

An occurrence at owl creek bridge by ambrose bierce essay

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"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is one of the best American short narratives and is considered Ambrose Bierce's greatest work. First published in Bierce's short narrative aggregation "Tales of Soldiers and Civilians" in 1891, this narrative is about Peyton Farquhar, a southern husbandman who is about to be hanged by the Union Army for seeking to put the railway p at Owl Creek on fire. While Farquhar is standing on the p with a rope around his cervix, Bierce leads the reader to believe that the rope catches and he falls into the river, and so makes an astonishing flight and eventually returns to his farm, to be reunited with his married woman. However, the stopping of the narrative is wholly different. In fact, Farquhar is hanged and these imaginings take topographic point seconds before his decease. Ambrose Bierce's fast one stopping succeeds because of the manner he manipulated the text by altering the narrative point of position from one type to another. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is divided into three subdivisions, with each subdivision holding a different narrative signifier.

In the first subdivision, the writer uses dramatic narrative: the narrative is told by no 1. With the disappearing of the storyteller, the reader is now the direct and immediate informant to the unfolding play. The reader views the work from the exterior. In the beginning of this narrative the readers are informed of all the readyings for a adult male about to be hanged: the set up for the hanging, the characters involved and the milieus. The storyteller gives an unbelievable and beautiful snapshot of the scene depicting the H2O, the guards, and his restraints. "...Vertical in forepart of the left shoulder, the cock rested on the forearm thrown sound across the chest- a formal and unnatural position" (Bierce pg. 90, line 10) .

This type of narrative is the least personal and the reader receives the least information on the character's ideas and feelings. Although the writer describes inside informations. the reader has to make full the spaces as to what actions and events lead up to the state of affairs. The ground for this type of narrative in the first subdivision of the narrative is to acquire the readers wonder traveling. One wonders what Peyton Farquhar could hold done to be hanged ; was he entirely in what he did. why is he involved in a military issue when he is a civilian?

In paragraph six and seven and through the 2nd subdivision. the writer changes his point of position to one which is 3rd individual omniscient: all knowing. The all-knowing storyteller is non a character in the narrative and is non involved with what happens. He imposes his presence between the reader and the narrative and controls all the events. From an outside point of position. the storyteller provides adequate information to sum up. interpret and admiration. As the narrative evolves. the reader begins to read ideas of the characters: Farquhar. his married woman and the soldiers. The reader becomes involved in Farquhar's life as the storyteller summarizes his state of affairs. The reader is told of him being a plantation owner and having slaves. that he is a secessionist and devoted to the Southern cause.

However. the storyteller leads the reader to believe Farquhar and his married woman are sort people. she fetched the H2O for the soldier to imbibe with her " own white hands" (Bierce pg. 92. line 15) alternatively of telling one on her coloured slaves to make it. Farquhar's rules and devotedness towards the South is explained in this subdivision and the

reader gets to cognize who he truly is. This makes the reader feel sympathetic towards him and his married woman. The intent of the all-knowing storyteller in the 2nd subdivision is to give information of the characters and to acquire a glance into Farquhar's life. The reader finds out how devoted his married woman is to her hubby. The reader can now associate to Farquhar and understand how and why he got caught seeking to destruct the p.

Section three is intended to make suspense. Bierce wants the reader to believe that what is being described really happens. In order for the reader to believe that what is being described is really going on, the narrative must be narrated from the character's point of position (limited omniscient point of position). With a limited omniscient point of position, the storyteller limits his or her ability to perforate the head of a individual character. The reader may be shown the character's voice, feelings and ideas through dialogue, soliloquy or watercourse of consciousness. As a consequence, the reader becomes more and more straight involved in construing the narrative.

By utilizing this point of position all of what Farquhar is going through seems so existent. The advantages of the limited all-knowing point of position are the stringency of focal point and control that it provides. If the 3rd subdivision was told in an all-knowing point of position, the writer would not have been able to gull the reader, for he would have " seen " what was truly going on. Seeing the whole action and cognizing the soldier's ideas would have given away the stopping.

“ An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” was written in three different subdivisions. with each holding a different narrative signifier. The first. utilizing dramatic point of position. depict where the action takes topographic point. The 2nd. all-knowing point of position lets the reader comprehend the victim’s ideas and actions. And eventually. the 3rd subdivision. limited all-knowing point of position creates suspense by being merely in one head. With the ability to exchange from one signifier to another. Bierce was able to make a narrative of machination. fascination and a twist-ending.