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ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT

A kísérteties Faulkner déli gótikájában – A hang és a téboly elemzése
The Uncanny in Faulkner's Southern Gothic – An analysis of The Sound and the
Fury

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This thesis claims that the Gothicism in the narrative strategy called Southern Gothic is interdependent with a realistic writing mode, which relies on the socio-economic context of the South. Gothicism here means the barbarity and violence of the Southern history. William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* does not display this violence by direct descriptions; the morally and intellectually strong Compsons, Quentin and Caddy, sense the uncanny. The concept of the uncanny requires the repetition of familiar and non-familiar mental contents; it contains familiarity and temporality, both present in the uncanny in *The Sound and the Fury*. Here the uncanny is triggered by the transition from the Old South to the New South; Caddy and Quentin represent different reactions to their era. Caddy behaves in accordance with the individualism of the New South, which causes the breakdown of the traditionalist Quentin. Temporality (time) and familiarity (home) are important concepts for Quentin. The certainty of the interpretation with which Quentin approached them vanishes, the meaning of Quentin's existence, based on the old set of values, becomes fragmented. He represses his central trauma, as it reveals the Compson dishonor, but tries to formulate a narrative of it nonetheless. This narrative is also fragmented; it contains repetitions of the never named trauma. Quentin stops the circle of repetitions by his suicide. Caddy flees from the South, vanishing from the story. Only the decaying, invalid Old South (represented by Benjy) and the unscrupulous, rigid New South (represented by Jason) remain in the Compson household; universal humanity disappears from the Compson family.

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Introduction

This thesis aims to analyze William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* from the perspective of the narrative strategy called Southern Gothic. First, the author examines the Southern Gothic by defining its place in American literature, arguing that it is not a distinct genre but a narrative strategy representing the grimness and anomalies of Southern social reality. Herein this essay also discusses the race and gender related social values of the Old South, regarding that they obtain a central role in Faulkner's world. Second, the analysis of *The Sound and the Fury* aims to construe how Caddy and Quentin Compson are trying to find an ethical behavior that can meet the requirements of their moral consciousness and the demands of the New South at the same time. The analysis mainly draws on Quentin's chapter, and claims that the Gothicism of *The Sound and the Fury* does not appear in the form of direct violence: it manifests in the uncanny and its compounds, repression and repetition. The trauma of Caddy's promiscuity triggers the dissolution of Quentin Compson's belief in the solidity of his set of values; his concepts about time and home become challenged.

Eighty decades of criticism produced some generally accepted points in the analyses of *The Sound and the Fury*. All are based on the observation that the Faulknerian universe exists in a moral context, of which the social changes of the South provide a background. This thesis accepts this view and aims to interpret it from the perspective of the uncanny.

The author addresses three problems before elaborating the actual topic. First, as the language of the Faulknerian discourse determines the terminology of this essay, the use of terms such as Negro or Yankee is essential to talk about the South in the Faulknerian context. In addition, the work this thesis most relies on while drafting the historical background, *The Mind of the South* by W. J. Cash, does not always present an objective tone, as the Southerner Cash could not successfully create a distance between himself and his (much referred and

analyzed) work. In order to eliminate biased statements, the author of this thesis compared the boldest claims of Cash with the remarks of the professionals listed in the “Works Cited” section, and did not include the ones from Cash which proved to be exaggerations.

Second, the concepts associated with the South provide a rich history: some focus on socio-geographical aspects (Deep South), some are devaluating (Benighted South), some are expressing merits (Garden Myth) (“Historical Myths”). Studies about the South are usually shifting between these associations, assuming that there is one abstract South, a Southern mythology containing all associations. Similarly, this thesis treats the South as an abstraction, as it has been the subject of its people’s constant mythmaking.

Third, Faulkner studies display a tendency of linking Faulkner to 20th century philosophers. Ideas of Freud, Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, psychoanalytical, phenomenologist, existentialist trends are usually finding their way to Faulkner in various analyses of his works. One trend in researching Faulkner and 20th century philosophical ideologies aims to reconstruct exact connections, the other chooses to analyze Faulknerian texts from the perspective of a particular philosopher or philosophy. This thesis is based on the relationship between the South and Faulkner and uses neither method; still, as Faulkner had a similar sensitivity for the *Zeitgeist* as his contemporaries, it is inevitable to spot dilemmas and ideas they shared. This thesis mentions names and concepts when relevant but avoids confining Faulkner to a single philosophical framework.

Gothic: Genre or Property?

First of all, it is essential to clarify the terminology. From the perspective this thesis offers, both compounds of the Southern Gothic, Gothic and Realism, are used to define narrative

strategies, not a genre or a movement. The concept of the Gothic in literature is not homogeneous: instead of one dominant and rigid definition, the current trend is to stress that distinct characteristics of the Gothic might as well appear in non-Gothic texts. There is a general understanding about the need to distinguish the Gothic as a genre and the Gothic as a narrative strategy. Both applications of the term rely on the definition of “3 ... a, medieval b, not classical c, barbarous; uncivilized 4 of or having to do with a type of fiction that uses remote, gloomy (and, formerly, medieval) setting, and a sinister, eerie atmosphere to suggest horror and mystery” (“Gothic”).

The Gothic as a genre is “a type of romance very popular from the 1760s onwards until the 1820s ... intended to chill the spine and curdle the blood” (“Gothic novel/fiction”), marginalized in literary canons since its heyday, (popular, nevertheless, among audiences across time and space), whereas Gothic strategies in literary texts have been keenly applied and analyzed ever since they became separated from the genre. Similarly, the literary strategy of realism is not confined to the “recognizable and conscious movement in literature which was subsequently tagged ‘realism’[which] began some time in the 1830s and had gathered momentum by the 1850s” (“Realism”). Realism as a literary strategy is “the portrayal of life with fidelity” (“Realism”), establishing correspondence, or at least coherence, between social reality and fictional reality. As literary strategies, the Gothic and Realism are often juxtaposed: the realistic mode represents the social, temporal, and local background, operating as a point of reference for the Gothic elements. In Botting’s words, “The internalization of Gothic forms reflected wider anxieties which, centring on the individual, concerned the nature of reality and society and its relation to individual freedom and imagination.” (qtd. in Royle 36). The interdependency of Gothic and Realistic modes is frequently employed in American fiction.

The first conscious steps in American literature took place in the heyday of the European Gothic genre: “American fiction began in a Gothic mode” (Lloyd-Smith 28). In the beginning of creating both an American nation and narratives recounting of the former process, American literature turned to the familiarity of European fiction. One of the first American Gothic novels, Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland* demonstrates the characteristics of the Europe-born Gothic genre by portraying the struggle between rationality and irrationality. But *Wieland* reflects American reality. The inspiration for the novel was a real event: a New York State farmer in 1781 exterminated his family under the influence of religious delusions (Brown 290).

Before American literature was depicting the quest for finding American voices in the period called American Renaissance, it was concerned with the trauma of conquering the new land and making it a home. It is a witness of the struggle to survive, and not of a flourishing and organized literary life. The states were processing and acknowledging historical trauma via laypersons writing about the new experiences, expressing religious and political opinion in the form of frontier narratives, captivity narratives, and letters. This literature retained the grimness and historical violence of the birth of America, and became realized later as the American Gothic. It was not domesticated as a genre but a narrative strategy: “in macabre *detailing* rather than by invoking the genre *in toto*” (Lloyd-Smith 53). Gothicism was emerging omnisciently “by the inclusion of “Gothic” elements within such clearly non-Gothic texts” (Lloyd-Smith 4), to evoke barbarity, lack of civilization, sinister atmosphere, and terror – not only from the psychology of the individual, but the fresh historical consciousness of the nation. Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, and Nathaniel Hawthorne contributed to the portrayal of the Gothicism stemming from social hypocrisy, religious delusions, and the Puritan obsession with sin. However, with the ever-growing frontier, the Gothic was also

expanding to the newly gained territories, as a documentation of frontier violence. “The South developed on the frontier and remained a frontier for a long time. It developed in fear – fear of the Indians, fear of the outsider, fear of the slave (or for the slave, fear of whites)” (“Attitudes toward Violence”). Besides the Indians, a new enemy was emerging for white America: the Negro slave.

Southern Gothic

The narrative strategy called Southern Gothic and the geographically and culturally distinct social reality of the American South are interdependent. Ellen Glasgow was the first to name the Southern Gothic in her essay “Heroes and Monsters”, published in 1935 (The Saturday Review). Glasgow recognized the monster-like characters of “the Southern Gothic School” as the opposites of the heroes of the plantation romance. Although she praises the rejection of excessive literary escapism, she asks the Southern writer to “deal as honestly with living tissues as he now deals with decay”. But when Glasgow complains about the lack of Southern realistic fiction, she thinks of a “truth in fiction so plain and broad that it could be called, with fairness, a school of realism”, an entirely naturalistic approach. She does recognize the portrayal of social reality in her contemporary Southern fiction; she merely draws the attention to the dangers of exaggerating Southern violence and Gothicism.

The name Southern Gothic is, however, misleading, as it implies that Southern Gothic is a subgenre of the 18th century Gothic genre, whereas it is a narrative strategy containing Gothic elements (such as the grotesque or the uncanny). These elements are embedded in a fiction otherwise operating in a realistic mode, in order to draw the attention to the Gothic (barbaric, violent, terrifying) nature of the social reality of the South. Flannery O’Connor paraphrased

this dilemma as “Any fiction that comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by northern readers – unless it is grotesque. Then – it is going to be called photographic realism” (qtd. in Holman 106).

Southern pride did not easily acknowledge traumas. Institution of slavery was “brutalizing-to white men” (Cash 94) as well, but the general reaction was repression and silence. Civil War defeat is the trauma usually mentioned regarding white Southerners, evolving into the shock of the Reconstruction period, when the North was forcing itself onto the South. But even this trauma was handled with traditional Southern escapism (Cash 136-137). Nostalgia toward antebellum life and values, cultivation of the plantation romance did not facilitate new voices in literature (Cash 151). Simultaneously, the Gothicism, born within the codes of the Old South, became uncalled for by the rationalism of the new order; consolidation meant the banishing of excessive violence from everyday life. Slavery transformed into segregation, lynching started to decline after its early Reconstruction heyday (“Lynching”), the plantation house, symbol of an old institution, was left to decay, while factories and shanties for workers were transforming the landscape (Cash 206-207).

In parallel with the transformation of the South, Southern literature started preserving the old imagination. The first wave of Southern Renaissance, emerging in the 20-30s, aimed to accomplish what the literature represented by Thomas Nelson Page’s plantation romances failed to do: to face the failures of the past (to abandon false nostalgia) and present (to address current social problems), and to open up to fresh literary tendencies (modernism) (“Southern Literary Renaissance”). This awakening produced the first widely acknowledged Southern literary movement along with its distinct literary criticism, called New Criticism (“Southern Literary Renaissance”). It was also the first time when the Southern Gothic was addressed and applied intentionally.

Southern Historical Identity in Faulkner's World

A common feature of the Gothic is the mechanism of the uncanny; “by the later nineteenth century the uncanny is seen as incredibly dominant when the Gothic probes deeper into psychological areas” (Lloyd-Smith 6). In Faulkner's Southern Gothic, the uncanny is set in motion by anomalies in the concepts of time and home, which are produced by the anomalies of Southern history. The South was built on the violent system of the binary opposition of oppressors and oppressed, whites and blacks. White thesis and black antithesis synthesized in the Southern way, being a literal demonstration of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic. The anomalies this dialectic order produced resulted in the operations of a historical uncanny.

White identity was, above all, defined by separation: racially (from the Negro) and politically (from the Yankee) (Cash 77). In this dialectic, identity did not mean a positive statement of who the individual was, but the definition of who he or she was not. The Other was needed to justify one's social position and act as a point of reference, to which the image of the self could be created. Identity defined by the Other was fragile: the dominant white male needed opportunities to strengthen it, even by transgressing racial boundaries.

Miscegenation was a means to commit transgression. The white male's identity was solidified by being on the dominant half of the line separating black and white (Cash 51). He constantly felt the close presence of the border in his everyday interaction with the Negro. Miscegenation meant crossing the border temporarily: after the intercourse, the white male, parting from his black, female opposite, returned to his strengthened identity.

The cult of Southern womanhood was a socially accepted way of strengthening the white male's identity. Although it also functioned as a compensation of the Southern woman for miscegenation ruining the domestic idyll, in overall, the decorum of the Southern woman

meant the purity of the dominant whiteness. The adoration of Southern womanhood (even to the extent of incest) functioned as protection of the Southern white male identity, and, indirectly, the whole body of the South (Cash 95-97). Faulkner links miscegenation to the cult of Southern womanhood in *Absalom, Absalom!*, pointing out that the violation of racial taboos (via interracial marriage) resulted in the white male's moral outburst, while the violation of the institution of the white family (via incest) was given a milder approach.

Besides the anomalies of gendered and raced identities, the anomaly of time was a defining Southern experience. The disparity between the Old, slave-owning South and the New, post-Civil War South created an asynchronicity of time in the Southern culture; this anomaly became the central interest of writers of the Southern Renaissance. In the socio-economical processes of the Reconstruction era and the following decades, old classes and groups experienced loss: the Negro became the scapegoat, former aristocracy lost property and prestige, and white, smallholder farmers became endangered by the sharecropping system ("Old South to New South"). While some values, such as Southern hospitality or the cult of beauty seemed to remain intact, the essence of the old moral language was slowly becoming obsolete in the early 20th century (Cash 189). Old morals were, as being violence-driven (Cash 55), not impeccable, but they represented a degree of social and ethical stability, a well-known and accepted point of reference, to which deviation and success could be measured. The values of cult of honor, acceptance of paternalism, patriotism, comradeship (Cash 87, 64, 114, 54) formulated the basis of social behavior. New-capitalist rulers of the New South of the first decades of the 20th century did not understand this moral language.

Faulkner's characters can be divided along the stereotypical portrayal of the two sets of values: the Sartorises represent the masochism, neurosis, obsession, passion of the Old South, while the Snopeses are egoistic, business-centered, pragmatic and cold (O'Donnell 24).

Although Faulkner does not conceal the fact that the Sartorises became invalid, passive and immobile, his sympathy is theirs, and the most repellent Faulknerian characters belong to the Snopes group. The Sartorises cannot abandon the rigidity of their traditionalism, and the Snopeses are too superficial and practical to understand the old abstract thinking. Therefore, the Snopeses are immune to sensing this temporal anomaly, whereas the oversensitive, contemplative Sartorises are suffering from the instability of time.

The Uncanny

The uncanny is an underlying and recurring element of the Gothic. Although it is not Sigmund Freud's invention, as it was first named in 1906 by Ernst Jentsch in his "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen" (Freud 247), it became widely applied on the basis of Freud's 1919 essay "The Uncanny" (Freud 245-283). According to Freud, the uncanny is the remnant of the infantile phase of human development, in which the individual experiences a primitive animism by being attached to the psychological world more than to the physical. During psychosexual development, the content of the infantile phase gets exceeded, and eventually repressed. It used to be familiar, but it is made unfamiliar in the repression. In certain occurrences, the individual meets these contents and re-familiarizes it. The appearance of a distorted familiarity creates the uncanny, a cognitive dissonance evoking the feeling of terror and anxiety. On this base, the passage of time is the prerequisite of the uncanny: passage of time is needed for defamiliarization; moreover, uncanny repetitions are only recognized if taking place within a short period.

The other thinker contributing to the definition of the uncanny is Martin Heidegger, who claims that the uncanny is related to the existential angst, (fear without intentionality), and it

means the disappearance of the familiarity of the world into strangeness, resulting in feeling dislocated, disoriented in otherwise familiar surroundings (“Existentialism”). The prerequisite of Heidegger’s uncanny is therefore the concept of home (familiarity).

The uncanny’s bond to the concepts of time and home corresponds to the Southern experience, in which these two concepts became challenged. In *The Sound and the Fury*, the concepts of time and home catalyze tension inside and outside the text. Outside the text, the reader is required to reconstruct the chronology of the events of the novel, in order to “re-familiarize” the pieces of information into a coherent narrative. In the following, this thesis examines the effects of the anomalousness of time and home on the uncanny in the text of *The Sound and the Fury*.

The Sound and the Fury

Faulkner portrays the confrontation of the paradigms of the Old and the New South in *The Sound and the Fury*, from the perspective of the 20s-30s. This thesis distinguishes and describes these paradigms on the basis of *The Mind of the South*, Robert Penn Warren’s essays “Introduction: Faulkner: Past and Future” and “Faulkner: the South, the Negro, and Time”, and the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (“History and Manners”; “Mythic South”).

The paradigm of the Old South offers a non-linear temporality, linking events through associations, while the New South paradigm uses chronological, linear time. The Old South paradigm shows the influence of the Southern homeland, a traditionalist attitude; the New South is formulated by the Northern spirit, representing both industrial and cultural modernism. Cherishing the Old South paradigm creates passivity and immobility, as it requires a quasi-religious belief in fate, and also pessimism. It emphasizes the role of the

community in the history of the South. The New South represents a belief in progress, manifesting in an ability to act, celebrating the importance of free will, human achievement, and a modern individualism (which is different from the traditional Southern value of independence). But from the perspective of the Old South, these values are born from the way the North imposed itself on the South, therefore they cannot be accepted.

The Compson siblings represent different aspects of the South. Benjy and Jason represent two distinct paradigms; Benjy the Old South, Jason the New South, therefore they are not characters subjected to transformation. They have calculable, stable behavior patterns, resulting in a way of life moving in different directions: Benjy's is descending, backward; Jason's is ascending, forward. If Jason and Benjy are regarded as stable points of reference, to which Quentin and Caddy conduct their quest for meaning, then the counterpart of Jason's New South is Benjy's Old South: passive, impotent (castrated), mistreated by the North (by Jason), betrayed and left alone by its people (Caddy and Quentin) to vegetate, and, eventually, die.

Quentin

Quentin and Caddy are characters in motion, shifting and trapped between the paradigms of the Old and the New South, realizing that they cannot accept the Old and do not want to accept the New. The Compson forefathers, according to the appendix (226-229), engaged themselves in two central activities: following their urge to flee and searching for a home. Both Quentin and Caddy continue this quest, with different methods, but with a same absurdity of the outcome. Absurdity is characteristic to the Gothicism of *The Sound and the Fury*, as the distortion of values results in contradiction, in the impossibility of achieving

moral stability. In Robert Penn Warren's words, "the very awareness and reverence of the values of the past may, in a certain perspective, become the enemy of those very values" (267).

For Quentin, the stability of the Old South means that the meshwork of individual existence, human interaction, and history is subjected to some kind of destiny, "the past may also be the source of doom" (Warren 267). Quentin sees himself in the mirror of his ancestors, whose collective sins and failures cumulate in his self. His free will is the captive of the Compson family's past; he cannot detach himself from the body of the tradition, even on the level of abstractions. The violence and Gothicism of his forefathers (conquering the wilderness, participating in military maneuvers) is imbibed in his identity, but, due to his sensitivity and the consolidated social atmosphere, it is weakened, manifesting only as his penchant for morbidity, his love for (even his own) death (Thompson 114) and his obsession with fate.

Quentin follows fate blindly, as if he was predestined. It corresponds to a traditionalist, quasi-religious paradigm, one which became attacked by the individualist and existentialist thought of modern philosophy. Quentin would rather identify himself in the context of the Old South myth as the extension of his family tradition, than create a new myth of individualism. For him, "Modernity", in this sense, is the end of that idea of community which is based on mutual recognition of human qualities" (Warren 256).

The fact that Quentin does not accept the prevailing social order does not mean that he is entirely rebellious; in fact, Quentin is a conformist, who desires to orientate by the old institutions and social norms (O'Donnell 25), not to celebrate the act of creating the new man, like a Nietzsche or a Camus would do. The realization that neither the Old nor the New South can offer an existence suitable for him leaves only one logical step to follow: abandoning the

rigidity of his thinking and accepting the available values of modern individualism, realizing that he could be a rightful successor of the Old South without continuing its ways of life. Quentin could have been a brilliant Harvard intellectual, contributing with his intellectual power to the betterment of the South in the same way the intellectuals of the Southern Renaissance did.

Quentin's suicide is a contradiction on more levels, representing both failure and victory. From the perspective of the Old South, it is a failure because Quentin rejected his Confederate role model by the act of cowardice; it is also a victory, as Quentin manages to follow the concept of destiny, which is running through his family, and which he started to consider as a possible solution since he held a knife to Caddy's neck. On the other hand, from the perspective of the New South, his suicide is a victory, because it means that Quentin started to act according to his free will and not to the Old South paradigm, but it is a failure, as Quentin's first independent act is to terminate his further acts. Quentin's suicide is absurd because it is both the means and the result of his acknowledgement of the New South paradigm.

The disparity between the Old and the New South leads Quentin to escape into the non-linear temporality of the Old South, as opposed to the Yankee's chronology. In his mind, the past is not closed down, not distanced from the present. As Faulkner worded it in *Requiem for a Nun*, "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (80). The past is present, the two are inseparable. But eventually Quentin realizes that human modification of time is only possible in the realm of total subjectivity, which is an abstraction, as it means the negation of an objective world – exactly what Quentin desires to do with Caddy, reconstructing innocence through incest (Vickery 302), escaping into a prehistoric, timeless Eden with Caddy functioning as a surrogate mother, the symbol of existential stability. This is the best example

of Quentin's tendencies for subjectivity. But as he fails to create an exit from the objective world of the New South, besides the already adversary linear time, his subjective, familiar time becomes his greatest enemy, the symbol and reminder of his human weakness: no matter how hard he tries, he cannot freeze time to take in his hands for examination like a broken watch.

Simultaneously, Quentin experiences the loss of home via the decay of the Compson family, and, on an abstract level, as the loss of the familiarity of meaning. He used to be familiar with the concept of time (which is, his non-linear time) and home, but upon being confronted with the New South (via Caddy's promiscuity) he realizes the relativity and obsolescence of his set of values (Warren 267). The basis, on which he could orientate in the world, becomes insecure, the stability of interpretation vanishes. M. Kartiganer summarizes this as "reality for Quentin is primarily change" (368), which crushes him, as his rigid mental system cannot adapt to changes, he cannot interpret anything in a context different from the Old South's. Therefore he wants to "*replace* life with interpretation ... interpretation, metaphor, is the created ground of permanence in which change is eliminated" (M. Kartiganer 368). But interpretation is also disturbed; here the uncanny appears as the limited access to meaning, the limitation of interpretation. Quentin shares Freud's remark, that "I always find it uncanny when I can't understand someone in terms of myself" (qtd. in Royle 29). As the made-up incest was the best example for Quentin's tendency for subjectivity, this quotation highlights how his subjectivity produces uncanny elements.

Caddy

Quentin and Caddy are counterparts; while Quentin is attached to the Old South paradigm, Caddy tries to live her life by the ways of the New South. She does not want to be defined by the values of the Old South: she rejects the role of the Southern belle and the name Candace. Even as a child, she shows personality traits traditionally considered masculine, complementing Quentin's femininity. She is the leader of the group of children, never passive but brave, curious and passionate, "she never was a queen or a fairy she was always a king or a giant or a general" (Faulkner 105). Caddy is a rebel, an individualist, who wants to rely on her free will and defined by her acts, not by old-fashioned social norms. The rootlessness of the new, Yankee-transformed South is therefore appalling to her; her tragedy is the early realization that choosing the New South means corrupting the humanism she wants to obtain from the Old South. Caddy retains her femininity, being a surrogate mother of her brothers, showing values traditionally labeled as feminine: compassion, affectionateness, and empathy. Caddy knows that in the era of transition she cannot successfully exercise both codes of behavior, this is why she tells Quentin "Im bad anyway you cant help it" (Faulkner 96) To which Quentin answers "theres a curse on us its not our fault is it our fault" (Faulkner 96) – he only suspects the fact that Caddy already knows, that their quest for meaning could only end with failure in their homeland.

Similarly to Quentin's, Caddy's solution is contradictory on more levels, resulting in absurdity. From the perspective of the Old South, it is a failure because she sacrificed her virginity; it is also a victory, considering that maternity leads her back to the passive, feminine position. From the perspective of the New South, Caddy's escape is victorious, as she manages to act in accordance with her free will, and failed, as choosing freedom means rejecting her old values, tainting them by leaving and betraying her loved ones (Benjy and

Quentin II). Caddy's muddied drawers foreshadow her future dishonor (Faulkner 223). As the appendix emphasizes (229-233), she remained a part of the collective Southern consciousness, obtaining the role of the traitor, who prostitutes herself in elite circles, even to a presumably Nazi general.

It does not matter that no one in Jefferson can reinforce that it is Caddy in the magazine, because in *The Sound and the Fury* she was never a voice (a narrator), only an abstraction, an empty tank of ideas, which each of her brothers fills with different thoughts and emotions. She is "never be seen directly but only through the eyes of her three brothers, each with his own self-centered demands to make upon her, each with his own limitations and obsessions ... but Caddy herself escapes satisfactory definition" (Millgate 103-104).

The loss of Caddy's virginity to Dalton Ames and her promiscuous behavior afterwards triggers the operation of the uncanny forces of "time" and "home" for Quentin, as Quentin's identity is shaped along separation (from the Negro and the Yankee) and by the protection of Southern womanhood. Although Negroes are no longer his properties, they remain in a servile, submissive position. The Southern womanhood, however, is no longer intact. The concepts Caddy represents for Quentin (identity, stability, and home) become disturbed. He realizes that he cannot orientate by the measures of his old, subjective temporality in the linearity of objective time. Faulkner emphasizes that Quentin does not love Caddy but the idea of her virginity (229). This "minute fragile membrane of her maidenhead" (229) is the base of his identity, "as a miniature replica of all the whole globy earth" (229), the centre of the ideas he cherished about the integrity of his Old South. Along with Caddy's honor, the stabile base of Quentin's intellectual system and his Southern identity also become tainted. This leads to the dissolution of Quentin's "whole globy earth", for him, existential meaning becomes fragmented, his interpretation of the concepts, along which he built his set of values,

becomes limited. The next section elaborates on how Quentin represses and repeats the uncanny in his trauma.

Narrative of the Trauma

Although the loss of Caddy is a central trauma for her brothers, the overall narrative lacks a “central complication”; “nothing happens” (Sartre 253), as “everything has already happened” (Sartre 255). The immobility of the present becomes a narrative of loss of the past. The significant acts in *The Sound and the Fury* all carry the seeds of violence; socially (Quentin II robbing Jason), existentially (death of Damuddy and Quentin), physically (Quentin’s fights, the loss of Caddy’s virginity, Benjy’s castration), but these acts of violence are rarely shown directly. They are embedded into the Southern tradition of violence, taken by the characters of the novel as a natural belonging of the Southern life. The lack of explicitly portrayed violence is uncanny, as it means that violence is constantly lurking around in life and fiction as well, so naturally it almost gets unnoticed.

The description of a violent event might be a revelation about its social and psychological context, opening opportunities to talk about the trauma, to make a narrative of the trauma, which is a way leading to healing. In correspondence with the way the Reconstruction South circulated around the Civil War trauma, the narrators of *The Sound and the Fury* do not speak about the violent events directly. This is the Gothicism in the text: the way violence is normalized in the Southern life. The uncanny stems from the characters’ uneasiness about the inlaying of violence into everyday happenings; as Sartre noticed, the narrators do not form a chronological narrative around the central violent acts. They do not create a distance between the trauma and the traumatized, nor do they isolate themselves from the trauma by narration.

On the contrary, they revolve around the trauma, observe and cherish it like it was a morbid monument. In Benjy's and Jason's cases, the trauma is untold because of their mental (Benjy does not have a conscious mind) or moral (Jason does not have a moral consciousness) condition. Quentin's chapter, however, is a model of this attitude. His fragmented syntax does not complete a narrative (it suits Quentin's aversion towards linearity) but starts it again and again. On this base, John T. Irwin's remark about Quentin acting like Faulkner's double is justified: Quentin is "fated to retell and reenact the same story throughout his life just as Faulkner seemed fated to retell in different ways the same story again and again" (Irwin, 280).

The uncanny can be summarized as the repetition of repressed mental contents: "the uncanny seems to be about a strange repetitiveness. It has to do with the return of the repressed..." (Royle 84). Modernist literary heroes often execute routines of repetition, in which they try to find the meaning they are constantly searching. The variation of the familiar and the unfamiliar elements evokes the uncanny. In this sense, the uncanny represents the fragmentation of meaning, the limitedness of interpretation. No matter how Quentin omits or distorts the violent, Gothic details in his narrative, it remains uncanny because of this incompleteness of meaning. The reason behind Quentin's routine of repetitions is his repression. Quentin's story about the Compson dishonor should not be told at all in the Old South paradigm, as its rigid code of honor does not accept such a deviance. It could be mumbled shamefully, to a dubious audience, but Quentin does not want this, therefore he represses the sore points of his narrative.

This manifests the clearest in his constant repetition of "the sister", starting in his monologue as a reference to "Saint Francis that said Little Sister Death" (Faulkner 47). But the question "*Did you ever have a sister?*" (56), present at his confrontations with other men, was first formed at his fight with Dalton Ames: he frequently repeats this memory in his

associations and reenacts it during his last day. He calls the little Italian girl “sister” (76), and has a fight with her brother, who states that Quentin “steala my seester.” (85) This intermezzo is another example of the absurdity: the local authorities accuse Quentin of violating the Italian “sister”. Quentin knows that committing incest with Caddy could have been possible only via rape, but he “was afraid to i was afraid she might and then it wouldnt have done any good but if i could tell you we did it would have been so” (107-108). Again, Quentin thinks he can escape from acting and solve his problem by the power of narration. The Italian intermezzo is Quentin’s repetition of doing nothing. During a brief prosecution, Quentin is cleared from the kidnap charges, but within the context of his trauma, his acquittal is a re-statement of the guiltiness of his passivity, the fact that he did not “kidnap” and save Caddy.

His seemingly unmotivated fight with Gerald Bland is the cumulation of Quentin’s futile attempts to protect the Southern womanhood. Bland is a Kentuckian, who dishonors women in the way Dalton Ames does, therefore here he is the double of Ames. Furthermore, Gerald has a doting mother, who participates in her son’s debauchery. This reminds Quentin not only of the irreversibility of the deterioration of the Southern womanhood, but the fact that he never had a loving mother, and his surrogate-mother, Caddy, became a victim and an example of this deterioration. But Quentin fails to act. His immobility is justified by Southern escapism (Warren 3-4); however, the male paragon of the old code of honor Quentin follows is the Confederate soldier. His statue in Jefferson reminds Quentin that he represents the opposite of the soldier’s ability to act. Quentin’s acts are futile and tentative, rather tragicomic than heroic. Instead of acting, Quentin closes his circle of repetitions by returning to “Little Sister Death”.

He also fails in narrating his story. The traditionalist Quentin does not fit into the old Southern tradition of narrating historical identity. In the Old South paradigm, stories about

local events and heroes were part of the oral lore, which resulted in a strong sense of history (“Family Folklore”). Personal identity was inlaid into the meshwork of Southern narratives, sustained and strengthened by this constant myth-making. Faulkner portrays how the ability to formulate a narrative identity, essential for one’s experience of the whole, valid self, becomes distorted in the era of the New South for the followers of the Old South spirit. Faulkner’s narrative techniques are in accordance with the modernist trend to present the self fragmented and disoriented with “the whole elaborate method of *deliberately withheld meaning*” (Aiken 48), due to, mostly, the disturbances in the order of the world. Naturally, the disturbance in the Faulknerian universe is the transition from Old to New South. The asynchronicity of Faulknerian heroes with their era causes them to perceive themselves as fragmented and traumatized. Quentin’s fragmented, repressed narrative cannot reveal any trauma, and therefore he cannot create a new narrative identity, in which he could eliminate the uncanny of his fragmentation, come at peace with the central ideas (time and home) of his existence, and reveal the “deliberately withheld meaning.”

There is no understanding audience for Quentin. His monologues do not seem to be intended for an audience at first, but later they reveal that Quentin is in fact a talker (as the opposite of the actor), desperately trying to express the torment beyond his words, in vain. Quentin is able to narrate a story about the tragedy of the South, if he is not directly involved, as in *Absalom, Absalom!*. There he realizes, through his own narration, what forces shape the South. He can explain his bitterness about the New South to his roommate, the Canadian Shreve, but he cannot tell the story of the Compson dishonor, therefore he cannot achieve the redemption a narration can offer for a trauma. The only understanding and compassion for Quentin can be retrieved from the reader, if at all; it is his or her task to reconstruct the pieces of Quentin’s narration, temporally and causatively, making the coherent story Quentin was

ashamed of telling. It also means that Quentin completes a Heideggerian mission by his suicide: his narrative becomes complete from the perspective of death, only “Little Sister Death” can stop the fragmentation.

Conclusion

The Sound and the Fury is an example of the narrative strategy of the Southern Gothic, which relies on the interdependency of Gothic and Realist elements. Here the main Gothic element, the uncanny is evoked by the socio-economical realities of the New South. The intellectually and morally strong characters (Quentin and Caddy) display possible behavioral reactions to this socially constructed Gothicism, but they become entangled in the anomalies of the South. In the clash of the paradigms of the Old and New South, the concepts of time and home become challenged, and these characters struggle to create a new meaning they can morally accept. It is not a fight against the Gothicism (barbarism) of the slave-holding Old South; this new enemy does not manifest itself in sheer violence but the violation and dehumanization of basic values. It is the reason beyond the fact that the Gothicism in *The Sound and the Fury* is not portrayed directly; it appears in the form of the uncanny, which is hard to pinpoint, but lingers through the whole text nonetheless, embodying the limit of interpretation and causing fragmentation.

Both Quentin and Caddy fail to dissolve this uncanny. In accordance with the paradigms they follow, Quentin uses his narrative and Caddy her acts to defeat the uncanny. Quentin cannot repel the repetitive resurfacings of his repressed trauma and chooses to complete his narrative via suicide. Faulkner never revealed the exact details of Caddy’s fate, but suggested that she had an unhappy, drifting existence. Neither Quentin nor Caddy could successfully

escape from the uncanny Southern burden. The only one who managed to complete his mission is William Faulkner: although he considered his narration of the story that “began with the picture of the little girl’s muddy drawers” (Faulkner 242) a failure (Faulkner 247, 242), he managed to present a bigger narrative about his simultaneously loved and hated South.

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