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Bakalářská práce

Short stories of the American Civil War

Povídky o americké občanské válce

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis will explore through literary fiction (specifically the genre of the short story) the history of the Civil War in the United States (1861-1865). The majority of the authors come from the north, and in the case of Ambrose Bierce, one served with distinction in combat for the Union forces. Both the experience of soldiers as well as the effect on the country (wives and children of soldiers, the slaves in the south, the civilian population etc.) will be examined and analyzed. The introduction will include an overview of the Civil War itself, with particular emphasis on the historical events depicted in the fiction under analysis.

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce prozkoumá historii občanské války ve Spojených státech (1861 – 1865) prostřednictvím literární fikce (konkrétně povídkového žánru). Většina autorů pochází ze severu, stejně jako Ambrose Bierce, který za boj na straně Unie získal vyznamenání. Budou zkoumány a analyzovány jak zkušenosti vojáku, tak dopad na celou společnost (manželky a děti vojáků, otroci jihu, civilní obyvatelstvo atd.). Úvod bude obsahovat přehled samotné občanské války se zvláštním důrazem na historické události zobrazené v analyzované fikci.

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1. Introduction

The American Civil War is indisputably the most influential event in American history. Although it was the bloodiest war which the United States have ever experienced, its impact on the society was huge. It is proved by fact that after more than one hundred fifty years; people remain this event and it is still deeply discussed topic.

This war did not influence only the society, its impact over culture and especially literature was tremendous. The post-war literature portrayed this event in many ways. Essays, memories of veterans, and histories were published during years thereafter. The Civil War meant a major change in direction for fiction.

The Real War Will Never Get in the Books.

(Whitman in Owens, 2006, ix)

Fortunately, many American authors that had experienced the war on their own or were born few years after it took on the Civil War as a theme for their works. In contrast with pre-war writers, they depicted the war in more a realistic way which does not glorify the battles and service as of soldiers. This bachelor thesis concentrates on showing how the Civil War is represented in stories by different authors.

The first chapter of this thesis provides historical background of the Civil War about which stories are based. The first part explains the reason of the conflict, differences between the South and the North. Then it briefly describes the process and the end of the war. In addition, it summarizes the consequences on society, racial question and American's thinking caused by the war. The second part shows the impact of the Civil War on American literature. Explaining the meaning of the war. The idealization in fictional literature in pre-war period showed slavery unrealistically but how Civil War changed it in the realistic description because of the war. It also changes the topic of the fiction; the post-war stories usually did not show the big battles in general but depict individuals and families and how they were affected by the war.

The second part contains analysis of short stories of the Civil War. It contains authors from the North as well as from the South. Ambrose Bierce, Union veteran of the

Civil War, is definitely the most famous authors of the Civil War stories so the thesis includes analysis of two stories "An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge" and "Chickamauga" which are partially based on his own remembered experiences. The next short story is "Riposte in Tertio" from William Faulkner who won the Nobel Prize in Literature. This story depicted a Southern family during the war. The women whose husbands were in the battles constitute the main topic of "The War Widow" written by Harold Frederic. African American writer Charles W. Chesnutt in his "Cicely's dream" describes the life of people from color-line during the war and immediate post war, early Reconstruction Era.

1.1 The history of the Civil War

The American Civil War, also known as War Between the States, took place between 1861 and 1865 and these four years came into history as the bloodiest era that America has ever experienced. This conflict was a culmination of tensions between northern and southern states which had been lasting for decades. Because of different opinions on serious questions, eleven southern states separated from the rest and formed the Confederate States of America.

There were differences in the economy of northern and southern states. While the North invested in modernization and industrialization and agriculture was limited to small farms, the Southern economy constituted big plantation estates that were growing crops and the labor war based on slavery. The issue of slavery and territorial politics was the heart of the conflict that start the Civil War.

Expansion into the West brought the question whether the newly formed states choose the South or the North politics i.e., if they had slavery. The best-known case is "Bleeding Kansas" when the decision about the settling of the state was accompanied by battles between enemy groups. In the middle of the century, the number of Northerners who were against slavery increased, it meant concern for people in the South because their economy was based on slavery. After the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, southern states created a new country: the Confederate States of America.

The Union planned to get the separated states back. However, on 12th April 1861 the Confederate Army opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbour, South Carolina. This incident showed that peace talks were impossible which resulted in the war. The number of soldiers of the Union Army was bigger but the Confederate Army had the advantage of experience with fighting on their own territory and better generals. Moreover, southern soldiers were fighting for their traditions.

In the first year, it seemed that Confederation Army was going to win. The first encounter of both armies was the Battle of Bull Run which stopped the Union Army, and this victory was followed by the next successes. Despite this fact, they did not cross the frontier to Union territory. The biggest failure for the South was the Battle of Gettysburg

which lasted for three days. As Union gains over the Confederate Army become overwhelming, southern slaves were freed because of the Emancipation Proclamation. Due to this document, many freed slaves joined the Union Army. The Confederation began to fade, moreover, they lacked supplies and soldiers. In 1864 the Union Army attacked the Confederation from all sides. The last and determinative battle was the Battle of Five Forks. On 9th April 1865 the Confederation capitulate, and this day is known as the last official day of the war, when Confederate Commanding General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant.

American Civil War resulted in the political union in the United States. The main result was the emancipation of enslaved people which of course did not mean legal equality. States of one-time Confederation still oppress Blacks by their laws. The Civil war began the fight for racial equality which has been continuing up to now. On the other hand, these successes are the result of the bloodiest event which caused a large number of casualties and dashed everyone's hope about the life of peace.

1.2 Civil War and American literature

The American Civil War was not only a new beginning for America with economical and industrial expansion, but it also meant a change in American literature. In the beginning, the war seemed like an opportunity for a change, and from a distance, people saw it romantically as glory for fighting men.

In April 1861, neither side, North or South thought that the conflict between the Confederate States of America and the Union would last four years and become the bloodiest event in American history. After the attack on Fort Sumter, men began to join the Army. They had a naive vision about where they were going. During the war, people were losing their ideals about the glory of war. It permeated every aspect of living. Men were killed in the battles or came back home injured, and women had to replace men in working to sustain family life.

The Civil War was the first war conflict captured in photos. Mathew Brady exhibited his black and white photographs from the Antietam in 1862 which attracted many people. It was the first time that people saw photos of the battle. *The New York Times* observed "Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it" (Hassler, Weber, Jennifer, 2022). People were aware of the brutality of the war and the romantic heroic vision of it was over and the literature reacted to this reality! The literary movement of realism was born.

The Civil War is a line in American literature that divided it into literature before the Civil War and after it and it is logical. The devastation of the Civil War cast doubt upon life's value and meaning of family, it also affected people religiously. The first half of the nineteenth century was about transcendentalism which in brief consisted on *the belief in the essential unity of all creation* (Britannica, 2021). The thought about goodness and unity of all people was ruined by sheer violence of the war the war and so this movement was replaced by Realism which showed all aspects (not only of the war) as they truly were. In the period before the war, and some Southerners after the war, some authors had a

tendency to write about the past with sentiment, but these works were the slow way to realism.

Ambrose Bierce defines realism as “the art of depicting nature as it is seen by toads. The charm suffusing a landscape painted by a mole, or a story written by a measuring worm” (Gray, 2012, 224) Initially, there was a tendency to stop using romanticism and fully replace it with realism. The sentiment and symbols which are typical of romanticism should not have been accepted anymore. Many authors perceived realism as a superficial description where everything is clear. For example, W. D. Howells was finding the right fictional techniques, but it was always characterized by the directness of the journalist or historian (Gray, 2012, 260). On the other hand, there is Ambrose Bierce, who kept the realistic line and connect it with psychology. In his works, readers get the natural description of war events and also have the opportunity to know what is going on inside the protagonist’s head. Bierce’s stories are typical of the balance between reality and dream.

Many articles and testimonies were written about the Civil War as well as fictional stories. Walt Whitman claimed: “*A great literature will yet arise out of the era of those four years*” (Hassler, Weber, Jennifer, 2022), and he was right. More than 60 000 books about the Civil War were published. The Civil War became the subject of literature for many decades. Authors who were writing before the Civil War were the first who react to it. Walt Whitman has the section “Drum-Taps” dedicated to the civil war in their famous collection of poetry *Leaves of Grass*. From the South, it is Henry Timrod who wrote the poem “Ode on the Confederate Death”. These authors wrote in a way to justify the Confederacy’s view. There were also authors whose stories seemed as a testify and depicted the absurdity and the brutality of the war. Ambrose Bierce and Stephen Crane belong to these authors. Ambrose Bierce participated in the war, so he drew from his own experiences, while Stephen Crane was born after the civil war, and it only shows that the Civil War also affected the next generations.

One of the favourite formats for describing the war was the short story genre. It did not describe huge battles in general, but it showed war from the point of view of one soldier. These stories were not only about soldiers, but they also showed civilians during

and after the war. Among Civil War writers also belong those who use fictional stories to criticize the politics after the Civil War which still did not solve problems about race equality. For example, Charles W. Chesnutt wrote about the situation of the color line, and his Civil War will be adressed.

2. Ambrose Bierce – “An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge”

“An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge” is one of the best-known stories Ambrose Bierce wrote, and it has been called by many his masterpiece. It firstly appeared in *San Francisco Examiner* in 1890 and one year later it was published with other stories in his book *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*.

This story displays Bierce’s unsentimental, realistic description of war from an individual civilian’s point of view, not just as an external event. It shows what could happen to an individual at the edge of a battle zone. Bierce creatively uses the individual’s mental experiences.

“An Occurrence at the Owl Bridge” has its important place in American literature. It was an inspiration for many American authors. For example, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” by Ernest Hemingway or “Pincher Martin” by William Golding owe much to Ambrose Bierce’s story (Gale, 2001, 210). For its aesthetic goals, the story was film filmed by the director Robert Enrico in 1962.

Kurt Vonnegut comments the brilliance of this story in his book *A Man Without a Country*:

And I consider anybody a twerp who hasn't read the greatest American short story, which is 'Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,' by Ambrose Bierce. It isn't remotely political. It is a flawless example of American genius, like 'Sophisticated Lady' by Duke Ellington or the Franklin stove.

(Vonnegut, 2005, 7)

Bierce is known for using his own experiences for his fictional stories and this story is not an exception. The plot is set in northern Alabama which is written at the beginning but there is no mention of the year.

A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama [...]

(Bierce, 1994, 33)

Bierce knew Alabama very well. First, he was there with the Ninth Indiana Battalion repairing the railroad along the Tennessee and Alabama line in June and July 1862. Then, in 1864, as a topographic engineer and after the war he visited many places in Alabama

due to his work as a treasury agent. Bierce usually wrote about the time when he was in the place of the story yet, in this case, it is not obvious. The original version began with *“One morning in the summer of 1862 a man stood upon a railroad bridge in Northern Alabama”* (Owens, 2006, 49). Moreover, there is a reference to the fall of Corinth, Mississippi in October 1862, which puts the story into a historical and geographical context and was essentially fought over control of railroad lines.

Eric Solomon comments that aspect of “the personal quality of his witness” connecting with I-wondered-if-that-really-happened? reaction (Owens, 2006, 2) of Bierce’s short war stories *“is that in each he manages to evoke the feeling of reality, the sense of fact and place that makes war not an abstract moral condition but a concrete physical actuality* (Owens, 2006, 2-3).” Daniel Arron also emphasises the sense of place: *“thanks to an almost uncanny visual sense cultivated by the wartime duties as topographical engineer, he managed to fix his in his mind the terrain he had traversed and to map his stories and sketches so that the reader can visualize every copse or ravine or stream he mentions”* (Owens, 2006, 3).

The story is divided into 3 short sections, each showing a different side of Farquhar’s person. The first one described Farquhar realistically, as a man about to be executed. No details about him are provided. From the text, a reader does not find out the man’s name, and his job is established only from his clothes. The information given in this part is only the narrator’s estimates.

His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well fitting frock coat. He wore a moustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark gray, and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp.

(Bierce, 1994, 34)

This section describes the moment before the man’s execution. Firstly from the narrator’s point of view and then from Farquhar’s view. Narrator stops the real-time in the most critical moment to comment on the background of the protagonist.

The sergeant stepped aside.

(Bierce, 1994, 34)

The second section does not follow the previous one and does not continue in relating the plot. This part works as a flashback and brings the view to the moment when the man has decided to go to the bridge. Moreover, it shows personal information about the hanged man's name. The important information is his conviction and his perception of war.

The story is about a man Peyton Farquhar, southern plantation owner. Bierce described him as *"a slave owner and [...] ardently devoted to the Southern cause [...] civilian who was at heart a soldier (Bierce, 1994, 35)."* Farquhar was not a soldier, but he wanted to be. As every man in the South, he dreamt about how he contributed to the South. Although he could be perceived as a hero because of what he wanted to do, Bierce delineated him as a romantic with mistaken vision of the war. The irony of Farquhar's thoughts is evident in the fact, that he is disappointed that he is not part of the unsuccessful Army.

Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with the gallant army that had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth.

(Bierce, 1994, 35)

This part also explains why Peyton Farquhar had to be executed. He was *"longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction (Bierce, 1994, 36)."* A soldier stopped at the Farquhar's farm during his way and mentioned the Owl Creek Bridge.

"The Yanks are repairing the railroads," said the man, "and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek bridge, put it in order and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels or trains will be summarily hanged. I saw the order." [...] "Suppose a man—a civilian and student of hanging—should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel," said Farquhar, smiling, "what could he accomplish?"

(Bierce, 1994, 35-36)

The Civil War was the first war in which railroads played a role. It was the major form of supplying. Strategy of sabotage a bridge is usual in war. People try to destroy the bridge or railroad in case to slow down the enemy's Army. Farquhar believed to the

soldier's speech and decided to sabotage the Owl Creek Bridge to be useful in this war. The grey-glad soldier, who pretends to be a Confederate soldier, was a Union spy.

The third section came back to Farquhar and the situation at the Owl Creek Bridge. The narrator does not tell the story objectively anymore. He fully uses the man's subjective perspective. Man's perspective is based on his not always logical feelings and thoughts. Just as in the first section the style of description is very straightforward and seems like a set of facts which makes these thoughts appear realistic. In the story, incredible things happen one after another and the reader does not have time to think about what is really happening or what is Farquhar's imagination although the description of his escape is full of supernatural things such as his ultra-detailed perception. The fact of unreality is intensified by subjective never-ending time. *"The man in the water saw the eye of the man on the bridge gazing into his own through the sights of the rifle"* (Bierce, 1994,38).

Also, a shift in tense is employed to heighten the reality of man's fantasy. The story is narrated in past tense and then it is changed into the present tense in the penultimate paragraph. The plot backs up to his last thoughts about his wife which are mentioned in the first section.

He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine. He must have traveled the entire night. As he pushes open the gate and passes up the wide white walk, he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife [...] He springs forwards with extended arms. As he is about to clasp her he feels a stunning blow upon the back of the neck; a blinding white light blazes all about him with a sound like the shock of a cannon—then all is darkness and silence!

(Bierce, 1994, 40)

The last sentence *"Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek Bridge"* (Bierce, 1994,40) destroys any romantic illusion about Farquhar's successful escape.

A combination of the sense of horror and irony is typical for Bierce's Civil War stories. In "A Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge" it is in the level of Farquhar's naive vision of the war and his heroic act. Indeed, the biggest irony is that he was executed at the bridge which should have been a proof of his courage.

Although this story belongs to realistic stories, it could be considered a psychological story. Bierce uses the real situation to describe the function of the human mind in extreme situations. He was also interested in the dying, not in death but the moment before it. Both these motifs are in this story. Farquhar is waiting for being executed and it affects his control over reality. The collision of reality can be understood at two levels: the main protagonist's storyline, and the reader's impression. Man's romantic image of the war, him as a hero who is useful to the South caused him to be taken in by the soldier's talk about the opportunity to burn the bridge and so to slow down the Union Army. He was so impressed by it that he lost the vigilance and did not recognize the Union spy. The fact that he was deceived and would be hanged is shocking for him, and did not want to lose hope and still thought about the escape. The man was deceived by a soldier as the reader by the narrator. The reader did not doubt that the story is true and did not take illogical circumstances into consideration. At this point, the man's subjective perspective was limited by what he heard or saw, and his narrative was only his thoughts. Everything objective was told by the narrator as a spectator. In the third section, the whole plot is told by man's experiences and the reader believes in the narration of the terrified prisoner. The only objective information is the first sentence "*As Peyton Farquhar fell straight downward through the bridge, he lost consciousness and was as one already dead*" (Bierce, 1994, 36). which shows the end of the story, but the reader still believes Farquhar has fallen into the stream and escaped. The last paragraph "Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge." brings the reader to the reality and to the realization that he was deceived by something unreal.

3. Ambrose Bierce – “Chickamauga”

Another famous short story by Ambrose Bierce is “Chickamauga”. Just as “An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge”, this story was firstly published in *San Francisco Examiner* in 1889 and was also included in the collection of Bierce’s short stories collection *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*.

The backdrop for this story is the one of the last major battles of the Civil War, The Battle of Chickamauga. The battle in northwest Georgia and southern Tennessee, which took place on September 19-20, 1863, was one of the bloodiest episodes of the Civil War. It meant the last major victory for the Confederate Army but as well as it resulted in 34 000 uniformed casualties on both sides.

Ambrose Bierce participated in the Battle of Chickamauga and as he wrote: “*When I ask myself what has become of Ambrose Bierce the youth, who fought at Chickamauga. I am bound to answer that he is dead. Some little of him survives in my memory, but many of him are absolutely dead and gone*” (Bierce in Aaron, 1973, 182). This experience influenced him not only in his personal life but also in was one of the major motifs in his fiction-writing career. Bierce described it in the essay *A Little Chickamauga* in 1898 which is his personal testimony about this battle. He used his own experience to write a fiction from different point of view. Bierce commented an another short story “What I Saw of Shiloh” which can similarly be applied to the case of “Chickamauga”: “*This is the simple story of a battle; such a tale as may be told by a soldier who is no writer to a reader who is no soldier*” (Bierce in Owens, 2006, ix).

The short story “Chickamauga” is about a young boy, about six years old, whose “*spirit, in bodies of its ancestors, had for thousands of years been trained to memorable feats of discovery and conquest*” (Bierce, 1994, 41). This little boy played like he was a soldier and dreamt about famous battles and victories. His father’s was a soldier and had a pictures and books about war. This all was the only experience the boy had with the war. Ambrose Bierce described this glorifying of war and the fact that in every boy there is a spirit of fighter.

These battle yarns, indeed, are nursing a baby war, which now lies mouthing its fat knuckles and marking time with its pinky feet, in a cradle of young imaginations, but

in another decade it will be striding through the land in seven-language boots, chewing soap.

(Bierce in Blume, 2004, 127)

This little boy with naive ideas about the war could be a representative of many young Americans who went to fight voluntarily knowing only the romantic description about the war which was about big victories but not mention a brutality connected with war. The thought that people are not afraid to something they have never experienced is proved by the scene in "Chickamauga".

Suddenly he saw before him a strange moving object which he took to be some large animal--a dog, a pig--he could not name it; perhaps it was a bear. He had seen pictures of bears, but knew of nothing to their discredit and had vaguely wished to meet one.

(Bierce, 1994, 42)

This theory approves description of the story as an allegory, which Woodruff explains in the Blume's book.

Bierce is not finally concerned with the pathos of the child himself or even with the horrors of war, but the main insight Bierce seeks to communicate through "Chickamauga" is that the child carries in him the same instinctive forces and impulses which send the wounded soldiers crawling crazily through the forest and which demolish the world.

(Woodruff in Blume, 2004, 125)

The little boy was playing with his handmade weapon that he was chasing the enemy when he got to the stream, and he knew he should have gone home but the desire to win his imaginative battle was stronger and the fighter won against the child. He did not manage to "*curb the lust for the war, nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star*" (Bierce, 1994, 42). He was scared by a rabbit and then lost in the forest where he fell asleep. When he was sleeping, one of the biggest battles of the Civil War took place in the immediate proximity to him. Meanwhile Armies were fighting, the situation around the boy is describing in opposite very calmly.

The wood birds sang merrily above his head; the squirrels, whisking their bravery of tail, ran barking from tree to tree, unconscious of the pity of it, and somewhere far away was a strange, muffled thunder, as if the partridges were drumming in celebration of nature's victory over the son of her immemorial enslavers. And back

at the little plantation, where white men and black were hastily searching the fields and hedges in alarm, a mother's heart was breaking for her missing child.

(Bierce, 1994, 42)

It could be understood that the nature is an enemy in this case, and nature won when it took the boy from his family, as well as men were lost in the war and might have never gone back to their families.

After the little boy woke up, he saw the wounded soldiers after the battle. It is the first time the reader does not see the world from the child's point of view.

A thin, ghostly mist rose along the water. It frightened and repelled him; instead of recrossing, in the direction whence he had come, he turned his back upon it, and went forward toward the dark inclosing wood. Suddenly he saw before him a strange moving object which he took to be some large animal [...] But something in form or movement of this object [...] told him that it was not a bear, and curiosity was stayed by fear. He stood still and as it came slowly on gained courage every moment, for he saw that at least it had not the long menacing ears of the rabbit. [...] To right and to left were many more; the whole open space about him were alive with them [...] They were men. [...] The man sank upon his breast, recovered, flung the small boy fiercely to the ground as an unbroken colt might have done, then turned upon him a face that lacked a lower jaw--from the upper teeth to the throat was a great red gap fringed with hanging shreds of flesh and splinters of bone.

(Bierce, 1994, 42-44)

This description should seem as exaggerated in order to shock readers into the reality of war though this description of moments after the battle. Ambrose Bierce based it on his own experiences from in the Union Army. Many veterans had the same memories, for example Colonel William Averell described his experience from the battle of the Malvern Hill on 1st July 1862, and it is similar to what Bierce wrote in "Chickamauga". Michael W. Schaefer quoted his memory in his book.

All that night, from his post atop the hill, Averell says, he heard the scream of the wounded who'd fallen on the slopes in the day's fighting and had not yet been removed, but the situation's full horror did not reveal itself until dawn. Looking down the hill at first light, Averell saw that "dead and wounded men were on the ground in every attitude of distress. A third of them were dead, but enough were alive and moving to give to the field a singular crawling effect."

(Schaefer, 1976, 16-17)

On the other hand, Schaefer in his study compare these two statements and although the Bierce's description is real, there are differences in the way they presented

it. Bierce's description is full of details which evoke terrifying feelings in readers, whilst Averell used simple language and describe only what he really saw without any expressive words. This difference shows the line between reality and realism which uses the reality and makes it meaningful (Schaefer, 1976, 17).

Ambrose Bierce did not use only horror descriptions to show the absurdity of the war. He also used the humor and irony which in this story is obvious in contrast to the little boy and wounded soldiers. He was afraid of the rabbit, but the wooden soldiers seemed like clowns. The most ironic scene is the fact that these soldiers were dying, and the little boy was playing with them as he was used to play with the slave on their farm. It is a great example of matching a reader's benign unawareness of the war and the brutal reality of it. These aspects do not make this story less realist. The story is described from child's point of view and the innocent child is not aware of the dark side of the war.

He had seen his father's negroes creep upon their hands and knees for his amusement--had ridden them so, "making believe" they were his horses. He now approached one of these crawling figures from behind and with an agile movement mounted it astride. The man sank upon his breast [...] then turned upon him a face that lacked a lower jaw--from the upper teeth to the throat was a great red gap fringed with hanging shreds of flesh and splinters of bone.

(Bierce, 1994, 43-44)

The story "Chickamauga" shows that the war knows no boundaries. It depicts the soldiers who were boys dreaming about the glory of war. The realistic writing of Ambrose Bierce also includes civilians in order to show that the men fighting in battles were not the only one who were affected by the war. In this story civilian loss appears when the boy found his mother's dead body.

There, conspicuous in the light of the conflagration, lay the dead body of a woman--the white face turned upward, the hands thrown out and clutched full of grass, the clothing deranged, the long dark hair in tangles and full of clotted blood. The greater part of the forehead was torn away, and from the jagged hole the brain protruded, overflowing the temple, a frothy mass of gray, crowned with clusters of crimson bubbles--the work of a shell.

(Bierce, 1994, 46)

This scene could be also perceived as a metaphor for soldier's homecoming. If soldiers did not die in battle, there was no certainty if they even have a home, or if their family is still alive.

Although Bierce uses detailed description of wounded soldiers or the surrounding area, he used only the initial information about the boy and his family. Readers do not know his condition and the biggest reversal is that the boy is a deaf-mute. This fact, Bierce mentions only at the end of whole story. Davidson believes that this the ending twist has a purpose.

The mature narrator knew of the child's handicap all along. Our "friend and confident", the explaining narrator, has duped us. Of course, that is the point. Texts lie. Books deceive. The reader who takes them at the face value, unquestioningly, is no smarter than the child perusing his picture books on war, and, by extension, is susceptible to the tragic fate endured by that child. The child's anguished cry is the author's cry. For Bierce, the child is father to the man – and that means you, mon semblable, mon frère.

(Davidson in Blume, 2004, 127)

4. William Faulkner – “Riposte in Tertio”

The short story “Riposte in Tertio” is one of the stories which William Faulkner wrote between 1934 and 1938. This story first appeared in the magazine *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1936 and originally was titled “The Unvanquished” but the name was changed when it was published as a book with a similar name. The collection of seven short stories *The Unvanquished* was published in February 1938 and in many sources, it is considered a novel although every single chapter could be read as a story on its own. This collection is centered on the Civil War era which is the main topic of many works of William Faulkner, for example, *Absalom, Absalom!*.

William Faulkner started writing as a teenage boy and his first works were poems, His first two novels were *Soldier’s Pay* and *Mosquitoes* but they were not successful and perhaps he would never have written anything else if Sherwood Anderson, Faulkner’s friend, did not give him advice which probably changed the way of Faulkner’s writing.

“[...] Because one place to start from is just as important as any other. You’re a country boy, all you know is that little patch up there in Mississippi where you started from. But that’s all right too. It’s America too; pull it out, as little and unknown as it is, and the whole thing will collapse, like when you prize a brick out of a wall”.

(Anderson in Richardson, 1964, 15)

Faulkner listened to what Anderson was advising and portrayed his homeland in his next novel *Sartoris* (1929) and situated it in a fictional country Yoknapatawpha, Northern Mississippi. Although this country is fictional as well as its inhabitants of it, the geographical setting included real places. It had a similar position as the Lafayette Country, Mississippi. This novel was the beginning of a Faulkner’s saga of Yoknapatawpha Country which depicted the time from before the Civil War to two generation after that war and its impact of it on the South.

Just as the place where the story takes place, Yoknapatawpha Country, the next important part of Faulkner’s writing are families which relate to this fictional country and cross the boundaries of individual books. One of these families is the multigenerationed Sartoris which first appear in the novel of the same name which continues in other Faulkner’s novels. Members of this family play a principal role in *The Unvanquished*, but

they appear in other Faulkner's works, such as *The Hamlet*, *The Town*, "A Rose for Emily", and many others. William Faulkner himself admitted that *Sartoris* was the beginning of his most productive period.

"Beginning with Sartoris I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it."

(Faulkner in Kinney, 1989, 1)

The Unvanquished is about the Civil War era but the stories do not describe battles and soldiers but the war from a civilian's point of view. These civilians fight the enemy, the Northern "Yankees", in a different way. The story is told by Bayard Sartoris who was maturing during all stories. In a simplified way, the war is described from his perspective regarding how the war changed his thoughts. It was not about the glory and enemies were not monsters but normal men. His dad was a colonel and was fighting in the war, while young Bayard lived with his grandmother Rosa Millard. They lost their house, silver, and slaves when the "Yankees" attacked their plantation and burnt it down to the ground. Rosa wanted their properties back, so she travelled across the country to the Union Army. The "Yankees" had troubles with freed slaves. Rosa got orders for mules, silver, and slaves which Rosa sold. Rosa and Bayard's friend Ringo used this order to get extra horses. This cheat began a strategy on how to both get money and thereby weaken the enemy. Granny Rosa and Ringo were falsifying orders to confiscate mules from one detachment of Union and sell them to another.

The mule swindle is depicted in the short story "Riposte in Tertio" in which the operation at a certain point did not work out successfully and the Union Army apprehended them. Yet it did not stop Rosa and she wanted to swap mules for one last time. This time, it was not with the Army but with a group of ex- Confederates named Grumby and Rosa was killed by them.

Although the main story of *The Unvanquished* is about Bayard Sartoris, in the "Riposte in Tertio" he stands in the background, and it focuses on Rosa. She was an important figure in the story and of course, in Bayard's life. She had an impact on his existence. Granny is not the only important women which influenced Bayard. Faulkner commented on the aspect that a man is heavily influenced by an older woman.

“...some men are improved by women. I don't think that I would make any generalization about an opinion of women – some of the best people are women, and I'm inclined to think that every young man should know one old woman, that they can talk more sense – they'd be good for any young man – well, an old aunt, or an old teacher, just listen to”.

(Yokozawa, 1991,33)

Granny was involved in the mules swapping with Yankees by falsification and she played the main role in this swindle. She acted determinately to take care of her own family financially and to other poor people, white and black, who are negatively impacted by the war, she distributed them money and mules. In this way, she could be looked like Robin Hood. Ab Snopes was aware of her ability and successfulness.

I done already admitted I can't hold a candle to you when it comes to getting mules; maybe I can't compete with you when it comes to selling them.

(Faulkner, 1991,95)

The lieutenant who caught her was aware of her strength and it is obvious when he spoke with her *as men to men* (Faulkner, 1991,113). Despite of mentioning her strength, repeatedly mentioned her weak physical appearance.

[...] her arm didn't feel any bigger than a pencil [...]

(Faulkner, 1991, 104)

From this non-military group, she alone was the one who traded with Yankees. For dealing she used features that are typical for women so that nobody would not suspect an old woman of a big swindle. These features are typical of a trickster figure which appears in mythology and religion of all cultures.

Today the trickster survives as a character archetype, although not necessarily a supernatural or divine figure. He or she is usually depicted as a clever, mischievous person or creature, who tries to survive the dangers and challenges of the world using trickery and deceit as a defense.”

(newworldencyclopedia.org)

A trickster could be found in literature all around the world. In this story, it is a Granny Rosa, but for Czech literature the most famous one is a soldier Švejk. Tricksters often appear in cartoons, for example, Bugs Bunny. The trickster also acts as if he or she knows nothing, this is strictly what Granny Rosa was doing in the story.

I don't know what are you talking about,' Granny said. 'I have no mules except this team I am driving. And my name is Rosa Millard. I am on my way home beyond Jefferson.'

(Faulkner, 1991, 104)

When the soldiers of the Union Army found Rosa and the boys, the worst fact for the lieutenant was that their army was defrauded by old women and children.

"You have been using cast-off band-saw bands for traces, hey? I'd rather engage Forrest's whole brigade every morning for six months than spend that same length of time trying to protect United States property from defenseless Southern women and niggers and children. Defenseless!" he shouted. "Defenseless! God help the North if Davis and Lee had ever thought of the idea of forming a brigade of grandmothers and nigger orphans, and invading us with it!"

(Faulkner, 1991, 112-113)

The figure of Granny is a trickster, but she is the only one aware of their wrongdoing. For this reason she still visited the church and distributed money there. She also asked others to pray for her. In her confession she explained why she had to do that.

I have sinned. I have stolen, and I have borne false witness against my neighbor, though that neighbor was an enemy of my country. And more than that, I have caused these children to sin. I hereby take their sins upon my conscience. [...] But I did not sin for gain or for greed. I did not sin for revenge. I defy You or anyone to say I did. I sinned first for justice. And after that first time, I sinned for more than justice; I sinned for the sake of food and clothes for Your own creatures who could not help themselves--for children who had given their fathers, for wives who had given their husbands, for old people who had given their sons to a holy cause, even though You have seen fit to make it a lost cause. What I gained, I shared with them. It is true that I kept some of it back, but I am the best judge of that because I, too, have dependents who may be orphans, too, at this moment, for all I know. And if this be sin in Your sight, I take this on my conscience too. Amen.

(Faulkner, 1991,115)

The Civil War changed people's behaviour and things that had been natural. Rosa believed in devotedness to country and did not trust Ringo and Bayard. She thought that Ab Snopes is a traitor, she answered on it: "*what side of a war a man fought on made him what he is*" (Faulkner, 1991,117). Ringo and Bayard begged Rosa not to deal with Grumpy, but she still trusted in the chivalric code. Nevertheless, she was later found dead.

Southern men would not hurt a woman. [...] I am a woman. Even Yankees do not harm old women.

(Faulkner, 1991,119)

The Civil War meant many changes for people in the South but there were deep-rooted things that were impossible to change in a short time. It is evident in notes about black people. Although white people did not treat them as slaves anymore, they were depicted as people who do not know what to do as freed people. They also sit in a segregated place away from white people in church.

William Faulkner focused on the Civil War in many of his books. He personally had not experienced it and all his works are fiction, with some real facts surrounding his plots, some of his characters he might have created from memories of older people.

At his father's livery stable or the family's hunting cabin, his grandfather's house of Mammy Caroline Barr's cabin, listening to the tales of the old time and people. He could hear stories of the Civil War from men who had fought in it – members of his great-grandfather's Partisan Rangers – as well as from those whose words were their only weapons: the old aunts, "the women, the indomitable, the undefeated, who never surrendered [...].

(Elliot, 1988, 890)

5. Harold Frederic – “The War Widow”

Harold Frederic is best known as the author of the novel *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896), but his literary output concludes also short stories dominantly about the Civil War. An example of a short story describing wartime is “The War Widow”. This story first came out in the newspaper *The Independent* and then was published as a part of a collection of short stories. It appeared in several collections in the USA and in England such as *The Copperhead and Other Stories of the North During the American War*, *Marsena and Other Stories of the Wartime* and *In the Sixties*.

Harold Frederic’s life was related to writing from a young age although his career as a novelist lasted only eleven years until his death. He started to work in *Utica Observer daily magazine* and after a few years he became its editor. Then he joined the *Evening Journal* as an editor. In 1884 he accepted a post of a correspondent for the *New York Times* in London and left in the same years. He made his name as a journalist, especially because through his extended article about the cholera pandemic in France. Frederic’s first novel *Seth’s Brother’s Wife* first appeared in *Scribner’s Magazine* and then in 1887 was published in New York and in London.

After a short time, he became known for his realistic fiction, which was supported by his rich experiences as a journalist. He knew life from all its perspectives and he experienced living in small town as well as in cities such as London, Paris, or York. Although most of his fictional works were composed during his residence in Europe, they still focused on themes like American history, the American Revolution, or the Civil War era. For his writing, the distance from his homeland could have been beneficial for several reasons. As a journalist he was used to writing about a certain event without any fiction. At that moment, he had the time and distance and could have thought about his experiences, so he created it into a nonjournalistic story. In London, he also lived in a different culture, so Frederic had the opportunity to look at the American people in a more critical and objective way.

Almost all of his stories include a fatherless narrator, a boy or a man in most cases. These boys matured earlier and behaved like grown men. In this aspect an autobiographical

influence is evident. His father was killed, when Harold was eighteen-month-old, so he knew exactly how the fatherless child behaved.

I was never taught but by myself, for my mother was too busy to attend to me at all [...] So I taught myself to read, and when I was four years old I went to school. That shows that I must have been advanced, for the rule of the city was that no children under the age of six were to be admitted, and exception was made in my case because I was advanced, and because I was a very big child for my age.

(Frederic, 1978, 64)

His father worked as a freight conductor on the New York Central Railway. When he was returning to his wife and son, the train was derailed, and Frederick returned in a basic coffin. It inspired his son Harold and recreated this motif in the return of the unknown soldier in the short story "The War Widow". Although his father did not die as a Union soldier because of the Civil War, Frederic combined that rather common occurrence with his earliest memories and Frederic explained the theme of his short stories in the interview with Robert Sherard.

My earliest recollections are about the Civil War, which broke out when I was five years of age--recollections of the hideous anxiety which prevailed among the people round me, recollections of the effect that each piece of news from the seat of war made on my own home-circle. I think that my truest work, in my books THE COPPERHEAD and MARSENA, deals with these early recollections of mine, collected from the age of five to the age of nine.

(Frederic, 1978, 64)

After the end of a war, people usually speak about battles, politics, and victories but these facts neglect the basic thing, war is primarily about people. War changes the lives of everybody not only soldiers who fight against the enemy but also family members who are waiting for their fathers, husbands and sons. Men join the army, and a family has to function alone. As men fight in battles, so to do women fight in daily life. They replace men in their daily labour because of the missing main breadwinner. It also influences the children who have to mature and work to help run the family business or farm instead of playing as in an ordinary childhood. This is not a description of a concrete war. It can be applied to every war, as it was happening during the Civil War and as it is happening now at the Ukraine.

Harold Frederic was a child when the Civil war was being waged and he saw people in tension and nervous about lives of their men and their future. It is the motif of his short stories. In his short stories, he gave the opportunity to look at the war from a different perspective, which although he does not include the direct participation in the war shows the effect on the civilian's lives.

In the short story "The War Widow" it is an aunt Em who replaced two men who left for the army.

She did all the housework there was to do, from cellar to garret, was continually lending a hand in the men's chores [...]

Frederic, 1985, 294)

She was never treated like a weak woman, and it is arguable if it is because of being raised by her father who might have not been happy that she had a daughter, in his eyes, she seemed like this:

He said I was a good worker—that they'd never had to have a hired girl since I was big enough to wag a churn dash, an' they wouldn't know what to do without me. I know all that; I've heard it on an' off for twenty years."

(Frederic, 1985, 305)

Her husband Abel and brother Alva joined the Union Army and although they both were fighting for their country; their parents saw differences between them. Alva was the oldest son, educated and in the army, he was a major. His family looked up to him as if he were something more than they.

His old parents literally abased themselves at his feet, quite tremulous in their awed pride at his greatness.

(Frederic, 1985, 296)

On the other hand, Em's husband Abel was just an ordinary soldier. He did not talk about the war and his name did not occur in newspapers and so family members practically behaved as if he did not even exist.

During battles in 1864, Abel and Alva are killed. Seneca once said: "*In the ashes all men are levelled. We're born unequal, we die equal* (goodreaders.com)," but it was not valid in this case and family members do not react the same way. They still thought about the higher status of Alva which played a big role after they died. When Martha told Em

that her husband was killed, she finished her work, and the next days she worked as usual, family members did not speak with her about Abel and *“aunt Em did not put on mourning. She made a black necktie for Marcellus to wear to church, but stayed away from meeting herself”* (Frederic, 1985,299).

Alva’s death was different.

The household was paralyzed with horror and fright. Martha had gone to bed, or rather had been put there by Em, and all through the night, when he woke up, he heard her broken and hysterical voice in moans and screams.

(Frederic, 1985, 300)

Arphaxed went to the town for Alva’s body in order to bury him and for his wife Serena and daughter to take care of them, while nobody was seeking Abel’s body or thought about a funeral. A different attitude to the death of two soldiers shows not only the hierarchy in the army position but also the ensuing position in a family. Alva was a son. Meanwhile Abel was “only” a worthless husband of their daughter. The same difference they made with their widows which Em commented:

“When a man’s dead, he’s pretty much about on an equality with other dead men, one would think. But it ain’t so. One man get’s hunted after when he’s shot, an’ there’s a hundred dollars for embalmin’ him an’ a journey after him, an’ bringin’ him home, an’ two big funerals, an’ crape for his widow that’d stand by itself. The other man—he can lay where he fell! Them that’s lookin’ for the first one are right close by—it ain’t more’n a few miles from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, so Hi Tuckerman tells me, an’ he was all over the ground two years ago—but nobody looks for this other man! Oh, no! Nobody so much as remembers to think of him! They ain’t no hundred dollars, no, not so much as fifty cents, for embalmin’ him! No—he could be shovelled in anywhere, or maybe burned up when the woods got on fire that night, the night of the sixth. They ain’t no funeral for him—no bells tolled—unless it may be a cowbell up in the pasture that he hammered out himself. An’ his widow can go around, week days an’ Sundays, in her old calico dresses.”

(Frederic, 1985, 306)

After they found out, they brought not Alva’s body but the body of an unknown soldier. Everybody realizes that the war treated everybody the same way regardless of their position or power. They all ended as an unknown bodies on the battlefield and instead of a funeral with all honour, their bodies ended in mass trench graves.[6] Em and Serena decided to conduct a symbolic funeral of the unknown soldier as an honour to all killed men.

Let him be buried in the family lot up yonder, where we had thought to lay Alva, and let us do it reverently, in the name of Emmeline's husband, and of all others who have fought and died for our country, and with sympathy in our hearts for the women who, somewhere in the North, are mourning, just as we mourn here, for the stranger there in the red barn."

(Frederic, 1985, 310)

This symbolic honor is not unusual. In many towns around the world there are statues of soldiers in order to remember those who were fighting for their country, and on the day of the anniversary, people could pay tribute to them.

"For the women [...] who are mourning (Frederic, 1985, 310)"; it is interesting that the war is called a male business but the one who is often affected by it are also women. Karel Čapek mentioned this in his drama *The Mother* which shows how men and women perceive the war.

MOTHER: Yes, my service. I also had my glory, and it was you. I had my home, and it was you. I had my ministry, and it was you, you, you - So explain to me why me, why it's always me, why all of the world, it's just me, a mom, a wife, who has to pay so badly for your great thing!

(Čapek, 2013, 94)

6. Charles Waddell Chesnutt – “Cicely’s dream”

“Cicely’s Dream” belongs to stories in the book *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Colour Line*, which was published in 1899 by Houghton Mifflin. In the same year, the same publisher issued another collection of the short story by Charles W. Chesnutt *The Conjure Woman*. All short stories, which Charles W. Chesnutt wrote, usually firstly appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Charles W. Chesnutt is known as an African American writer who wrote books dealing with questions of race and social class after the Civil War and “Cicely’s Dream” is not expectation.

Charles Wadell Chesnutt is regarded as the first African American writer who used the short story as a serious medium. J. Saunders Redding wrote about Chesnutt in his *To Make a Poet Black* that he was “a transitional figure. He drew together the various post-Civil War tendencies in Negro creative literature and translated them into the most worthy prose fiction that the Negro has produced” (Walser, 1959, 71). He came from mixed-race family and due to that, he focused on the social limitation related to the category of people only as white and black and the restrictions on African Americans. Although he looked like a white man, his black origin automatically classified him as a Negro belonging to the black race. Chesnutt used fiction about people from different races, usually mulatto characters, to show the negative effects of discrimination. He had been a principal of the North Carolina Normal School at Fayetteville and thought about writing a book because life of Afro-Americans seemed to be valuable material for it. In his journal is a mention about a book *A Fool’s Errand* from A. W. Tourgee and he was not impressed by the book but by a number of readers and especially by the money which this book earned because Tourgee had no experience with black life so how he could have written such a book.

Could not a colored man, who had lived among colored people all his life, who is familiar with their habits, their ruling passions, their prejudices, their whole moral and social condition, their public and private ambitions, their religious tendencies and habits ... who was familiar with the political history of the country, and especially with all the phases of the slavery question-why could not such a man, if he possessed the same ability, write as good a book about the South as Judge Tourgee has written? But the man is yet to make his appearance; and if I can't be the man, I shall be the first to rejoice at his debut, and give God speed to his work.

(Terry, 1977, 2)

His works had been published in the *Atlantic Monthly* since 1887 and it brought his stories to a big audience, including many authors. George Washington Cable was one of them, he read many of Chesnutt's stories and gave him opinions. Critics were also impressed by Charles W. Chesnutt's works. After publishing "The Wife of His Youth" in 1898, the novelist James Lane Allen wrote a letter to the magazine's editor:

Who—in the name of the Lord!—is Charles W. Chesnutt? . . . I went through [The Wife of His Youth] without drawing breath—except to laugh out two or three times. It is the freshest, finest, most admirably held in and wrought out little story that has gladdened—and moistened—my eyes in many months.

(Allen in storyoftheweek.ioa.org)

The problem of the color line is the main topic of his stories. As a light-skinned mulatto, being on the color line, he saw the future of America's race in mixed-race American, and in his essay "What Is a White Man?" he argued about the defining racially mixed people as Negro and that the Civil War did not change many important issues, such as marriage, education etc.,

By the Mississippi code of 1880, the color-line is drawn at one-fourth of Negro blood, all persons having less being theoretically white. [...] Before the War the color-line, as fixed by law, regulated in theory the civil and political status of persons of color. What that status was, was expressed in the Dred Scott decision. But since the War, or rather since the enfranchisement of the colored people, these laws have been mainly confined—in theory, be it always remembered—to the regulation of the intercourse of the races in schools and in the marriage relation.

(Chesnutt in chesnuttarchive.org)

These problems are the main topic of the book *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories Of the Color Line*, W. D. Howells characterized it as a collection describing the "tragic position of persons of mixed blood" (Howells in Delmar, 1979, 364). Although "Cicely's Dream" is more about whites and Blacks hiding their real personality connected with their race or their personality is hidden from them, it proved Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask". It could be used in two ways, in stories "The Wife of His Youth" or "Matter of Principle" suggest that Black people had to wear the mask, on the other hand, "Cicely's Dream" shows it in a positive way. In this, the hidden identity led to romance.

The story is about young mulatto Cicely.

[...] was not only young, but lithe and shapely as a sculptor's model; that her bare feet seemed to spurn the earth as they struck it; that though brown, she was not so brown but that her cheek was darkly red with the blood of another race than that which gave her

her name and station in life; and the old woman did not see that Cicely's face was as comely as her figure was superb, and that her eyes were dreamy with vague yearnings.

(Chesnutt, 2001, 170)

She was collecting vegetables when she found an injured unconscious Union soldier. The situation between whites and blacks was difficult despite the abolition of slavery. Cicely's decision on what to do depended on his race.

"What shall I do with that man?" she reflected. "I don' know whether he 's a w'ite man or a black man. Ef he 's a w'ite man, I oughter go an' tell de w'ite folks up at de big house, an' dey 'd take keer of 'im. If he 's a black man, I oughter go tell granny. He don' look lack a black man somehow er nuther, an' yet he don' look lack a w'ite man; he 's too dahk, an' his hair 's too curly.

(Chesnutt, 2001, 173)

His hair and brown skin are the reason why Cicely and her grandmother thought that he must be mulatto so they took him to their house to take care of him as long as he did not recover.

Old Dinah pushed back the matted hair from the wounded man's brow, and looked at the skin beneath. It was fairer there, but yet of a decided brown [...] "Mos' lackly he's a mulatter man f'om up de country somewhar. He don' look lack dese yer niggers roun' yere, ner yet lack a wi'te man."

(Chesnutt, 2001, 174)

They assumed that the soldier is a mullato not only because of his hair and skin, he also wore the Union uniform. The plot is set during the last year of the war, probably after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. This document declared that all slaves shall be free. Due to this event, many southern black men joined the Union Army. Because of this fact women may have thought that the soldier is "one of them".

His appearance reminded Cicely of her dream from last night.

She had dreamed that under some strange circumstances — what they had been was still obscure — she had met a young man — a young man whiter than she and yet not all white — and that he had loved her and courted her and married her. Her dream had been all the sweeter because in it she had first tasted the sweetness of love, and she had not recalled it before because only in her dream had she known or thought of love as something supremely desirable.

(Chesnutt, 2001, 173)

She was sure that finding a man is a manifestation of this dream. The stranger did not remember his name or history, moreover, he forgot his language. They called him John

and this name meant his identity for new life and Cicely adopted him. She taught him “to speak her own negro English, which he pronounced with absolute fidelity to her intonations; so that barring the quality of his voice, his speech was an echo of Cicely's own.” (Chesnutt, 2001, 177) He fell in love with her. During the war, she was hiding him from the Confederation Army but after the war, she still did not want him to remember his past because there is no barrier to their union.

He was hers — hers alone. She had found him, as Pharoah's daughter had found Moses in the bulrushes; she had taught him to speak, to think, to love. She had not taught him to remember; she would not have wished him to; she would have been jealous of any past to which he might have proved bound by other ties. Her dream so far had come true. She had found him; he loved her.

(Chesnutt, 2001, 178)

Falling in love with somebody who saved the person is a usual phenomenon in literature. We can find it in many fairy tales when a prince saved a princess. It appears also in classic literature, for example in Sophie's choice, by William Styron the love between Sophie and Nathan is a good example. Moreover, there is a similar begging of their relationship, Nathan took care of Sophie, and taught her English and she was addicted to him in an existential way, which is the same as the relationship between Cicely and John. Furthermore, John was more addicted to Cicely because he did not know anything else which was caused by his amnesia.

The romance of “Cicely's dream” is impacted by Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, as Christopher Koy claims in his article “Revising Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Closer Look at Two Color Line Stories [...]”. There are evident similarities. *Enid and Geraint* and “Cicely's dream” are based on the love between a nursing woman and an injured man. While Enid took care of her husband, Cicely's patient is an unknown soldier. Unlike Enid, Cicely hides her soldier from everybody, first before the Confederate Army and then before other women. Also, the motif of unknown soldier can be seen in *Gareth and Lynette*. In both cases, men show their real faces at the end. John's identity is changed at the moment when his mind is back. His real identity is not about his social status but about his real race which is different than Cicely. The end is not typically Arthurian. Chesnutt uses the story to show the problem of crossing the color line in marriage. John/Arthur recalls his past and forgets Cicely. She perceives this fact because she sees the difference in their race.

This story is set during the war and the Reconstruction period which followed, the story depicts a change in the education system in the South. Before the Civil War, teaching slaves was illegal but at the end of the war, there was a desire to creating schools. Schools were built with northern aid help or by blacks themselves. Chesnutt mentioned this in the story and wrote about their passion for education and as in many of his speeches, he criticized the politics in the South where the freedom for slaves did not solve all the main problems.

It is fashionable to assume that those who undertook the political rehabilitation of the Southern States merely rounded out the ruin that the war had wrought merely ploughed up and that wiser and honester men might have failed as egregiously. It may even, in time, be conceded that some good came out of the carpet-bag governments, as, for instance, the establishment of a system of popular education in the former slave States. Where it had been a crime to teach people to read or write, a schoolhouse dotted every hillside, and the State provided education for rich and poor, for white and black alike. Let us lay at least this token upon the grave of the carpet-baggers. The evil they did lives after them, and the statute of limitations does not seem to run against it. It is but just that we should not forget the good. Long, however, before the work of political reconstruction had begun, a brigade of Yankee schoolmasters and schoolma'ams had invaded Dixie, and one of the latter had opened a Freedman's Bureau School in the town of Patesville, about four miles from Needham Green's cabin on the neighboring sandhills.

(Chesnutt, 2001, 178)

Northern voluntaries were moving to the South to educate the black community. In the story Cicely's dream, it is represented by Martha Chandler. Cicely visited her classes. The thick boundary between races is here described by Martha own:

Martha felt sometimes, in the vague way that one speculates about the impossible, that if she were brown, and had been brought up in North Carolina, she would be like Cicely; and that if Cicely's ancestors had come over in the Mayflower, and Cicely had been reared on Beacon Street, in the shadow of the State House dome, Cicely would have been very much like herself.

(Chesnutt, 2001, 180)

Cicely's dream and love ended up at the moment when John saw Martha Chandler and he recovered his past and recognized his fiancée. He had been considered as dead or missing, his name was Arthur Carey, of the 1st Massachusetts. Although Cicely was cultivated and tried to behave like Martha, John/Arthur chose Martha and forgot his African American life and love for Cicely. Because he was not the same race as her, she

automatically called herself as “the other woman” and it fulfilled her thoughts about her dream,

If the wounded man were of her own race, her dream would thus far have been realized, and having met the young man, the other joys might be expected to follow. If he should turn out to be a white man, then her dream was clearly one of the kind that go by contraries, and she could expect only sorrow and trouble and pain as the proper sequences of this fateful discovery.

(Chesnutt, 2001, 174)

The thin line between race is proved by the fact, that nobody recognized that Arthur is not a mullato from the South but a white Union soldier. He does not speak so there is nothing that can show his origin. His silence could be caused by posttraumatic syndrome. At the end, there is a mention of Salisbury prison which was established by the Confederates for Union soldiers. The treatment of soldiers was horrible, and it could be compared to a German concentration camp. He probably escaped from this prison. Moreover, the story is set in Fayetteville, which is far from the Salisbury prison, so his condition was affected by his stay in the prison and long journey. Cicely took care of him and taught him to speak and write but he learned her Negro language, so he was not able to demonstrate another feature than what he adopted from Cicely.

7. Conclusion

The American Civil War influenced the United States in many ways. It is considered the first modern battle and also it was the largest conflict that has ever happened on the American continent. The Civil war was a brutal event that affected everybody in American society. The North and the South did not expect that the political difference between them began the war. None of the sides was prepared for such a large and long war. Armies were based on voluntaries. Men joining the armies dreamt about glory and victories, but the reality was different. The Experiences of soldiers were in contradiction with what they had known about war from literature. This fact meant a large change not only in the thinking of the Americans but also in literature. Authors stop to glorified and idealized the war and began to describe it realistically with all negative aspects. The fictional literature could also information young generation about the absurdity and brutality of the war. It have bigger range than historical literature.

All analysed authors belong to the movement of realism. Although they all have the Civil War as the main motif in their short stories, each of them uses this background differently. The common features are individuals and families impacted by the war which play the main role here.

Ambrose Bierce is a veteran of the Civil War which is reflected in his works. "An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge" as well as "Chickamauga" come from Bierce's own experiences. He always set his stories in a time and place which he knew. He fought in the Battle of Chickamauga and the plot of "An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge" took place in Alabama where he spent a long time. "An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge" describes the last moments of the life of a voluntary who wants to be part of the war as a hero. However, his heroic action end up in execution. This story is also an example of how people lost control over perception in extreme situations. The short story "Chickamauga" looks at one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War from a child's point of view. This story shows the collision of an innocent child who dreams about being a soldier and injured soldiers who had the same thoughts as the small boy before the war.

“Riposte in Tertio” by William Faulkner describes the Civil War from a civilian’s point of view. Family without the breadwinner who lost everything when the Yankees attacked their plantation finds a way how to get their money back. The cheat began a strategy to both get money and thereby weaken the enemy. This story also depicts the strength of women during the Civil War which is evident in figure of Granny. The obvious aspect is changing in people’s characters and trustfulness is not valuable anymore.

Harold Frederic focuses on the dead soldiers and their families in his short story “The War Widow”. Although men went to the war with a vision of glory and victory, they usually ended up dead on the battlefields. This story shows the disrespect of armies for the soldiers who were fighting for their country. Moreover, families did not have the opportunity to bury. Frederic also describes the impact on family members. Women had to replace men in their labor and children do not have an ordinary childhood.

The only author who set the story at the end of the war with the overlap with the Reconstruction Era is Charles Waddell Chesnutt. “Cicely’s dream” uses a romantic story about a nursing mullato girl and an unknown soldier to depict the problem of color-line in the South and its impact on relationships. This story works as a critique of the post-war politic in the South regarding restrictions against Blacks. Chesnutt was an African American and so he extracts his own experience

8. Resumé

Americká občanská válka ovlivnila Spojené státy v mnoha ohledech. Je považována za první moderní bitvu a také to byl největší vojenský konflikt, který se odehrál na americkém kontinentu. Občanská válka byla brutální událostí, která poznamenala každé v americké společnosti. Sever ani Jih nepředpokládal, že se jejich rozdílné politické názory změní ve válku. Muži se dobrovolně hlásili do vojenské služby s vidinou slávy a vítězství, což se od skutečnosti liší. Jejich zážitky byly v protikladu s tím, co znali z literatury. Tento fakt znamenal velkou změnu nejenom v myšlení Američanů, ale také v literatuře. Autoři přestali opěvovat a idealizovat válku a začali ji popisovat reálně se všemi negativními aspekty. Fiktivní literatura má mnohem větší dosah než historická literatura, pro by také mohla sloužit jako zdroj informací pro mladší generace o absurditě a brutalitě války.

Všichni analyzovaní autoři patří do realismu. Ačkoliv i všem je občanská válka hlavním tématem, každý z nich toto pozadí využívá jinak. Společným znakem všech autorů je, že hlavní roli v jejich příbězích hrají jedinci nebo rodiny postižené válkou.

Ambrose Bierce je veteránem z americké občanské války což se odráží v jeho dílech. „An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge” stejně jako „Chickamauga” vycházejí z Biercových osobních zážitků. Jeho příběhy jsou vždy časem a místem shodné s jeho osobní zkušeností. Účastnil se bitvy u Chickamaugy a v Alabamě, kde je zasazený děj „An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge“, dlouhou dobu pobýval. „An Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge” popisuje poslední momenty v života dobrovolníka, který chce také přispět ve válce nějakým hrdinským činem. Bohužel jeho hrdinský čin končí oběšením. Tento příběh je také ukázkou toho, jak lidé v extrémních situacích ztrácí kontrolu nad svým vnímáním a nedokáží rozeznat realitu od halucinace. Povídka „Chickamauga” se dívá na jednu z nejkrvavějších bitev občanské války pohledem dítěte. Tento příběh ukazuje střet nevinného dítěte, který sní o tom, že jednou bude vojákem, a zraněných vojáků, kteří před válkou smýšleli stejně jako ten malý kluk.

„Riposte in Tertio” od Williama Faulknera popisuje občanskou válku z pohledu civilistů. Rodina bez živitele, která kvůli útoku nepřátel na jejich plantáž přijde o všechno, najde způsob, jak získat své peníze zpět. Z tohoto podvodu se stane úspěšná strategie, jak

nejen získat peníze zpět, ale navíc ještě oslabit protivníka. V tomto příběhu je také znázorněná ženská síla, která je zde patrná v postavě Granny. Dalším zřetelným aspektem je změna v lidských povahách, kdy důvěřivost už není na místě.

Harold Frederic se ve svém povídce "The War Widow" zaměřuje na mrtvé vojáky. Ačkoliv muži šli do války s vidinou slávy a vítězství, obvykle končí mrtví na bitevních polích. Tato povídka poukazuje na neúctu k vojákům, kteří bojovali za svou zemi. Rodiny ani nemají možnost je pohřbít. Frederic také popisuje dopad války na rodinné příslušníky. Ženy museli nahradit muže v jejich práci a děti přišly o normální dětství.

Jediný autor, který děj příběhu zasadil na konec války s přesahem do období rekonstrukce, byl Charles Waddel Chesnutt. Jeho „Cicely's dream“ využívá romantického příběhu mezi ošetřující snědou dívkou a neznámým vojákem k vyobrazení problému "barevné linie" a jeho dopad na vztahy mezi lidmi. Příběh slouží jako kritika poválečné politiky Jihu, která stále omezovala lidi s černou pletí. Inspiroval se situací na Jihu po skončení války, kterou jako Afro-Američan sám pocítil.

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