

Week 2 Assignments

A. Understanding the social and political climate during the U.S. Civil War is crucial to understanding Ambrose Bierce's short story, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." Read the article linked below, and answer the following questions with at least 3 sentences for each response.

<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/faq/>

1. According to this article, what were the causes of the U.S. Civil War? Were there any causes mentioned with which you were unfamiliar?
2. What was responsible for two thirds of the deaths in the Civil War? Describe the medical technology available at that time.
3. Describe African-American involvement in the Civil War on both sides.
4. Considering Ambrose Bierce, the author of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" fought in the Union Army (the North) during the Civil War, how do you think he felt about Southern plantation owners like his character, Peyton Farquhar? What influence do you think Bierce's experience in the war had on him writing this story?

B. Watch the film version of “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge.” Here is a YouTube link to the film: <https://youtu.be/M7n4LeRB6js>

Note: I could only find an online version of the film with Spanish subtitles. The sign at the beginning that the subtitles obscure reads, “Order: Any civilian caught interfering with the railroad bridges, tunnels, or trains will be summarily hanged.”

After watching the film, respond to the following questions. Each response should be at least four sentences in length.

1. Compare and contrast the treatment of Farquhar in both the text and the film. Which one is more sympathetic toward him? Support your answer with details from both. Would you have been more or less sympathetic toward Farquhar if you had only seen the film version of the story? Why?
2. How accurately do you think the movie portrays the events in the story? Why?
3. How do the sights and sounds of the film add to your interpretation of the story? Please give specific examples.
4. One current issue this story and film gets us thinking about is the death penalty as a punishment for crime. Read the top 10 arguments on ProCon.org for the death penalty on here:

<http://deathpenalty.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=002000>

Choose a position on this issue. Write at least two paragraphs arguing your side. Support your opinion using information from this website or any other reliable resource you find.