الأدبي في قصتين قصيرتين، "فارس في السماء" و "حادثة جسر أوول كريك"، كتبهما امبروز بيرس من خلال استكشاف استخدام بيرس للسياق التاريخي و التقنيات الأدبية لتشكيل موضوعات و معاني القصص، تسلط هذه الدراسة لضوء على تعقيدات تجربة الانسان خلال فترة الحرب الاهلية من خلال تحليل مفصل للنصوص، تسلط هذه الاطروحة الضوء على مهارة بيرس في صياغة القصة القصيرة و قدرته على النقاط التوترات الاجتماعية و الثقافية في ذلك الوقت. من خلال اظهار التفاعل بين السياق التاريخي و التقنية الادبية في عمل بيرس، تقدم هذه الدراسة نظرة جديدة على الثقافة و التاريخ الفكري الاوسع في الولايات المتحدة . وفي النهاية تؤكد هذه الاطروحة ان النهج الابتكاري لبيرس في النوع القصصي القصير لا يزال ذو اهمية و تأثير الى يومنا هذا ، و تستمر في الهام الكتاب و العلماء المعاصرين على حد سواء.

**كلمات مفتاحية :** التحليل التاريخي و الأدبي للحرب الأهلية "حادثة في جسر أوول كريك" و "فارس في السماء"

# Contents

<b>Dedications.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER-I. Theoretical Framework .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Introduction .....	4
I.1. Overview of "An Occurrence at owl Creek Bridge" and "A Horseman in the Sky" .....	4
I.2. The Concept of House Divided.....	6
I.3. American Civil War .....	10
I.4. Ambrose Bierce.....	12
I.5. Historical and literary Approaches to the stories.....	15
Conclusion.....	19
<b>CHAPTER-II. Historical and Literary Approaches to "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge".....</b>	<b>19</b>
Introduction .....	20
II.1. Historical Context .....	20
II.1.1 Setting The Scene .....	20
II.1.2. Understanding the Time and Place in the Story .....	21
II.1.3. Exploring the Past: The Historical Significance of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" .....	23
Things then intensify .....	25
II.2. Literary Elements of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge " .....	26
II.2.1. plot.....	26



II.2.2. Point of view .....	27
II.2.3. Characters.....	28
II.2.3.1.Peyton Farquhar.....	28
II.2.5. Captain and lieutenant .....	28
II.2.6. Mrs. Farquhar.....	29
II.3. The Analysis of “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”.....	29
II.3.1. Symbolism.....	29
II.3.1.1. The Owl Creek Bridge.....	29
II.3.1.2. The Ticking Watch.....	30
II.3.2. Themes analysis.....	31
II.3.2.1. Nature of War .....	31
II.3.2.2. Desire for Autonomy .....	31
II.3.2.3. The Fluid Nature of Time .....	32
Conclusion.....	32
<b>CHAPTER-III. Historical and Literary Approaches to the Story "A Horseman in The Sky.".....</b>	<b>33</b>
Introduction .....	34
III.1 Historical Context.....	34
III.2.Riding into History: The Background of "Horseman in the Sky" .....	35
III.2.1.Divided Nation, Divided Sky: The Historical Context .....	36
III.2.2. Echoes of Conflicts: Contextualizing "Horseman in the Sky" Short Story .....	36
III.3.Literary elements.....	37
III.3.1. Plot .....	37
III.3.2. Characters .....	37
III.3.2.1. Carter Druse .....	37
III.3.2.2. Carter Druse's Father .....	38

<b>III.3.2.3. Other soldiers.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>III.3.3. Point of View.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>III.4. Analysis of the story themes and symbolism.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>III.4.1. Themes.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>III.4.2. Symbolism.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Works Cited .....</b>	<b>48</b>



# General Introduction

Literary works are one type of human work that depicts human life. A short story is a work of fiction that typically focuses on a single incident or a small cast of characters, with a plot that unfolds over a relatively brief period and is often characterized by a concentrated use of language and an economy of plot and characterization. Short stories can take many different forms and styles, but some common features include a clear narrative arc, a central conflict or dilemma, and a resolution or climax that provides closure to the story. They may be structured around a particular theme, mood, or atmosphere, and may be written in a variety of genres, including horror, romance, science fiction, and realism. Some well-known examples of short stories include "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by Ambrose Bierce, "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson, and "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe. Short stories can be a powerful literary form, offering a concise and impactful exploration of complex ideas and emotions.

"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "A Horseman in the Sky" explore important messages conveyed in these two classic American short stories. The dissertation seeks to shed light on the historical context in which the stories were written, as well as their literary techniques and themes. By examining the historical events and cultural attitudes that informed Bierce's writing, the dissertation aims to provide a deeper understanding of the messages conveyed in these symbolic works of the Civil War.

The dissertation examines the themes, characters, and narrative techniques employed by Bierce in these stories, as well as the historical context in which they were written. This includes an analysis of Bierce's own experiences as a Union soldier in the Civil War, as well as the broader cultural and social issues of the time.

Ultimately, the dissertation argues that "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "A Horseman in the Sky" offer valuable insights into the human experience, particularly in times of war and conflict. Through their vivid imagery, intricate narrative structures, and exploration of complex themes, these stories continue to resonate with readers today, reminding us of the enduring power of literature to illuminate the human condition, and also provide a deeper understanding of Bierce's literary contributions and how his writing reflects the historical and cultural context in which it was produced.

This study aims to analyze two short stories "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "A Horseman in the Sky," using historical and literary approaches to gain insights into "the impact of the American Civil War on individuals and communities on both sides of the conflict. By exploring the literary techniques used by the authors, this study seeks to deepen our understanding of how literature can reflect and engage with historical events and social issues, and how these reflections and engagements shape our collective memory and understanding of the past.

To examine the role of the Civil War as a historical backdrop in each story and how it shapes the character's attitudes, beliefs, and actions. To explore how each story addresses the theme of division, both within the individual characters and within the larger society, and how it relates to Lincoln's statement. To assess the impact of each story on literature and popular culture's understanding of the Civil War and its legacy, including how they reflect and challenge common narratives and interpretations of the conflict.

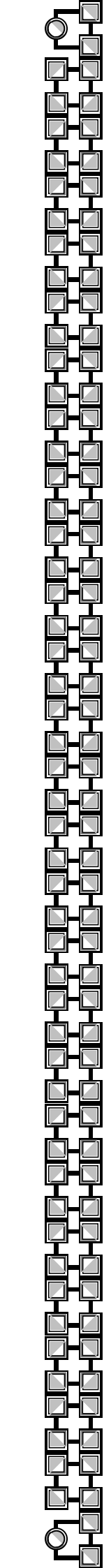
The dissertation poses several questions to reflect and convey the impact of the Civil War era in both stories:

1. How do the two short stories "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "A Horseman in the Sky" reflect the divisions and tensions of the Civil War era?
2. What literary techniques do the authors use in these stories to convey the impact of the Civil War on individuals and communities on both sides of the conflict?
3. How do the perspectives of characters from different sides of the conflict in each story offer insights into the social and cultural divisions of the time?

The study hypothesizes that both stories use literary techniques to reflect the divisions and tensions of the Civil War, offering insights into its impact on individuals and communities on both sides of the conflict and its enduring legacy in American culture.

The methodology for this study will be a mixed methods approach, combining both historical and literary analysis. The historical approach will involve the use of primary and secondary sources to contextualize the stories within the broader historical context of the American Civil War. The literary approach will involve a close reading of the stories to identify the literary techniques used by the authors to convey the impact of the war on individuals and communities.

Therefore, this dissertation is divided into three chapters: chapter one, is concerned with the Background. The second chapter deals with the Historical context and literary approaches to the story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge". The third highlighted the Historical context and literary approaches to the story " A Horseman in the Sky "



# **CHAPTER-I. Theoretical Framework**

## **Introduction**

This chapter examines the overview of the two short stories by Ambrose Bierce that deal with the concept of “a divided house”, both historically and figuratively. Against the backdrop of the American Civil War, Bierce explores the themes of conflict, betrayal, and the consequences of choosing sides. Through close analysis of "A Horseman in the Sky" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," the chapter seeks to illuminate Bierce's literary technique and how he uses the concept of a divided house to comment on the broader societal divisions of his time.

### **I.1. Overview of "An Occurrence at owl Creek Bridge" and "A Horseman in the Sky"**

"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "A Horseman in the Sky" by Ambrose Bierce explore themes of war, death, and the human psyche. Both stories were published in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, during a time of great social and political change in the United States.

Both stories are known for their masterful use of language and their exploration of complex themes and ideas also have a strong focus on the human experience of war and the psychological effects it has on individuals, as well as the theme of the fragility of life and the unexpected twists and turns it can take.

"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is a short story by Ambrose Bierce, published in 1890. The story is set during the American Civil War and follows the experiences of a Confederate sympathizer named Peyton Farquhar, a haunting and suspenseful story that is widely regarded as one of the greatest short stories ever written. The story opens with the protagonist, Peyton Farquhar, standing on a railway bridge with a noose around his neck. He has been condemned to death by Union



soldiers for attempting to sabotage a railroad bridge. As he waits for the signal to be given, Farquhar reflects on his life and imagines an escape plan.

Suddenly, Farquhar is jerked back into reality as the signal is given, and the plank beneath him falls away. However, instead of dying, Farquhar experiences a vivid and surreal journey. He imagines himself breaking free from the rope and swimming down the river, evading the Union soldiers who are pursuing him. He eventually makes his way back home to his wife and children, only to have his dream shattered when he is suddenly jolted back to reality and realizes that he has been hanged. The story concludes with a chilling final sentence that leaves the reader questioning what is real and what is not.

"A Horseman in the Sky" is a short story by Ambrose Bierce, published in 1889. The story is set during the Civil War, in a mountainous region of Virginia, and follows a young Union soldier named Carter Druse. The protagonist, Carter Druse, is a young soldier serving in the Union Army. He is stationed on a high cliff overlooking a valley that separates the Union and Confederate lines.

One day, as he stands on guard duty, Druse sees a horseman riding towards him from the direction of the Confederate lines. As the horseman approaches, Druse realizes with horror that it is his father, who had joined the Confederate army. Druse is torn between his loyalty to his country and his love for his father. He feels duty-bound to shoot the horseman, but he hesitates, hoping that his father will turn back before he reaches the cliff. However, as the horseman comes closer, Druse realizes that his father is unaware of his presence on the cliff. He raises his rifle and aims at the horseman, but he still hesitates to pull the trigger. At that moment, the horseman disappears over the edge of the cliff and falls to his death. Druse is overcome with guilt

and grief at having killed his father. He fears that he will be court-martialed for desertion and executed. However, he decides to surrender himself to his superiors and take responsibility for his actions. At his trial, Druse refuses to provide any justification for his hesitation to shoot his father. He simply states that he was conflicted between his duty to his country and his love for his father. The court finds him guilty of desertion, but a fellow soldier testifies that he saw Druse bravely fighting in a battle that occurred around the same time as the incident on the cliff. This testimony raises doubts about whether Druse deserted his post, and the charges against him are dropped.

The story concludes with Druse returning to duty, reflecting on the nature of courage and the high cost of following orders blindly. It leaves readers with a powerful reminder of the difficult choices that people must make during times of war and the lasting impact those choices can have on their lives.

## **1.2. The Concept of House Divided**

House Divided is a phrase taken from the famous speech delivered by Abraham Lincoln in 1858, known as "House Divided" speech. The speech was delivered during Lincoln's campaign for the Illinois Senate, in which he argued against the expansion of slavery in the United States. The speech was delivered at a time when tensions between the North and South were high, and the country was on the brink of civil war. The phrase "house divided" refers to the idea that a nation, like a house, cannot stand if it is divided against itself. Lincoln's speech argued that the United States could not continue to exist as both a slave and free nation and that it must ultimately become one or the other. The "House divided" concept remains relevant today, as it is a reminder that unity is necessary for a nation to prosper and that division can lead to destruction.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in a one-room log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky, to Nancy and Thomas Lincoln. His family relocated to southern Indiana in 1816. Despite having limited opportunities for formal education, Lincoln attended local schools for short periods, as he had to work continuously to provide for his family. Lincoln's family moved to southern Illinois in Macon County in 1830, where he secured a job on a river flatboat, transporting goods down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Later, he settled in New Salem, Illinois, where he became a shopkeeper and postmaster, as well as an active supporter of the Whig Party in local politics, winning a seat in the Illinois state legislature in 1834. In November 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected the 16th President of the United States, shortly before the Civil War began. He was a self-taught lawyer, legislator, and a vocal advocate for the abolition of slavery. Lincoln was a skilled military strategist and leader, and his Emancipation Proclamation was instrumental in ending slavery in the United States. His famous Gettysburg Address is regarded as one of the most significant speeches in American history. Tragically, he was assassinated in April 1865 by Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth, which made him a martyr for the cause of freedom. Abraham Lincoln is widely recognized as one of the greatest presidents in U.S. history.

Abraham Lincoln was selected by the Republican State Convention on June 16, 1858, to compete against Democrat Stephen Douglas for the U.S. Senate. During his speech, Lincoln focused on the issue of slavery in the United States and how it was exacerbated by the recent Dred Scott decision made by the U.S. Supreme Court. To emphasize the division caused by slavery, Lincoln paraphrased a Bible passage from Matthew 12:25, referring to a house divided: And Jesus knew they

are [the Pharisees'] thoughts, and said unto them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." Lincoln sought to utilize a well-known quotation to help the populace understand the significance of the current discussions about whether or not slavery was legitimate. Taking a closer look at more of his speech may help you understand how he uses this metaphor:

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe the government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved - I do not expect the house to fall - but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new - North as well as South. Abraham Lincoln. "House Divided" speech.

Abraham Lincoln wasn't referring to the current political conflicts when he declared that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." There is no single subject that geographically and economically divides the country in the same manner that slavery did in the 1850s, although People may have strong opinions that diverge on topics like abortion and immigration. Lincoln unintentionally fueled the idea that the United States might engage in civil war at the time because of how divided the country was. In 1858, Lincoln made a speech at the Illinois Republican State Convention, where he used his now-famous "house divided" line. At the time, he was a relatively unknown politician who had just won the nomination to run for U.S. Senate against

Stephen A. Douglas, one of the most important politicians in the country. The Democrats were mainly from the slave-holding South, while the Republicans were from the free North that opposed slavery's expansion. Republicans were not too worried about Lincoln's race as they believed that Senator Douglas, a Democrat, might be willing to work with them against expanding slavery. Douglas had been seeking a middle ground between North and South, some way of compromising on the slavery issue," says Eric Foner, a history professor at Columbia University who has written several books about slavery and the Civil War . In his "house divided" speech where he argued against the Dred Scott decision made the year before. According to Lincoln, this decision had already allowed slavery to become legal in the North and in all territories that the United States acquired. He believed that if the United States wanted to be a truly free country, it needed to take action immediately before it was too late. Lincoln's saying, 'No, there is no compromise," Foner explains. "You've got to be on one side or the other." In effect, he's saying, "I'm on the side of freedom and Douglas...is on the side of slavery." Abraham Lincoln. "House Divided" speech or, to quote the man himself: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved-I do not expect the house to fall-but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. In response to these developments, Lincoln called for a united effort to restrict the spread of slavery and ultimately eliminate it. He closed his speech with the famous words, "We shall not fail-if we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate, or mistakes delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come." Abraham Lincoln.

The speech is perhaps best known for the line, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. In his address, Abraham Lincoln stated that the country could not continue to be made up of both slaves and free people and that either slavery would eventually expand throughout the entire nation or it would be outlawed. In addition, he opposed the Supreme Court Dred Scott decision, which had been rendered two years earlier, contending that it had essentially legalized slavery throughout the nation. A crucial turning point in American history, Lincoln's "House Divided" speech launched his ascent to national prominence and prepared the way for his ultimate election as president in 1860. The speech also assisted in clarifying the slavery argument that would ultimately result in the start of the civil war.

### **1.3. American Civil War**

In this section about the Civil War, will see that this was a time in American history dominated by two major concerns: politics and society and culture. The content not only covers the political choices made during the war but also illustrates how the war impacted all aspects of American society. It discusses the reasons behind the war, its significant occurrences, and the multiple outcomes resulting from it. Therefore, this segment narrates one of the pivotal moments in American history.

Civil War is a war within the same nation. This occurs when the political or religious parties fail to accomplish their objectives peacefully, so they use violence and force to realize their objectives. Many countries faced this social conflict that has an indirect relation with the social and cultural components. The conflict augmented and later on turned to armed conflict. Economic factors are not the only reason for the Civil War. The American Civil War occurred in 1861 and was a result of economic and political reasons. Many historians say that slavery was the only reason for the

American Civil War along with the great difference between the South and the North. While the South was agricultural, the North was industrial.

The Civil War was One of the deadliest wars in American history which occurred between 1861 to 1865. The conflict arose due to differences between two regions, the North and the South. The North was characterized by industrialization, while the South was heavily reliant on agriculture.

The economic differences resulted in two blocks or divisions: South and North. Southerners depended on plantations in addition to slave labor. Unlike the South, the North was wealthy and relied on manufacturers, and did not need slaves.

These differences created a problem between the North and South. Southerners wanted to develop their economy and compete with the Northern industrial section. In doing so, they used slaves to labor on their plantations. Slaves became property in the South; they worked in severe conditions as planters, carpenters, drivers...etc. On the other hand, Northerners were against slavery, and they treated slaves as natural citizens; in addition, they sought to abolish the whole institution of slavery from the southern territories.

The conflict augmented when Southerners wanted to trade with Europeans. To accomplish that, Southerners needed to pay taxes. However, Southerners, who saw tariffs as a threat to their prosperity and tried to nullify them, did not welcome these taxes.

The South hoped to keep slaves and maintain its practice in the South. Southerners' defense of slavery came not from a moral point of view. They wanted to keep slaves as a labor force that would help in the growth of the Southerners' economy. Southerners, thereafter submitted the matter to the Supreme Court, and they defended

their state rights. These claimed right allowed Southerners to both secede from the Union and ask for legalizing slavery within their states.

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which was ratified on January 1, 1863, was a constitutional act that had a significant impact on the course of the Civil War. Its dual purpose was to preserve the nation and abolish slavery. Although the proclamation did not immediately free all slaves, it did grant them the opportunity to escape to the North. This move proved beneficial to the Northern army, as former slaves became an active part of it, contributing to the Union's victory in the war. Overall, the Emancipation Proclamation played a crucial role in bringing about the end of slavery in America.

In April 1861, the American Civil War began, and it lasted until 1865. This conflict, which was known as the first modern American War, involved brothers and uncles. Shortly after Abraham Lincoln was elected, Confederates assaulted Fort Sumter in South Carolina, sparking the commencement of this conflict. As a result, the election played a role in the Confederate States' decision to leave the Union. Some historians asserted that other factors contributed as well. However, there were other indirect and direct factors, such as Sectionalism, tariffs, States' rights, the emergence of abolitionists, and the election of Abraham Lincoln, that contributed to the start of this war.

#### **1.4. Ambrose Bierce**

Ambrose Bierce, known for his satirical and realistic writing, was an American journalist and author who grew up in Kosciusko County, Indiana after being born in Meigs County, Ohio in 1842. He joined the Union Army as part of the 9th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment in 1861 and later settled in San Francisco, California,



where he wrote for and edited local newspapers and journals. Bierce's blunt honesty, cynical humor, and pessimism earned him the nicknames "Bitter Bierce" and "the wickedest man in San Francisco." Many of his works, including "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and excerpts from *The Devil's Dictionary*, were first published in newspapers and were inspired by his military experiences. Bierce's date of death is uncertain, but he was last reported to be observing Pancho Villa's army in Chihuahua, Mexico in 1913 during the Mexican Revolution. Although not as renowned as Edgar Allen Poe, Ambrose Bierce's writing style and storytelling were equally captivating, and he gained recognition as a journalist, editor, humorist, and satirist during his time. His writing, including his Civil War short stories and the 'Devil's Dictionary', not only entertained but also provided informative content. Bierce's distinct writing style allowed him to express his opinions in a persuasive manner, which established his character, credentials, and influence, granting him both prestige and power. Ambrose Bierce was the tenth child among thirteen siblings, all of whom had names starting with 'A'. Bierce deliberately crafted both his public persona as a writer and his private identity through a series of half-truths, making it challenging to discern the real man from the façade. Despite his notoriety, Bierce faced severe criticism from his detractors, earning him the moniker "Bitter Bierce." Walter Neale's biography of Bierce is a tribute to the writer from a friend's perspective, yet even Neale struggled to reconcile the numerous contradictions surrounding Bierce's true identity. Neale writes after researching Bierce's early life, "It is now clear to me why Bierce misrepresented his early life. He was ashamed of his lowly estate while in Elkhart (Neale, p39)." Neale was repeatedly told by Ambrose Bierce about his early life, in which he claimed to have been born and raised on a farm in the Western Reserve in Ohio until the age of

seventeen. He then left home and worked as a freelance journalist in Chicago before enlisting in the Union Army during the Civil War. Ambrose took great pride in his family's cultural and historical significance, as they were originally from New England and had migrated to Ohio. However, Neale later discovered that Ambrose's account was only partially true. Although his family did have New England roots and were of high social standing, Ambrose himself was born and raised on a farm and did not leave home to become a newspaper writer in Chicago. A townsman from Elkhart confided in Neale after Ambrose's death, revealing more details about Ambrose's youth.

The boy had what was called a 'poor chance' He quit school early and went to work in the brickyards. He 'graduated' there in due time, and came downtown to work- Andrew Faber was running an establishment on Main Street in those days, a bakery grocery restaurant saloon, and he took Ambrose on as an around handyman. When who'd treat, it was Ambrose the boys got together upstairs to play cards to see Bierce who brought the beer and sandwiches upstairs.

Then Fort Sumter was fired on, and Elkhart was aflame with patriotism. Young fell7s enlisted faster than they could be equipped and mobilized, and young Bierce was among the very first. He joined Co.C, the 9th Indiana Infantry.

Then he gave his friends their first surprise. The army seemed to bring out in young Ambrose things that had never been seen in Elkhart. His education had been neglected, and he was always rather queer and different. But the first thing I knew he was a commissioned officer on the staff of General W. E. Grose, in the Army of the Cumberland. As a topographical engineer, Bierce served throughout the war, with great distinction (Neale p37)

Bierce had a tumultuous personal life marked by repeated tragedies such as failures, abandonment, and the early deaths of his sons. He had a pessimistic, cynical, nihilistic outlook on life which influenced his writing, particularly in his collection of stories called "Tales of Soldiers and Civilians." Bierce drew from his experiences in the American Civil War and used them to create his best works, such as "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge", "Chickamauga," and "One of the Missing." Bierce's journalistic career in the San Francisco Sunday Examiner during the 70s and 80s honed his writing style and greatly influenced his war stories. Like Poe, Bierce preferred the short-story format for its ability to create a complete effect, and he used techniques like creating suspense to build up to a dramatic crisis. Bierce's focus was not on the grandeur of the Civil War, but rather on its impact on individual consciousness. Quite convincingly, Eric Solomon (1982) says that along with Crane and Kipling- Bierce's treatment of war is the most extensive in English and American fiction: "He catches war at his sources and makes an intensification of personal experience [...] He manages to evoke the feeling of reality, a sense of fact and place that makes war not an abstract moral condition but a concrete physical actuality" (185).

### **1.5. Historical and literary Approaches to the stories**

A literary analysis approach known as "new historicism" places an emphasis on a text's historical and cultural context and how that context affects its interpretation. By examining the historical setting of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "The Horseman in the Sky," we may understand how these tales represent the conflicts and tensions of the pre-Civil War era.

The North and South clashed over issues including slavery, states' rights, and federal authority during the Civil War, which divided the country along geographic

and ideological lines. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" depicts a Confederate sympathizer named Peyton Farquhar who is going to be hung by Union soldiers and is set in the South near the end of the war. As Farquhar awaits his execution, he muses on his life and experiences, showing the intense tensions and differences that existed between the North and South during the conflict.

Through the use of vivid and realistic descriptions, Bierce is able to portray the effects of the Civil War on people and communities. Bierce, for instance, goes into great detail while describing the scene where Farquhar is getting ready for his execution, including the "owls" and "whip-poor-wills" that are "hooting and laughing" in the woods. As if nature itself were mocking Farquhar's fate, this instills a sense of gloom and despair.

By employing the perspectives of characters who represented various sides in the fight, Bierce also examines the effects of the Civil War. Farquhar, a Confederate sympathizer who is put to death by Union forces in "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," is the main character. This demonstrates the disparities between the North and the South and how even those not actively involved in the conflict can become victims of its cruelty and violence.

In a similar vein, the Civil War-era novel "The Horseman in the Sky" relates the tale of a young Union soldier called Carter Druse who is posted on a hilltop overlooking Confederate territory. Druse must choose between his duty as a soldier and his allegiance to his family when he encounters a Confederate soldier who turns out to be his own father. This tale also examines how the Civil War affected people individually and as families, as well as the difficult decisions they had to make.

From the perspective of literary study, Bierce's use of symbolism and irony is especially successful in illustrating the effects of the Civil War. The title "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," for instance, alludes to the savagery and cruelty of the conflict while the bridge stands in for the division between the North and South. Irony can also be seen in the twist ending, which shows that Farquhar's escape was only a fiction and that the South's optimism and hope were ultimately doomed to failure.

In "The Horseman in the Sky," Bierce again employs symbolism and sarcasm to illustrate the effects of the Civil War. The horseman's lonesome ride through the sky symbolizes the loneliness and isolation that troops on both sides of the conflict must have experienced. The irony of Druse's choice to kill his own father highlights the devastating outcomes of the war and how it tore communities and families apart.

Each narrative provides additional insights into the social and cultural divisions of the era through the views of people who represent opposing sides of the struggle. As a Confederate sympathizer, Farquhar emphasizes the tensions between the North and the South in "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," as well as the challenging decisions that those caught up in the struggle had to make. Meanwhile, the Union troops who carry out his execution serve as a symbol of how terrible and dehumanizing war is.

In "The Horseman in the Sky," Druse's perspective as a Union soldier who must choose whether to kill his own father emphasizes the moral complexity of the Civil War and how it caused people to choose between allegiance to their country and loyalty to their family. In contrast, the viewpoint of Druse's father, a Confederate

soldier, emphasizes how the war tore families apart and led to significant tensions between the North and the South.

"A Horseman in the Sky" focuses on how a single family can be destroyed by war, and that this destruction extends further than the family members who are physically involved in actively fighting in it. In the story, a father and a son find themselves taking different sides in the Revolutionary War and this leads to the son killing his father in the name of the Union. After this murder, the young man, Carter Druse, goes slowly mad, unable to cope with having chosen patriotism over love for his father.

When reading Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "The Horseman in the Sky" in their historical and literary contexts, it becomes clear that these tales illustrate the effects of a divided so city, highlight the negative effects of war, and emphasize the struggle for survival during times of conflict.

These two short stories explore the effects of this separation on individual lives and are set during the American Civil War, which lasted from 1861 to 1865 and was a period of intense war and division in the United States.

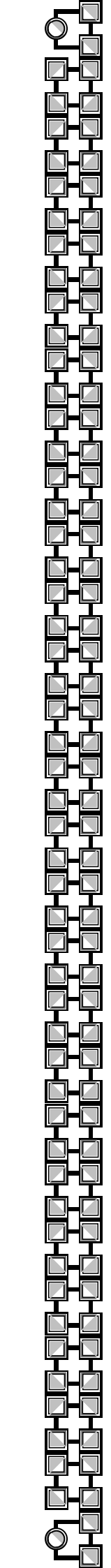
"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is a short story that explores the last moments of a person's life. What happens as a person is about to die? What changes in the way their brain functions? What thoughts do they focus on? Are their thoughts rational and worthy of trust? All of these questions are explored in this short story set during the Civil War. and how it pitted brother against brother and created deep divisions within families and communities.

Bierce employs literary devices like symbolism and imagery to illustrate the themes of division and survival in both stories. These tales underscore the importance

of rapprochement and understanding during times of conflict by illuminating the long-lasting impacts of a divided society.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, Bierce's short story shows his adeptness in utilizing the potency of literature to delve into intricate historical and societal matters. Through the application of historical and literary methodologies, one can develop a more profound admiration for the author's perspective and his analysis of the human experience. In essence, Bierce's narratives prompt us to acknowledge the significance of comprehending historical events and the intricate dynamics of societal partitions, thereby functioning as a potent reminder of the abiding influence of literature in providing readers with enlightenment and comprehension.



**CHAPTER-II. Historical and Literary  
Approaches to "An Occurrence at Owl  
Creek Bridge"**



## **Introduction**

Ambrose Bierce's renowned short story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" was initially released in 1890. The narrative is renowned for its distinctive composition, featuring an unexpected denouement that has engrossed readers for more than a hundred years. Throughout time, scholars specializing in literature have scrutinized the narrative from diverse viewpoints, encompassing historical and literary methodologies. The present chapter will delve into these methodologies and scrutinize their ability to elucidate the themes, symbols, and narrative techniques employed in the story. By analyzing the historical and literary contexts, a more profound comprehension of the narrative's importance and lasting allure can be attained.

### **II.1. Historical Context**

#### **II.1.1 Setting The Scene**

Setting refers to the moment and location of a situation. It can aid in establishing the tone, influencing characters' actions and speech, predicting events, eliciting an emotional response, reflecting the society in which the characters live, and occasionally even contributing to the plot. It can be a crucial component in nonfiction as well because the setting sets the stage for the ideas being explored. It's crucial to provide vital details to bring the scenario to life. That doesn't include outlining everything the characters observe or providing a detailed account of the setting where the scene takes place. It's crucial to provide enough details so that readers can picture the scene, but going overboard with the small particulars would slow down the narrative rather than advance it. There are several approaches to setting clarification besides employing extensive descriptive sections. For instance: The terminology the characters employ can infer where they are from or where the situation is set. On the

other side, the climate might reveal the season or overall location of a scene. Readers will learn where or when the narrative takes place if you mention a hurricane or snowfall. Compared to the smell of asphalt pervading the air, the scent of a particular flower blowing on a gentle breeze reveals a distinct scenario. Scene the mood and provide information about the scene can be done by describing a dark, foreboding mansion or a murky woodland. Candles flickering can either hint at romance or suggest a religious scene; adding other details will help clarify their significance.

"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is set during the American Civil War (1861-1865) in northern Alabama, specifically at Owl Creek Bridge, which spans a small river. The bridge is described as being a "trifling distance" from a nearby town and a major railway, both of which controlled forces. Union are by While the Rebel protagonist Peyton Farquhar is about to be hanged by Union soldiers at Owl Creek Bridge, the site is important to the plot.

The story's backdrop reflects the tension that existed between the North and the South during the Civil War, a period of great struggle and separation, Also The conflict's importance is highlighted by how close the bridge is to the town and train, but Farquhar feels alone and powerless in the rural setting.

The setting of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" attempts to reflect the greater historical background of the Civil War while also evoking a tangible sense of danger and dread.

### **II.1.2. Understanding the Time and Place in the Story**

In the years following the Civil War, the United States faced tremendous political, social, and economic upheavals.

Tensions between the North and the South as well as initiatives to give Black Americans more rights and freedoms made up this era, known as Reconstruction.

The story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" recounts the events leading up to the execution of a man named Peyton Farquhar, who was a farmer and slave owner devoted to the Southern side during the American Civil War. The story is set near Owl Creek Bridge, where the impact of the Civil War is most strongly felt. The events leading up to Farquhar's execution are presented through flashbacks. The character of Farquhar is shown as a slave-owning Southern patriot who will stop at nothing to further his cause. His wife is quietly portrayed as a benefit of the slaveholding society that Farquhar wishes to protect. Although he is not legally a combatant, there is a subliminal message in the character's ideology that he is committed to the South and directly benefits from slavery. He is therefore accountable for the same crimes that his cause is and deserving of the punishment he's about to receive. Also, focused the narrative on emotional states and subjective experience parallels larger intellectual and cultural movements of the late 19th century.

Bierce Ambrose's commentary on the psychological effects of war and the trauma that soldiers often experience. The story's protagonist, Peyton Farquhar, is a Confederate sympathizer who is about to be hanged by Union soldiers. As he awaits his execution, he experiences vivid hallucinations and fantasies, suggesting that his mind is struggling to process the traumatic experience he is undergoing.

"If I could free my hands," he thought, "I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving, I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods, and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader's farthest advance."

This passage describes the final moments of Farquhar before he dies, which is also the last objective reality before his imagination takes over. It establishes how his thoughts about his family become the driving force for him to live. He even imagines some extraordinary ways to escape to return to his family, which he later lives out in his hallucination. The paragraph serves as a foreshadowing for the upcoming events and an ironic comparison between the perceived innocence of his family and the slavery that enables them to live such a life.

At the time of the American Civil War, the country was deeply divided between the North and the South over issues such as slavery, states' rights, and political power. The war resulted in the deaths of over 600,000 people and had a lasting impact on American society and politics. The setting of the story, Owl Creek Bridge, is a real location in northern Alabama that was a strategic point for the Union army during the war. The story's themes and setting reflect the tension and turmoil of the Civil War era.

Overall, contextualizing "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" involves understanding the historical, cultural, and intellectual climate in which it was written, as well as its themes of war, trauma, and subjectivity.

### **II.1.3. Exploring the Past: The Historical Significance of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"**

It is crucial to comprehend the setting of the events that take place by understanding the historical background of the story. During the Civil War, the Union and Confederate armies had high levels of hostility, and the Confederacy frequently used sabotage to hinder the Union's progress and weaken its control over the Confederate States. Advocates for the Confederacy often interfered with Northern

activities by damaging bridges and railroads. By using the historical context of the Civil War, Bierce investigates themes of time, perception, and reality in "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." He creates a disturbing and intriguing story about war and its effects by immersing the reader in Peyton Farquhar's world through sensory elements. Bierce's experiences as a Civil War veteran who was kidnapped and imprisoned by Union forces likely influenced his writing, and his careful attention to historical detail makes the story even more compelling and authentic.

Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" grounds the story in a specific time and place by using the historical context of the Civil War to explore themes of time, perception, and reality. By immersing the reader in Peyton Farquhar's world through sensory details and vivid imagery, Bierce creates a haunting and unforgettable tale of war and its aftermath. Also, Bierce's short story style and narrative skill prefigure the modernist innovations of writers like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Katherine Mansfield, who similarly seek new ways to portray time and the individual's subjective experience of the world. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" This could be seen as a creative reinterpretation of the widely accepted idea that just before we die, we experience a quick succession of memories from our life.

Take the moment when Bierce describes Farquhar's watch ticking shortly before he is going to be hanged

Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a sound which he could neither ignore": nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or near by- it seemed both. Its

recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell " Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge."

### **Things then intensify**

He awaited each stroke with impatience and he knew not why -apprehension. The" intervals of silence grew progressively longer, and the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency, the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch" Bierce, Ambrose."An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge."

In addition, abolitionists' writings were extremely influential throughout the Civil War era. It was organized by free abolitionist writers who opposed the social and political institution of slavery and the inhumane treatment of slaves. There were dramas, poems, short stories, and novels among abolitionist works.

People from many backgrounds were regularly moved by their writings. Uncle Tom's Cabin, a story about the fight between a slave named Tom and the cruel white slave owner Simon Legree, was the first piece of literature that indirectly influenced the American Civil War. A generation of Northerners as well as many Europeans were inspired by Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin to view all slave owners as monstrously evil. Southerners denounced the novel's falsity and saw it as an example of the North's irrational prejudice against their way of life. Later, when President Lincoln met Mrs. Stowe, he is reported to have said, "So you are the little woman who wrote the book that made the Great War (Galbraith 342).

The American Civil War benefited greatly from the writings of abolitionists. It was composed in protest of the South's treatment of slaves. The Abolitionists aimed to

enhance the dreadful conditions of African-Americans and also to uplift their social status and position within the American community.

So we might view "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" Bierce's narrative functions as a creative and unconventional work of fiction, while also serving as a critique of war. The story's dual aspects are interconnected: through the unexpected twist in the final paragraph, readers are compelled to acknowledge the harsh realities of warfare, where human life is undervalued and casualties, both military and civilian, are numerous, including individuals like Farquhar

## **II.2.Literary Elements of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge "**

### **II.2.1. plot**

The first section sets the context for the story. It took place during the American Civil War, and the main character, Peyton Farquhar, was in his thirties and was about to face execution by hanging. Despite being a planter by profession, he was not a soldier and came from a wealthy and respected family, not having a criminal background. The reason for his sentence was treason, and the hanging was to take place on a railway bridge over a river.

In the second section, a flashback revealed more information about Farquhar's background. He was a separatist who owned slaves and was devoted to the Confederacy's cause during the Civil War. One day, when a soldier came to their door and asked for water, Farquhar and his wife were at home. Knowing that anyone caught trying to destroy the railroad would be executed by hanging, Farquhar suggested that someone with the necessary expertise might be able to burn down the bridge if he

could avoid the guards. The soldier explained that Union troops had captured and fixed the Owl Creek railroad bridge.

Farquhar realized the soldier was a Union scout who had lured him into a trap when he saw him return later that night and ride north.

The third section of the text concentrates on the execution process. A detailed depiction of the hanging moment ensues, followed by a surreal sequence where Farquhar seemed to sink into the water, nearly suffocate, and then resurface to flee. The natural surroundings, from the tree foliage to the crawling spiders, exhibit a heightened vitality, and Farquhar's hearing picks up on previously unheard sounds. He journeyed back to his residence and reunited with his loved ones

The very last sentence of the story revealed that the rope didn't break and that Farquhar had indeed passed away, therefore all of this was just his imagination

### **II.2.2. Point of view**

In the story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," Ambrose Bierce conveys his strong conviction that war is an unnatural and unnecessary aspect of human life. Through various literary techniques, Bierce effectively communicates his message. He uses the death of a civilian, Peyton Farquhar, to highlight the unintended harm that war can inflict on innocent people. Farquhar is deceived into attempting to burn down the Owl Creek Bridge by a Federal Scout, who tells him that the Union army is advancing towards it. Although Farquhar did not commit any crime, the military captures and hangs him because they believed he was planning to sabotage the bridge. Bierce's story demonstrates that even civilians can become victims of war's recklessness and that war's costs extend beyond the battlefield.



### **II.2.3. Characters**

#### **II.2.3.1. Peyton Farquhar**

Peyton Farquhar was the most important character in this story. He was so important that through much of the story, he is almost the only character. Most of the other characters don't even have names.

Farquhar was described as standing on the Owl Creek bridge at the beginning of the narrative. It concluded with a description of him hanging there after being put to death. The rest of the story described his back-story-how he got into this predicament and his death. Farquhar was a loyal Southerner. He was a slave-owning planter who supported the Confederate rebellion. Thirty-five years old, he'd married and loved his family. On the other hand, Farquhar was driven by a desire for fame and views himself as a potential hero. Unfortunately, Farquhar misunderstands both himself and his circumstances, despite his belief that he did. While doing so, he lies to himself. He considered himself a hero enough to attempt to destroy the Owl Creek bridge. But he was also foolish enough to attempt it once a spy for the Union told him about the bridge, deceiving Farquhar into getting captured and being executed. Bierce dramatized Farquhar's self-delusions further in Part 3 when he had a vision of his heroic escape from his execution. This turned out to be nothing more than another fantasy. It was difficult to decipher which details concerning Farquhar were real and which may be self-deception or illusion.

#### **II.2.5. Captain and lieutenant**

The anonymous Union captain is in charge of Farquhar's hanging. The anonymous Union lieutenant is in charge of the company of Union soldiers at Owl Creek...

### **II.2.6. Mrs. Farquhar**

Farquhar's dutiful wife, as Farquhar imagines her, is a feminine ideal. Since Mrs. Farquhar never appears in the story as a real person, his view of her may or may not be accurate.

## **II.3. The Analysis of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"**

### **II.3.1. Symbolism**

#### **II.3.1.1. The Owl Creek Bridge**

The Owl Creek Bridge was important enough to the story for Bierce to include it in the title and the story's first line.

The Owl Creek Bridge suggested connection and transition. It was believed that the bridge was destroyed by Confederate forces or their supporters to stop the North from advancing further into their territory. However, Union forces managed to restore this crucial passage, which allowed the North's war effort to regain strength in northern Alabama. This played a significant role in ultimately defeating the Confederacy and ending the Civil War.

Bridges were often associated with change, as crossing a bridge implied moving from one place to another, whether in a literal or figurative sense. This represented characters embarking on a journey or crossing a boundary. Heroes, in particular, were often depicted crossing bridges as they transitioned from one realm to another, such as from life to death or the afterlife. This certainly applied to Farquhar whose goal was to undermine the structure and connection which he achieved by indulging in his fantasies that involved disconnecting from his physical body in his last moments. The bridge symbolized a space of mediation that linked the opposing banks of the creek, representing a connection between two different states. In

Farquhar's case, the bridge symbolized the connection between life and death. By "escaping" into the water, Farquhar entered a psychological transitional space between reality and fantasy, which was suggested by the bridge. At the end of the story, it turned out Farquhar was still on the bridge, from which his dead body swung.

### **II.3.1.2. The Ticking Watch**

As Farquhar awaited his execution, he began to hear "a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil," which intensified his anxiety and prolonged the moments before his death. However, it was the ticking of his watch. In literature, watches are often powerful symbols of time, and in this case, the watch emphasized how little time Farquhar had left. Bierce directly linked the ticking of the watch to the impending execution, "Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell," Bierce wrote. Farquhar was acutely aware that his time was running out, and each moment became clear and precise.

The watch's ticking motion also served as a type of foreshadowing. Farquhar's senses became "preternaturally keen and alert" when he thought he had freed himself from the noose. He could magnify even the smallest features and sounds, such as the unmistakable hammering of his watch. The reader was prepared for this alteration in the protagonist's perception by the ticking watch because both ideas implied a certain shift in perception just before death. In turn, the sound of the watch ticking made it simpler for Bierce to transition into the fantastical near-dream of Farquhar's escape and flight...

### **II.3.2. Themes analysis**

#### **II.3.2.1. Nature of War**

Many of Bierce's tales centered on the nature of war, frequently juxtaposing men's idealized conceptions of war with its harsh reality. Both of these characteristics of battle were firsthand for Bierce. When he was a youngster, his parents sent him to a military academy, and Bierce later wrote of how "zealous and idealistic he was in his pursuit of freedom. The Civil War was also a very brutal internal conflict at the time. After taking part in some of its fiercest battles and suffering serious injuries, Bierce saw the cruel, revolting truth of war firsthand.

In "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge", Farquhar's illusions about the war were exposed as his unrealistic hopes of becoming a war hero were revealed. He was deceived into attempting to destroy the Owl Creek bridge, despite lacking the necessary practical skills for the mission. Farquhar failed to destroy the bridge and was immediately apprehended by the Union Army. Even as he was being executed for his crime, he remained lost in his war fantasy, envisioning a daring escape amidst a hail of bullets. The portrayal of war could be one-sided, either idealizing its glories or presenting a pessimistic view of it, as Bierce did in his other stories. What was remarkable about this narrative was how effectively it incorporated both aspects of this complicated reality.

#### **II.3.2.2. Desire for Autonomy**

In the story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" the protagonist Farquhar longed intensely throughout this tale, generally to no avail. The entire story was either focused on Farquhar being held captive by hostile soldiers, reflecting on the events that prevented him from enlisting or having a hallucinatory escape during the brief

period before he was hanged. In Part 1 he stood waiting for his death, wishing he could escape and see his family again. In the first sentences of Part 2, the narrator revealed how desperately Farquhar wished he could take part in the fight, but was unable to due to unknown circumstances. Early in Part 3, he expressed a desire to pass away by being "hanged and drowned," as opposed to being shot, which was out of his hands. He leaned forward to embrace his wife at the very end of the story but instead jerked to his death by hanging. Farquhar was never able to carry out his desires.

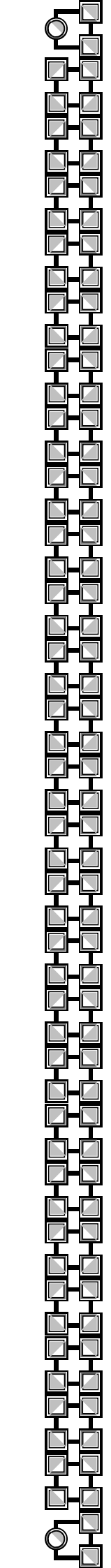
### **II.3.2.3. The Fluid Nature of Time**

This fluidity, as well as the tension between opposing concepts of time, reflects in the story's structure, which shifts from the present to the past to what is later revealed to be the imagined present. The second portion breaks up what initially seems to be a constant flow of execution taking place right now. Farquhar keeps his eyes closed as he stands on the brink of the bridge, indicating that he enters a different universe that is not constrained by the rules of time. As Farquhar's watch ticks slower and the time between each stroke keeps increasing, he enters a realm where time seems to have no significance. Nevertheless, Farquhar's attempts to control time are fruitless, and regardless of whether he lives for a few moments or several days, he will eventually succumb to death. Bierce's portrayal of Farquhar's distorted perception of time in "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is remarkable because it suggests that time's essence is somewhat subjective.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" endures as a perennial and engrossing work of short fiction that has fascinated audiences across multiple generations. Scholars have utilized historical and literary methodologies to

analyze the intricacies of the narrative, revealing its profound themes and symbolic significance. Bierce's implementation of distinctive narrative methodologies and his analysis of the human experience have substantively contributed to the sustained attraction of the narrative. The enduring examination and scrutiny of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" serves as a poignant reminder of the significant influence that literary works can exert on our comprehension of the surrounding environment.



**CHAPTER-III. Historical  
and Literary Approaches  
to the Story "A Horseman  
in The Sky."**

## **Introduction**

The literary work entitled "A Horseman in The Sky" was authored by Ambrose Bierce and made available to the public in the year 1889. The narrative is set against the backdrop of the American Civil War and delves into the overarching motifs of obligation, integrity, and allegiance. Throughout time, scholars of literature have scrutinized the narrative through diverse lenses, encompassing both historical and literary methodologies. This chapter will explore various approaches and their contribution towards illuminating the themes, symbols, and narrative techniques employed in the story. Through an analysis of the story's historical backdrop and Bierce's employment of literary devices, a more profound comprehension of the story's importance and lasting allure can be attained. By delving into historical and literary viewpoints, one can gain a deeper understanding of the enduring relevance of Bierce's narrative among contemporary readers.

### **III.1 Historical Context**

Ambrose's Civil War stories are known for their meticulous attention to detail and vivid descriptions, bringing to life the specific battles, strategies, and personal experiences of soldiers both on and off the battlefield. This includes exploring the moral choices presented by wartime situations.

To gain a better understanding of the historic context of the story, it's beneficial to review the Civil War battles that took place in Western Virginia. The story's setting could be near Grafton, where Druse informed his father of the Union regiment's arrival, and Philippi, where both Union and Confederate brigades were led by Col. Morris and Col. Porterfield, respectively. On June 3, 1861, the Union mounted a surprise two-pronged advance, catching a small Confederate occupation force at Philippi off-guard



before dawn. Although resulting in only 30 casualties, this event was considered the first major land action in the Eastern Theater.

But was it truly an act of "treason" for Virginians to join the Union instead of the Confederates? No, as the counties that now comprise West Virginia were largely under Union control, approximately 32,000 Virginians served in the Union army, while the majority of eligible Virginians (155,000) served the Confederates. The enlistment rate in Confederate Virginia was a staggering 89 percent, higher than any other state in the Confederacy. For more information, refer to Encyclopedia Virginia

Is it accurate that a soldier caught sleeping at his post could face execution? Yes, in 1861, a Union soldier named William Scott, also known as "The Sleeping Sentinel," was court-martialed and sentenced to death for dereliction of duty. However, President Lincoln granted him a pardon, extending clemency to the offender. The pardon explicitly states that it should not be seen as a precedent for future cases. It emphasizes the gravity of a sentinel's duty, which if neglected through "A Horseman in the Sky" sleeping or desertion, could jeopardize the safety of a command or even the entire army. Many nations impose the penalty of death for such offenses.

To establish clear guidelines for the conduct of Federal soldiers during wartime, President Lincoln implemented the Lieber Code in April 1863. This code laid out ethical standards for the treatment of prisoners of war and emancipated slaves.

### **III.2. Riding into History: The Background of "Horseman in the Sky"**

"Horseman in the Sky" is a short story written by Ambrose Bierce that is deeply rooted in the historical context of the American Civil War era. Bierce, who served as a Union soldier during the war, draws upon his firsthand experiences and observations

to craft a compelling narrative that reflects the challenges and complexities of the time. Through vivid descriptions of battlefronts, soldier's perspectives, and the harsh realities of war, Bierce paints a vivid picture of the historical background against which the story unfolds. Readers are transported to the tumultuous times of the Civil War, where soldiers faced daunting obstacles, made difficult choices, and grappled with the moral implications of their actions. By understanding the historical context of the Civil War and its impact on the nation, readers can gain a deeper appreciation for the rich historical background of "Horseman in the Sky"

### **III.2.1.Divided Nation, Divided Sky: The Historical Context**

The American Civil War was a time of deep division within the United States, as the Union and Confederate states were pitted against each other in a brutal conflict. The war resulted from fundamental differences in political ideologies, social structures, and economic systems, which led to a divided nation torn apart by conflicting loyalties and ideologies. This division was not limited to the land, but also extended to the sky, as aerial reconnaissance and military strategies played a crucial role in the outcome of the war. The subtitle "Divided Nation, Divided Sky" highlights how the historical context of the Civil War impacted not only the land but also the skies, setting the stage for the events that unfold in "Horseman in the Sky."

### **III.2.2. Echoes of Conflicts: Contextualizing "Horseman in the Sky"**

#### **Short Story**

The subtitle "Echoes of Conflicts: Contextualizing Horseman in the Sky Short Story" emphasizes the connection between the events of the Civil War and the themes explored in Bierce's story. The story echoes the conflicts of the time, delving into the moral complexities of war, the struggles faced by soldiers, and the impact of duty and

honor. Bierce's own experiences as a soldier inform the narrative, as he draws upon his understanding of the historical context to create a thought-provoking story. By contextualizing "Horseman in the Sky" within the broader historical context of the Civil War, readers can gain insights into the author's intentions, the historical backdrop of the story, and the relevance of its themes to the larger historical context of the era.

### **III.3.Literary elements**

#### **III.3.1. Plot**

"The Horseman in the Sky" is a tale by Ambrose Bierce, published in 1889, that centers on Carter Druse, a young man who enlists in the Union Army during the Civil War, despite his father's allegiance to the Confederacy. Positioned on a ridge overlooking a battlefield, Carter sees a rider in the distance, only to realize it's his father, now fighting for the Confederates. Torn between loyalty to his country and love for his father, Carter hesitates but ultimately chooses to spare his father's life. Unfortunately, as he does so, he is fatally shot. The story ends with a poignant revelation that Carter's father, unaware of his son's presence, was also trying to spare Carter's life. Through its exploration of duty, honor, and the complexities of war, as well as the tragic consequences of conflicting loyalties within families, the story delves into profound themes.

#### **III.3.2. Characters**

"The Horseman in the Sky" by Ambrose Bierce features several distinct characters who play important roles in the story. The main characters are:

##### **III.3.2.1. Carter Druse**

He is the protagonist of the story, a young man who joins the Union Army during the American Civil War, despite his father's loyalty to the Confederacy. Carter

is positioned on a ridge overlooking a battlefield and is faced with a moral dilemma when he spots his father, who has joined the Confederate Army. Carter struggles with conflicting loyalties and grapples with the decision to spare his father's life, ultimately resulting in tragic consequences.

### **III.3.2.2. Carter Druse's Father**

He serves as both the antagonist and a supporting character in the story. He is a Confederate soldier who is unknowingly spotted by his son, Carter, on the battlefield. He is also aiming to spare his son's life, unaware of Carter's presence. His actions and role in the story contribute to the moral conflict and emotional tension experienced by Carter.

### **III.3.2.3. Other soldiers**

There are other soldiers from both the Union and Confederate armies mentioned in the story, although they do not have significant roles or names. They serve as a backdrop to the main conflict and contribute to the overall setting and atmosphere of war.

### **III.3.3. Point of View**

The *Horseman in the Sky* by Ambrose Bierce is narrated from a third-person limited point of view. The story is told by an external narrator who is not a character in the story but has access to the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the protagonist, Carter Druse. The narrator focuses primarily on Carter's perspective and provides insight into his inner thoughts, emotions, and struggles as he navigates the moral dilemma of potentially firing upon his father on the battlefield.

The third-person limited point of view allows the reader to have a close connection with Carter and gain an understanding of his internal conflict, but it also

limits the reader's access to the thoughts and feelings of other characters in the story. The reader only has access to Carter's perceptions and interpretations of the events and other characters, which adds to the suspense and tension of the story.

The point of view chosen by Bierce in "The Horseman in the Sky" provides a subjective and intimate perspective, allowing the reader to empathize with Carter's internal struggles and moral dilemmas, while also maintaining a sense of objectivity as an external narrator observes and describes the events of the story.

### **III.4. Analysis of the story themes and symbolism**

#### **III.4.1. Themes**

"The Horseman in the Sky" by Ambrose Bierce is a gripping short story that explores themes of duty, honor, family loyalty, and the complexities of war. Through its well-crafted plot and vivid descriptions, Bierce creates a thought-provoking narrative that raises moral questions and leaves readers with a sense of reflection.

One notable aspect of the story is Bierce's use of irony and foreshadowing, which adds depth and complexity to the narrative. For example, when Carter Druse, the protagonist, first spots the rider on the battlefield, the story states, "He was not far from the Confederate picket line, and almost within rifle range of his comrades. This foreshadows the tragic turn of events that will follow, as Carter realizes that the rider is his father, fighting for the Confederacy, and he must decide whether to fire upon him.

The story also delves into the internal conflict that Carter faces, torn between his duty to his country and his love for his father. Bierce writes, "To a soldier, the violation of his oath of allegiance is a monstrous thing. In his eyes, it has no parallel in civilized warfare, it is a treachery only conceivable by demons in the semblance of

men." This quote captures Carter's internal struggle, highlighting the moral dilemma he faces as he grapples with conflicting loyalties, showcasing the complexities of war and the choices that soldiers may have to make. Bierce also portrays war as a brutal and unforgiving reality, and the story offers a stark commentary on the senselessness and futility of war. When Carter hesitates to fire upon his father, the story states, "A moment only he hesitated, then the gray eyes looked into the blue ones with that strange, indefinable gaze peculiar to those who have seen the elephant." This phrase "seeing the elephant" is a euphemism for experiencing the horrors of war, and it underscores the traumatic impact that war can have on individuals, forcing them into impossible situations. Furthermore, the story depicts the complexities of familial relationships in times of war. As Carter grapples with the decision to spare his father's life, Bierce writes, "The loving heart of the young man was filled with grief, the pitiful longing to see and speak to his father. He stretched forth his hands and cried aloud above the roar of battle, Father!" This poignant moment captures the emotional toll that war can have on families, as Carter yearns for a connection with his father despite their differing allegiances.

Bierce's writing style in "The Horseman in the Sky" is concise and descriptive, creating a vivid and somber atmosphere. Through his use of powerful imagery and evocative language, he paints a harrowing picture of the battlefield and the internal struggles of the characters. The story is filled with lines that evoke deep emotions and leave a lasting impact on readers.

In conclusion, "The Horseman in the Sky" is a compelling short story that delves into complex themes of duty, honor, family loyalty, and the complexities of war. Bierce's skillful use of irony, foreshadowing and evocative language create a

thought-provoking narrative that raises moral questions and invites readers to reflect on the human experience in times of conflict. The story serves as a poignant commentary on the senselessness of war and the profound impact it can have on individuals and families alike.

### **III.4.2. Symbolism**

"Horseman in the Sky" by Ambrose Bierce also utilizes symbolism to convey deeper meanings within the story. Here are some examples of symbolism in the story, along with relevant quotes:

The "Horseman in the Sky" The rider on horseback that Carter Druse sees on the battlefield symbolizes the conflict between duty and loyalty, as well as the harsh realities of war. As Carter aims at the rider, he realizes it is his father, representing the internal struggle he faces. The horseman serves as a symbol of the moral dilemma Carter must confront. A quote from the story that illustrates this symbolism is: "In the gray light of dawn he held the position assigned to him the previous night and stood staring now at the unsolved problem of his existence. He knew that he would soon be engaged in a battle...And his eyes, upon the dim and desolate landscape, shrank not from the foe. Here, the horseman represents the daunting challenge that Carter must face in war and the uncertainty and moral conflict that it brings.

The "Blue Sky" and "Gray Sky' The references to the blue sky and gray sky in the story symbolize the contrast between the Union (blue) and Confederate (gray) armies, as well as the conflicting loyalties that Carter and his father, as representatives of the opposing sides, grapple with. A quote from the story that illustrates this symbolism is: "He was so close to the Federal lines that he could occasionally catch sight of the blue uniforms of the enemy." Here, the blue uniforms represent the Union

Army, while Carter himself is a soldier in the Union Army. The contrast between the blue and gray colors symbolizes the divided loyalties and allegiances of the characters in the story.

The "Elephant" The mention of "seeing the elephant" in the story serves as a symbol for the traumatic and life-changing experiences of war. A quote from the story that illustrates this symbolism is: "The gray eyes looked into the blue ones with that strange, indefinable gaze peculiar to those who have seen the elephant." Here, "seeing the elephant" represents the horrors and brutality of war, and how it can deeply impact those who have experienced it. It symbolizes the psychological and emotional toll of war on the characters, including Carter and his father.

The "Ridge" The ridge overlooking the battlefield where Carter is positioned serves as a symbolic vantage point for him to observe the events of the story. It represents a heightened perspective and moral crossroads for Carter as he grapples with the decision to fire his father. A quote from the story that illustrates this symbolism is: "From his position, he could see his home, distant a half mile or so, beyond what had been the lines. He could discern the roof... He stared at the melancholy ruins, absorbed in his problem." The ridge represents Carter's elevated position both physically and morally, as he struggles with the weighty decision that he faces.

Overall, the symbolism used in "The Horseman in the Sky" adds depth and complexity to the story, enriching its themes and exploring the internal struggles and moral dilemmas faced by the characters in the war.



## **Conclusion**

To sum up, "A Horseman in The Sky" by Ambrose Bierce endures as a contemplative piece of short fiction that retains its ability to engross contemporary audiences. By scrutinizing historical and literary viewpoints, scholars have successfully analyzed the intricacies of the narrative, revealing its profound themes and symbolism. Bierce's implementation of literary techniques and his analysis of the human experience have contributed to the enduring allure of the narrative. As the analysis of "A Horseman in The Sky" persists in the future, it serves as a reminder of the potential of literature to provide comprehension and perception into the intricate matters that persist in shaping our contemporary world.



## General Conclusion

The historical and literary approaches taken towards the analysis of Ambrose Bierce's renowned short stories, "The Horseman in the Sky" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," offer a captivating and enlightening insight into the cultural and societal attitudes that prevailed during the time of their creation. Although these two narratives differ significantly in terms of plot and tone, they share a common exploration of profound themes such as sacrifice, duty, and mortality, which continue to resonate with readers across generations.

"The Horseman in the Sky" serves as a poignant reflection of the cultural attitudes that permeated the Civil War era. Set against the backdrop of a divided nation engaged in a brutal conflict, the story delves into the psychological toll that war exacts on individuals. Ambrose Bierce, drawing from his own experiences as a soldier, masterfully employs irony and symbolism to convey his message. Through vivid descriptions and haunting imagery, he portrays the sacrifices made by Confederate soldiers with a poignant and tragic undertone. Bierce's narrative compels readers to confront the weight of duty and the consequences of choices made in the midst of harrowing circumstances. It offers an intimate glimpse into the challenges faced by those caught in the throes of war, their sense of loyalty, and the personal sacrifices demanded by their convictions.

On the other hand, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" takes a surreal and mesmerizing approach to similar themes. Through a skillful blend of realism

and fantasy, Bierce invites readers into the psychological realm of the story's protagonist. This narrative can be interpreted as a profound critique of the glorification of war and a commentary on the futility of violence. By challenging the boundaries of time and perception, Bierce exposes the illusory nature of war's grandeur and confronts readers with the devastating consequences that ripple through the lives of individuals and their communities. The story's ethereal quality and thought-provoking symbolism offer a unique lens through which to contemplate the psychological impact of war and the potential for disillusionment in the face of conflict.

Both "The Horseman in the Sky" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" have rightfully earned their place as masterful works of literature, standing the test of time. They not only provide literary excellence but also offer valuable glimpses into the minds of their respective authors, shedding light on the cultural and societal attitudes prevalent during their time of creation.

Through a historical analysis, we gain a deeper appreciation for the social and cultural milieu that shaped these works. The context of the Civil War era, with its profound impact on the collective consciousness, infuses these stories with added depth and resonance. By situating ourselves within the historical landscape, we gain a heightened understanding of the prevailing attitudes, values, and conflicts that influenced the authors' perspectives and narrative choices. We gain insights into the struggles, dilemmas, and moral complexities faced by individuals during a time of immense societal upheaval.

Additionally, a literary analysis allows us to recognize and appreciate the remarkable artistry employed by Ambrose Bierce in crafting these enduring tales. By closely examining the authors' narrative techniques, stylistic choices, and use of symbolism, we unlock the intricate layers of meaning interwoven within the texts. The interplay of language, structure, and characterization reveals the authors' intentions and sheds light on the profound thematic undercurrents that continue to resonate with readers across generations. We discover the depth of Bierce's storytelling prowess and the artful ways in which he explores universal themes through the lens of his unique literary vision.

In essence, the true value of "The Horseman in the Sky" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" lies not only in their historical and cultural significance but also in their capacity to provoke thought and inspire introspection. These stories serve as mirrors to our own human condition, challenging us to contemplate the choices we face, our responsibilities, and the enduring impact of violence on both individuals and society.

By delving into the themes of sacrifice, duty, and mortality, these narratives compel us to grapple with profound existential questions that remain as relevant today as they were when the works were first penned. They invite us to reflect on our own moral obligations, the consequences of our actions, and the complexities of the human experience. In an era where societal divisions persist and conflicts continue to shape our world, the exploration of these timeless themes prompts us to critically examine the consequences of our choices and to strive for a more compassionate and peaceful existence.

In conclusion, the historical and literary approaches employed in the analysis of "The Horseman in the Sky" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" provide a rich and multi-dimensional exploration of the cultural and societal attitudes prevalent during their time of creation. These enduring works of literature offer readers a profound insight into the human experience, sparking contemplation and fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities of sacrifice, duty, and mortality. Through the intertwining of historical context and literary analysis, these stories transcend their original settings, speaking to universal themes that continue to resonate in our own lives. By immersing ourselves in the historical backdrop and delving into the intricacies of the narrative craft, we enrich our appreciation for these timeless works and their abiding relevance to the human condition.



# Works Cited

**Articles and websites :**

"American Literary Realism, 1870-1910." Vol. 19, No. 3 (Spring, 1987): 52-67.

University of Illinois Press.

1. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Analysis." Bartleby, [www.bartleby.com/essay/An-Occurrence-At-Owl-Creek-Bridge-Analysis-PJHXBSPQV](http://www.bartleby.com/essay/An-Occurrence-At-Owl-Creek-Bridge-Analysis-PJHXBSPQV).
2. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Summary and Analysis." LitCharts, [www.litcharts.com/lit/an-occurrence-at-owl-creek-bridge/summary-and-analysis](http://www.litcharts.com/lit/an-occurrence-at-owl-creek-bridge/summary-and-analysis).
3. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Symbols." LitCharts, [www.litcharts.com/lit/an-occurrence-at-owl-creek-bridge/symbols](http://www.litcharts.com/lit/an-occurrence-at-owl-creek-bridge/symbols).
4. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." Course Hero, [www.coursehero.com/lit/An-Occurrence-at-Owl-Creek-Bridge/](http://www.coursehero.com/lit/An-Occurrence-at-Owl-Creek-Bridge/).
5. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." Loashared, [https://www.loashared.s3.amazonaws.com/static/pdf/Bierce\\_Owl\\_Creek\\_Bridge.pdf](https://www.loashared.s3.amazonaws.com/static/pdf/Bierce_Owl_Creek_Bridge.pdf).
6. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." Project Gutenberg, [www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/375.txt.utf-8](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/375.txt.utf-8).
7. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." ResearchGate, [www.researchgate.net/publication/346671883\\_An\\_Occurrence\\_at\\_Owl\\_Creek\\_Bridge\\_Annotated\\_Bibliography](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/346671883_An_Occurrence_at_Owl_Creek_Bridge_Annotated_Bibliography).
8. "Time and the Wounded: The Civil War as a Time of Experience." JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/27746247](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27746247).
9. Ames, CR. "Do I Wake or Sleep? Technique as Content in Ambrose Bierce's Short Story, 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge'." *American Literary Realism*, 1987;19(3):52-67.
10. Bailey, Ted. "From Fiction to Film: Two Versions of Ambrose Bierce's 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge'." *B.A.S.: British and American Studies / Revista de Studii Britanice si Americane* 7 (2001): 166-73.
11. Berg, Gordon. "Ambrose Bierce and America's First Great War Stories." *Historynet*, 29 Mar. 2012.
12. Grant, Richard. "The Shadow of War in Ambrose Bierce's 'The Horseman in the Sky'." *War, Literature, and the Arts*, vol. 17, no. 1-2, 2005: 174-179.
13. Heller, Terry. "The Civil War and Ambrose Bierce's 'The Horseman in the Sky'." *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History, and the Philosophy of History*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1983: 287-294.
14. Kishbaugh, Joel. "Disunity in Ambrose Bierce's 'The Horseman in the Sky'." *Studies in American Fiction*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1990: 237-242.
15. Ladenburg, Thomas. *Why Do People Fight?: The causes of the Civil War*. Digital History, 1974.
16. Samide, Daniel E. "Anatomy of a Classic: Ambrose Bierce Cleverly Used Some Key Literary Tools in Crafting His Civil War Tale 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge'." *Writer*, May 2005: 42.
17. Tearle, Oliver. "A Short Analysis of Ambrose Bierce's 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge'." *Interesting Literature*, 26 Jan. 2022,



<https://interestingliterature.com/2022/01/ambrose-bierce-occurrence-owl-creek-bridge-summary-analysis/>.

18. Toth, Emily. "A Bitterness That Lingers: Ambrose Bierce's 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge'." *The Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 1/2, 2008: 61-76

**Books :**

1. Bierce, Ambrose. "A Horseman in the Sky." *Can Such Things Be?* Doubleday, Page & Company, 1912: 145-149.
2. Bierce, Ambrose. "A Horseman in the Sky." *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*. E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1917: 1-5.
3. Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge": An Annotated Critical Edition. Edited by Robert C. Evans. West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, c2003.
4. Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." *American Literature*. Edited by William E. Cain et al. Pearson, 2014: 522-526.
5. Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." *The Complete Short Stories of Ambrose Bierce*. Edited by Ernest Jerome Hopkins. University of Nebraska Press, 1984: 267-275.
6. Bierce, Ambrose. *Ambrose Bierce Civil War Stories*. Dover Publications, 1994.
7. Bierce, Ambrose. *Ambrose Bierce: The Devil's Dictionary, Tales, and Memoirs*. Edited by S.T. Joshi and David E. Schultz. Library of America, 2011.
8. Morris, Roy Jr. *Ambrose Bierce: Alone in Bad Company*. Oxford University Press, 1995.
9. Morris, Roy Jr. *The Shadows of War: Ambrose Bierce's Civil War Stories*. University of Georgia Press, 2002.
10. Neale, Walter. *Life of Ambrose Bierce*. AMS Press, 1969.
11. Ruppert, Peter. *The Inscription of Ambrose Bierce: Horrific Artistry and American Humor*. University of Delaware Press, 2011.
12. Sullivan, Walter. *Ambrose Bierce: A Biography*. Viking Press, 1992.
13. Wagenknecht, Edward, editor. *The Stories and Fables of Ambrose Bierce*. Stemmer House, Inc., 1977.

