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Diplomová práce

Povídková tvorba Williama Faulknera. Rysy
literatury amerického jihu.

William Faulkner as a Short Story Writer of the
American South

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Poděkování

Ráda bych poděkovala vedoucí mé diplomové práce PhDr. Alici Sukdolové Ph.D. za cenné rady, připomínky a čas, který mi při psaní mé diplomové práce věnovala.

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Anotace

Diplomová práce se v úvodní kapitole bude věnovat charakteristice literatury amerického Jihu, bude se snažit vytyčit její hlavní témata (historie regionu, význam rodiny, život v malé komunitě, náboženský aspekt a vnitřní konflikt jedince s náboženstvím, smysl pro spravedlnost, smysl pro humor a další). V přehledu autorů literatury amerického Jihu se pokusí charakterizovat společné rysy jižanské prózy a stanoví přibližné hranice regionu amerického Jihu s ohledem na "jižanství" uvedených autorů. Jádrem práce bude interpretační analýza povídek Williama Faulknera: *A Rose for Emily*, *Red Leaves*, *Dry September*, *That Evening Sun*, *Mountain Victory* a *Barn Burning*. Na základě analýzy společných rysů povídkové tvorby autora bude práce zkoumat Faulknerův vztah k americkému Jihu a odraz těchto témat v autorově románové tvorbě. Součástí práce bude kapitola věnovaná žánru grotesky a literární kategorii *American Gothic*.

Abstract

In the first part, the diploma thesis will deal with the characteristics of the literature of the American South and will provide an overview of its main themes (history of the region, the importance of the family, life in a small community, man's conflict with religion, the sense of justice, the sense of humor and others). In the overview of American Southern authors, it will try to characterize typical features of southern prose, and set borders of the region. The main task of the thesis will be the analysis of William Faulkner's short stories: *A Rose for Emily*, *Red Leaves*, *Dry September*, *That Evening Sun*, *Mountain Victory* and *Barn Burning*. Based on the short story analysis, it will focus on Faulkner's relation to the American South. Part of the thesis will be a chapter dedicated to the grotesque genre and to the literary category of *American Gothic*.

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Introduction

The main task of the diploma thesis is an interpretation of six William Faulkner's short stories, which were chosen from his short story collection *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950) including *A Rose for Emily* (1930), *Red Leaves* (1930), *Dry September* (1931), *That Evening Sun* (1931), *Mountain Victory* (1932) and *Barn Burning* (1939). These short stories belong to the most appreciated and anthologized. The subject of this thesis is the short story analysis and finding the most typical and recurring features which were characteristic for William Faulkner's works and for Southern literature in general.

The first chapter of the thesis focuses on the development of American Southern literature and its characteristic features including the historical and geographical consciousness, storytelling tradition, religion, race and slavery, and the responsibility to family and community.

The second chapter deals with the South's typical literary genres. Although it might be said that southern literature is itself a genre, there are certain literary forms, organizing motifs, and stylistic conventions that are considered as typically southern. Among these genres are the plantation novel, the slave narrative, southwestern humor, southern pastoral and counter-pastoral, southern modernism, the southern grotesque and grit lit. The first two chapters are mostly based on *The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements, and Motifs* (2002), and *Genres of Southern Literature* (2004) by Lucinda MacKethan.

The third chapter is dedicated to the literary category of American Gothic and its development, and features which influenced Southern literature. The chapter is based on Allan Lloyd Smith's *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction* (2004).

Chapter four mentions some of the most significant writers of American Southern literature. The subchapters are dedicated to Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, Carson McCullers and Flannery O'Connor. It also briefly deals with works of Truman Capote and William Styron. The following chapter deals with the character of William Faulkner as he is the author of the analyzed short stories, and one of the key

figures of Southern literature. The chapter focuses on Faulkner's personal life and provides an outline of his works.

The sixth chapter provides a general introduction to William Faulkner's short stories, and it shortly describes each category in *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (The Country, The Village, The Wilderness, The Wasteland, The Middle Ground, and Beyond). The introduction is followed by the analysis of the selected short stories: *A Rose for Emily* (1930), *Red Leaves* (1930), *Dry September* (1931), *That Evening Sun* (1931), *Mountain Victory* (1932) and *Barn Burning* (1939). Each story contains a short description of its publication history, setting, narrator, and then deals with the most important themes and features.

1. American Southern Literature

The idea of southern literature entered the cultural discourse in 1830s as a concept based on the tensions between regionalism and nationalism, and has developed from an elite white man's literature to a multicultural literature dealing with differences in race, gender, and class.¹

1.1. Southern Renaissance

Southern renaissance is a major reawakening of literary activity that took place in American South during the first half of the twentieth century as a reaction to the industrialization of the South, the experiences of southern veterans in World War I, the influence of Lost Generation values, and the region's reaction against its own sentimental tradition.

This writing included fiction, poetry, drama, literary criticism, memoir, and journalism. The Southern Literary Renaissance "*involved a critical re-examination of southern history, a new awareness of the restrictions of traditional racial and gender roles, an interest in literary experimentation, an examination of the role of the southern artist in relation to the southern community, and an increasingly realistic presentation of social conditions in the South.*"² For example Kate Chopin, Grace King and Mark Twain could be seen as part of an early phase of the southern reawakening. These writers started a tradition of modern critical sensibility which continued in the works of William Faulkner, Richard Wright, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, and Tennessee Williams. According to Allan Tate, modern southern writers stood "*at the boundary between the traditional southern agrarian culture and the modern, increasingly industrial new order.*"³ In the case of African American writers of the Renaissance, they were more interested in the racial equality than in the influence

¹ FLORA, Joseph M., Lucinda Hardwick. MACKETHAN a Todd W. TAYLOR. *The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements, and Motifs*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, c2002., p. 832

² *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 835

³ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 835

of modernization. Southern black authors from the Renaissance include Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Walter Francis White, and Richard Wright.⁴

1.2. Features of Southern Literature

To the most significant features that are connected with southern culture and literature belong a strong historical consciousness, an agricultural tradition, an oral storytelling tradition, tense relationships between the blacks and the whites, the presence of black and southern dialects, responsibility to family, home and region, and the sense of grotesque.⁵

1.1.1. Historical and geographical consciousness

One of the key factors in defining Southern literature is a strong awareness of the region's history, which is present in the literature's plots, settings, symbols, and themes. The specific historical periods which are the most important for southern literature are the early national period that frames the plantation society and the period of the Civil War. This return to the past is the most apparent in the plantation novel and the historical romance. The plantation novel developed as a legend of the southern past that was connected with order, elegance, aristocracy, and minimal labour. The historical romance offered a subgenre for retelling Civil War battles. To the most dominant southern voices which were retelling the southern story during the last three decades of the nineteenth century belonged Mark Twain, George Washington Cable, and Joel Chandler Harris. In the later generation of authors who were interested in the past were William Faulkner, Ellen Glasgow, Eudora Welty, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, Walker Percy, Ralph Ellison, and John Barth. Among African American writers who also confronted the southern past were Ernest J. Gaines, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison.⁶

⁴ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 838

⁵ PROCHÁZKA, Martin. *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, nakladatelství Karolinum, 2002, p. 227

⁶ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 619-620

Hand in hand with the historical consciousness goes geography, although it is not perfectly clear where the South begins and ends. The eleven states that formed the Confederacy are clearly southern, but certain border states such as Kentucky and Missouri are also included. There is probably only one real city which is considered as southern, and that is New Orleans, which has a unique atmosphere thanks to its mixed architectural and cultural heritage. The attachment to their homeland is evident in writers such as William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor, as most of their works are set in the South.⁷

1.1.2. Storytelling tradition

In the South, the tradition of storytelling plays a very important role. The story is told for its own pleasure, and the oral folklore with its legends and fairy-tales is very important for the structure of many literary works, which is obvious in McCullers's *The Ballad of the Sad Café*.⁸ To the best storytellers belonged William Faulkner who evokes the classic image of storytelling, Elizabeth Spencer who is a master of allusion, Eudora Welty whose stories show humorous surface of small-town life while revealing a world in ironic opposition, and many others.⁹

1.1.3. Religion

Religion played an important part in forming southern history, culture, and literature and influenced the lives and works of southerners. The impact of religion on the literature had its origins in the South's bond to the land, in slavery, in defeat and occupation in war, and in a close agrarian community focused on a church. Whether one visited church or not, Bible stories were present in everyday experience. Many southern writers including Zora Neale Hurston, Allen Tate, or William Faulkner seen their homeland as a region of spiritual paradox. Faulkner explores human's longing for God in several works, such as *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August*, and *Absolom, Absolom!*. Religion is also a dominant theme in the works of Walker Percy and Flannery O'Connor. O'Connor had a status of an outsider

⁷ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 229-231

⁸ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 232

⁹ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 863-864

because she was a Roman Catholic in the mostly Protestant South. Religion was also crucial for some writers of the later generation including Reynolds Price, Will Campbell, Sheila Bosworth, Larry Brown, William Styron, and others.¹⁰

1.1.4. Race and slavery

Concerning southern history and culture, race is one of its defining ideas. The idea of race was used as a main justification for the institution of slavery and for the social order that lasted into the middle of the twentieth century. Race is also the central theme in literature. The literature of the pre-war era usually emphasized the idyllic plantation life and devoted slaves. It was the literature of white southern writers who defended slavery. On the other hand, slave narratives written by African American ex-slaves focused on the horrifying conditions and deprivations. Race has been a dominant element in the works of William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Robert Penn Warren, William Styron, Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and others.¹¹

1.1.5. Responsibility to family and community

For southern writers, family usually means the extended family consisting of uncles, aunts, cousins, great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters. History and genealogy of a certain southern families are important for their present generations, which show an inherited sense of identity that makes them different from other families in the community. Families also share knowledge learned from earlier generations and worked as individual's connection with the past. According to Andrew Lytle family was the institution of southern life. Because southern life was primarily agrarian and rural, the family usually stayed in one place for a long time and combined social and economic activities in one unit.¹² Responsibility to family in a traditional way is not very common. An example of true family devotion is seen in Faulkner's *Light in August*, and in *The Sound and the Fury*. Families in the works of "in search of love" generation are often incomplete and are not functioning very well.

¹⁰ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 731-735

¹¹ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 705-708

¹² *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 248-249

Characters usually feel stronger responsibility to their community rather than toward their family. In a southern community, everybody knows everybody, not anyone is excluded, and everyone has their own place within it.¹³

¹³ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 235-236

2. Genres of Southern Literature

Southern literature is usually recognizable by its certain identifiers such as social, geographic, cultural, political and historical features, but as Lucinda MacKethan writes in her essay, the South also has its own typical literary genres. It has its own particular set of forms, organizing motifs and stylistic conventions that could be pointed out as Southern. Among these genres which are associated with the South are the plantation novel, the slave narrative, southwestern humor, southern pastoral and counter-pastoral, southern modernism, the southern grotesque and grit lit. It might be said that southern literature is itself a genre: a body of texts bound together through similarities in areas of theme, setting, mood, message, structure or plot.

Genres usually classify works according to their similarities, but they also depend on differences. These are not only differences in forms and conventions, but also differences based on people's various perceptions of history within the same geographical places. From the slave South came different genres of slave narrative and plantation romance. The agrarian South produced both pastoral and anti-pastoral. Southern Renaissance writers produced modernist narrative, the grotesque narrative, and "grit" narrative.¹⁴

2.1. The South's Literatures of Slavery

The American institution of chattel slavery started with the first importation of captured Africans in the 1620s and continued till the Confederacy's surrender in 1865. Chattel slavery developed as a unique form of oppression in which, by law, the master had absolute rights over the person and his labor. The slave was used as a personal property, a chattel, which was used as suited his master's interest.¹⁵ By the second decade of the nineteenth century, slavery's legal practice was narrowed mostly within the plantation South.¹⁶

¹⁴ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online]. 2004 [cit. 2018-06-05]. DOI: 10.18737/M71590. ISBN 10.18737/M71590. Dostupné z: <https://southernspaces.org/node/42703>

¹⁵ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 140

¹⁶ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

2.1.1. Plantation fiction

Plantation in the South developed in the seventeenth century as agricultural ventures involving a large labor force of slaves and usually consisted of the planter's mansion, the slaves' quarters and sometimes a chapel or a school. The planter's status was not defined by land or capital but by the number of slaves he owned. That is why plantation is synonymous to slavery itself.¹⁷ White novelists of the South started to use plantation setting as an idealized world where lived characters with expected types of personal qualities. The plantation literature written by men authors was considered to belong to the genre of the historical romance, while women's writings were referred to as sentimental or domestic fiction. In the plantation fiction the planter aristocracy is the center of social organization for both male and female novelists. These works were usually promoting model slave societies founded upon the plantation ideal of patriarchy. Plantation fiction often included and often emphasized works written by local color writers after the Civil War.¹⁸

Among the male writers of the early nineteenth century could be mentioned George Tucker, John Pendleton Kennedy, William A. Caruthers and William Gilmore Simms. Their works usually dealt with specific historical events thus they were referred to as "historical romances." In their novels plantation was a place of the nobility of class as well as the nobility of spirit that the heroic male character must be an example. On the other hand, women's novels which are called sentimental or domestic, bear these labels in a pejorative way.

It reflects the idea that woman's place is at home, that politics and public life is inappropriate for them and that they should naturally teach their children the morals needed for gendered roles in society. White women's writing in the plantation South usually created stories of women that centered on "the marriage plot". *"Still it is important to see, in southern white women's antebellum fiction, the political value of the plantation as a social organization involving the ideal of slavery as a domestic institution."*¹⁹ Some of

¹⁷ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 648-649

¹⁸ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

¹⁹ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online]

the female writers of plantation fiction were interested in white upper-class women's experience within this ideal of planter society as well as men writers were interested in upper-class masculinity.

One of the most important works of plantation fiction is Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published in 1852. This work shows memorable versions of most of the stereotypes that we now associate with the plantation.²⁰

As a reaction to Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, southerners began to publish dozens of works of fiction and epic narratives poems as a counter-attack to Stowe's work. White southerners tried to undo the damage to their social image caused by her novel. Novels which followed the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are called "The Anti-Tom Novels." In 1854 appeared one of the most significant novels as a reaction to Stowe's novel. Thomas B. Thorpe's *The Master's House* and Caroline Lee Hentz's *The Planter's Northern Bride*. Other popular Anti-Tom novels were Mary Eastman's *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* (1852) or Maria McIntosh's *The Lofty and the Lowly* (1853). Generally, most of Anti-Tom novels pictured slaves as happy characters who live in a mutually supportive relationship with their masters.²¹

2.1.2. The Slave Narrative

While white southern writers used plantations as idealized settings, African American writers used the plantation scheme very differently in developing the North American slave narrative, which might be seen as America's first native literature. These works are often titled as "Fugitive Slave Narrative." Southern-born narrators who escaped the South were telling their firsthand experience of slavery. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* provided some key features for African American writers. Their works usually picture emotional dramatizations of slave life including the cruelty of masters, the depths of slave's suffering and the strength of their desire to be free. Slave narratives had power to move opinion against the institution of slavery.

²⁰ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 651

²¹ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

Most of these narratives were produced during the first great era of American literature (1830-1860). To the most paradigmatic works of the genre belong Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), *My Bondage and my Freedom* (1855) and Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). Douglass and Jacobs adopted novelistic techniques such as extensive dialogue between characters and thematic chapter headings.

In the 1970s writers as Ishmael Reed, William Styron, Octavia Butler and Charles Johnson "have brought the first-person slave narrator's voice into dialogue with modern practices of racial discrimination through the genre of neo-slave narrative."²² Neo-slave narratives may be set in antebellum South, in post-Reconstruction or twentieth-century America to explore the consequences of the African American's enslaved past. These works picture protagonist's desire to be free, either mentally or physically, from the bonds of slavery. Neo-slave narratives also evoke the African tradition of storytelling and put emphasis on passing the story to future generations.²³

2.2. Southern Pastoral Literature

The pastoral literature is a genre which is characterized by the tension between memories of a simpler past and present. The past is associated with nature and rural southern life where the natural world is considered the "good earth" or "the garden". This rural life is idealized and may seem nostalgic or fatalistic.

Pastoral literature developed in times of dramatic historical changes, when writers experienced a dislocation from a familiar home world and turned back to pastoral conventions. Civil War was usually seen as the historical dividing line between ideal past and real present. Local color writers of the South mythologized the plantation as a place where slavery was a feature of the idealization. Works written by local color writers had some distinctive features such as curious settings, attention to details of dress, manner and

²² MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

²³ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 535

speech, and marriage plots which focused on both highlighting and overcoming differences between families, classes and regions.²⁴

2.2.1. Southern Agrarianism

Authors as Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate and Donald Davidson became modern representatives for southern agrarianism. Their agrarianism had its roots in a myth of a traditional agricultural South. Their agrarianism prefers “*nature over the machine, contemplation over competition, rootedness over progress.*”²⁵ From the beginning, literature of southern agrarianism pictured farmer’s connection to the land as the mean of enjoying the good life.

2.2.2. Southern Modernism

Modernism in the United States designates patterns of mind and style as well as a relationship to the historical period of the early 1900s through World War II. Modernism reflects the pressures of the early twentieth century such as the disintegration or serious compromise of religious, governmental, gendered authority, the development of technologies or the mass migrations to the cities.

Southern writers absorbed these changes and interpreted the consequences for traditional assumptions about their place within a conservative, southern society. Southern writers understood the need for new literary techniques and new ways of using language and many of them, regardless of race or gender, had the tendency to combine pastoral thematics with modernist technical innovations. Typical example are William Faulkner’s novels of Yoknapatawpha. Faulkner found innovative linguistic and structural ways to access the past in order to dramatize the modern southerner’s loss of traditional approach of knowledge. He wrote novels that dealt with modern man’s disconnection from nature and memory, with the loss of faith in God or tradition, and with alienation of any maintaining conception of community. Other writers such as Robert Penn Warren, Eudora

²⁴ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

²⁵ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

Welty, Walker Percy and Zora Neale Hurston used similar modernist narrative techniques, mostly multiple points of view and disruptions of chronological time.²⁶

2.3. Southern Counter-Pastoral Literature

Writers of southern counter-pastoral literature did not write about idealized past as writers of pastoral literature. Their narratives present many souths “*as places of experience, not privileged artifacts of memory*” and “*create characters who subvert privilege based on race, class, gender or pride of place.*”²⁷

Works of counter-pastoral realists are not based on memories of the past and are not dominated by white traditions of authority. Instead these southern literatures focus on locating and questioning realities in the present. New kinds of characters such as the African American school teacher or the redneck truck driver are pictured as positive figures who become subjects and voices instead of objects and victims. Characters in counter-pastoral novels are often portrayed within plots of economic struggle. One of the well-known character that is typical for counter-pastoral literature is Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn. Other authors who wrote works of counter-pastoral are Charles Chesnutt, Kate Chopin, and even Zora Neale Hurston and her masterwork *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) can be considered as counter-pastoral.²⁸

2.3.1. Southwestern Humor

The southwestern humor tales satirize many elements of antebellum plantation fiction through characters who stand up against the classic qualities and slave-holding society and its hypocrisies. The stories contain exaggeration and their protagonists both critique and subvert the dominant power structure. Some tales offer versions of anarchy that target preoccupations with social class (any class claim to superiority is challenged).²⁹ Some

²⁶ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

²⁷ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

²⁸ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

²⁹ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

gentleman narrators of these tales sometimes view the lower class with amused disdain but more common relationship is one of mutual respect.³⁰

2.3.2. Southern Grotesque

According to *The Companion to Southern Literature*, *grotesque* “is a term applied to a decorative style in sculpture, painting, and architecture characterized by fantastic representations of intricately woven human, animal, and vegetable forms creating distortions of the natural to the point of comic absurdity, ridiculous ugliness, or ludicrous caricature.”³¹

In literature, the term *grotesque* is applied to anything that is different than an explicit or implicit norm. It can be something bizarre, ugly, unnatural, fantastic, abnormal. Literary grotesque appears in many forms, such as figures, or human beings with physical deformity, incoherent behaviour, or objects that appear to have become animated to possess an unusual amount of energy. One of the most significant elements of the grotesque is contrasting of “*paradoxical, and incompatible elements, such as an impossible or horrific event narrated matter-of-factly and with great detail, often provoking a humorous response.*”³² These opposites in the grotesque often evoke a powerful and emotional reaction in readers.

The grotesque could be divided into three subcategories which are roughly the same as kinds of humor: humor of a character, situational humor and purely linguistic humor. The grotesque quality of a character goes hand in hand with the frequent occurrence of handicapped people. Southern grotesque characters are often labelled as “misfits”, people who do not have any fixed place in society, and usually fail to find one. Situational grotesque is usually caused by the incompatibility between words and actions, between ideals and reality. The most significant creator of situational grotesque was probably Flannery O’Connor, whose characters quite often die in a funny way. Pure linguistic

³⁰ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 850

³¹ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 321

³² *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 321

grotesque is rare – it usually co-exists with either situational grotesque or the grotesque of a character.³³

The grotesque genre in southern literature begins with Edgar Allan Poe. His gothic works of horror appeared around the same time as southwestern humour writings. These two different genres share similar *“elements of distortion and displacement, gratuitous violence, and outrageous hostility.”*³⁴

In the twentieth century, southern authors of literary grotesques who incorporated into their fiction elements of grotesque humour were William Faulkner (uses grotesque to present spiritual matters of deep moral seriousness), Flannery O’Connor, Cormac McCarthy, Erskine Caldwell, Walker Percy, John Kennedy Toole or Mark Steadman. The use of the comic mode is a typical method of the writers of humour in the South, which is used as a mean of distance from the realistic portrayal of characters and actions that might otherwise overwhelm readers. Other creators of the grotesque are Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, who portrays a gothic world of decay where people are sexually abnormal or demented, and Carson McCullers who uses grotesques to reflect internal, psychological horrors.³⁵

2.3.3. Grit Lit

Grit Lit is a fiction devoted to the *“rough edges (“grit”) of life, or to the regionally commonplace or comic (“grits”), or to both.”*³⁶ Such stories typically deploy stark, sometimes violent narratives of poor white southerners. It often mixes violence and humor. Grit Lit employs violence as a feature which is often crucial as a prelude to grace or some fundamental transformation in character. To the writers of grit lit belong Cormac McCarthy with his work *Suttree* (1979), Larry Brown (*Big Bad Love*), and also William Faulkner and Flannery O’Connor.

³³ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 236-237

³⁴ MACKETHAN, Lucinda. *Genres of Southern Literature* [online].

³⁵ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 323

³⁶ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 319

3. American Gothic

According to Smith, any study of a genre is a study of repetitions, the patterns that constitute a tradition. And repetition is *“a hallmark of the Gothic in another sense too, as Freud identified repetition as one of the central characteristics of the uncanny.”*³⁷ Gothic characters are often shown as struggling in a web of repetitions caused by their unawareness of their own unconscious drives and motives. Repetition also figures in a Gothic understanding of trauma, when an experience is fully felt only in its echoing repetition at another time. The Gothic is about a return of the past, of the repressed and denied, the buried secret that subverts and destroys the present, whatever the culture does not want to know or admit, will not or dare not tell itself.³⁸

It is assumed that Gothic fiction has its beginnings in a dominant tradition of largely realist and morally respectable fiction. It is considered that *“gothic’s representations of extreme circumstances of terror, oppression and persecution, darkness and obscurity of setting, and innocence betrayed”*³⁹ begun with Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* published in 1764 and continued with Ann Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho* from 1794 and Mathew G. Lewis’s *The Monk* from 1796. But Gothic elements can be seen even in the earlier works that began the English novel tradition, for example in Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and *Clarissa* or in Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* (1722) and even long before them in the romance tradition, or in Thomas Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594); along with parts of Shakespeare’s plays and much Jacobean tragedy.

From the earliest period of American Gothicism, differences in American circumstances led American Gothicists in other directions.

“Rather than a simple matter of imitation and adaptation, substituting the wilderness and the city for the subterranean rooms and corridors of the monastery, or the remote house for the castle, dark and dangerous woods for the bandit instead mountains of Italy,

³⁷ LLOYD SMITH, Allan. *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*. New York: Continuum, 2004. Continuum studies in literary genre, p. 2

³⁸ *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 1

³⁹ *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 3

*certain unique cultural pressures led Americans to the Gothic as an expression of their very different conditions. Among these American pressures were the frontier experience, with its inherent solitude and potential violence; the Puritan inheritance; fear of European subversion and anxieties about popular democracy which was then a new experiment; the relative absence of developed "society"; and very significantly, racial issues concerning both slavery and the Native Americans."*⁴⁰

Some strict interpreters of the Gothic as a genre would say that the true period of Gothic, and its cultural, aesthetic, religious and political background, was from about 1764 to 1824, which was the period of the first Gothic Revival. The classic gothic novel is characterized by elements of magic, mystery, supernatural occurrences and horrific settings that impart an uncanny atmosphere of terror.⁴¹

Hallmarks of the Gothic include a pushing toward extremes and excess and that implies an investigation of limits. In exploring extremes, whether of cruelty, rapacity and fear, or passion and sexual degradation, the Gothic tends to reinforce culturally prescribed doctrines of morality and propriety. The Gothic deals in transgressions and negativity, perhaps in reaction against the optimistic rationalism of its founding era. Among the extremes and taboos that the Gothic explores are religious profanities, demonism, occultism, necromancy, and incest.

Gothic interest in extremes can also be seen to correlate with social anxieties and fears. These fears are connected with the suppression of past traumas and guilt, anxieties concerning class and gender, fear of revolution or worries about the developing power of science.⁴²

⁴⁰ *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 4

⁴¹ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 312

⁴² *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 5-7

Certain aspects of the American experience may be understood as inherently Gothic: religious intensities, frontier immensities, isolation, and violence; above all, perhaps, the shadows cast by slavery and racial attitudes.⁴³

Leslie Fiedler (1960) claims in one of his works, that American fiction has been a Gothic fiction, “*non-realistic and negative, sadist and melodramatic – a literature of darkness and the grotesque in a land of light and affirmation.*”⁴⁴

One of the other significant features of the Gothic genre is the style of its architectural settings. In early Gothic, these were ancient stone buildings with Gothic arches, passageways, and crypts, including hidden doorways and secret chambers. Landscapes in the Gothic were usually mountains, crags, and wastelands. Although the American landscape seemed inherently resistant to Gothic settings.

3.1. Examples of American Gothic Fiction

Among some works that are Gothic or at least contain Gothic elements could be mentioned for example John Neal’s *Rachel Dyer* (1828), Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Hollow of the Three Hills* (1830), Edgar Allan Poe’s *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1839), *The Man of the Crowd* (1840), *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1842), *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Black Cat* (1843), *The Raven* (1845) and many others. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe also includes Gothic episodes. Other American authors whose works contain some Gothic elements are Henry James, Frank Norris, William Dean Howells, Edith Wharton, John Hawkes, Flannery O’Connor, Stephen King, Toni Morrison and many others. Even the first American Gothic writers who engaged with the form, such as Charles Brockden Brown or Edgar Allan Poe, developed a version that shows differences from the English or European tradition.

The last mentioned, Edgar Allan Poe, left an indelible mark on the development of the genre. For example, Richard Gray claims in his work that Poe was “someone who was not

⁴³ *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 25

⁴⁴ *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 26

even born in the South but chose nevertheless to perceive himself in Southern terms.”⁴⁵ One of the things that makes Poe one of the leading figures of Southern Gothic is his treatment of race, of the region’s “dark legacy.” Critic Eric Savoy mentioned the “blackness” in connection with Poe’s *The Black Cat* and *The Raven*. According to David Punter, Poe’s “greatest contribution was in terms not of themes but of structure and tone in which he has never been surpassed.”⁴⁶

3.2. Southern Gothic

Allan Lloyd Smith wrote that Southern (and American Gothic) “explores the tensions between a culturally sanctioned progressive optimism and an actual dark legacy.”⁴⁷

The “dark legacy”, which is explored by Southern Gothicists, is primarily connected with the legacy of slavery and is therefore racial, political, moral, religious, spatial and even environmental in nature. So whilst the Southern Gothic may not have had the ruined castles, it did have its own source of blackness, which was not identified with evil but with racial blackness. Blackness is therefore the central concern in many of the critical discourses about Southern Gothic.⁴⁸

According to Teresa Goddu, the “foundational theme of Southern Gothic is the revelation that the nation is built on economic exploitation and racial terror.”⁴⁹ These themes, including the terrors of racial oppression, the legacy of slavery, the persistence of historical memory and the ability of a dark past to rupture contemporary reality, are most sophisticatedly treated in Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved*. According to the critics, Morrison is able to demonstrate how the pain of regional and national trauma can still influence individual lives.

⁴⁵ WALSH, Christopher J. “Dark Legacy”: *Gothic Ruptures in Southern Literature* [online]. In: . Salem Press (Critical Insights), 2013, s. 19-34 [cit. 2018-06-05]. Dostupné z: https://salempress.com/store/pdfs/southern_pgs.pdf, p. 24

⁴⁶ WALSH, Christopher J. “Dark Legacy”: *Gothic Ruptures in Southern Literature* [online], p. 25

⁴⁷ *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 118

⁴⁸ WALSH, Christopher J. “Dark Legacy”: *Gothic Ruptures in Southern Literature* [online], p. 21

⁴⁹ WALSH, Christopher J. “Dark Legacy”: *Gothic Ruptures in Southern Literature* [online], p. 22

According to *The Companion to Southern Literature*, Gothicism is a mode of fiction which can be characterized by grotesque characters and scenes, explorations of abnormal psychological states, dark humor, violence, and a sense of alienation or futility. Many southern gothic tales are based on similar myths of southern society: a patriarchal plantation aristocracy, built upon and haunted by a racist ethic, and a lower class living in isolation in closed communities, which are plagued by educational ignorance, religious fundamentalism, racial intolerance, genetic deformities, perverted sexuality, and violence.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 311

4. American Southern Writers

“Generally speaking, a Southern author is a writer who was born and has lived his formative years within the Southern area and who therefore to some degree displays in his works the so-called Southern temper.”⁵¹ Most of the writers lived in the South permanently, with the exception of Carson McCullers, Tennessee Williams, and Truman Capote, who lived at different places in the U.S. and also in Europe, but their writings remained Southern.

Before the First World War, the South was referred to as a cultural desert with a minimum of talented writers and poets. During the inter-war period many of the southern writers, almost at once, entered the literary scene: besides William Faulkner, there appeared Thomas Wolfe, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Katherine Anne Porter, Lillian Hellman, Erskine Caldwell and Cleanth Brooks. In the early 1940s and 1950s came another generation, which is often named the generation “in search of love” (the generation “in search of love” focuses more on intimate themes rather than on history, which was the key factor for William Faulkner): Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Flannery O’Connor, Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote. Capote’s first success came with *Other Voices, Other Rooms* in 1948. The story is set in the Deep South and its discussion of homosexuality made it quite controversial.⁵² His other famous novel is *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1958) in which he engaged themes of childhood isolation and loneliness. Although the story is not set in the South but in New York, the main protagonist cannot escape her southern origins, which is often the case of southern literary heroes. To the Carson McCullers’ masterpieces belong *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), *A Member of the Wedding* (1946) and *Clock Without Hands* (1961), which are all set in the South.⁵³ William Styron is also considered to be a Southern writer. His first novel *Lie Down in Darkness* was published in 1951 and then in 1967 he created a considerable stir with his

⁵¹ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 225

⁵² FLORA, Joseph M., Amber. VOGEL a Bryan Albin. GIEMZA. *Southern Writers: A New Biographical Dictionary*. [New ed.]. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, c2006., p. 59

⁵³ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 231

work *Confessions of Nat Turner*.⁵⁴ Styron's portrayal of Nat Turner brought him sharp criticism from some African American authors who claimed that Styron had little understanding of the slave experience. His greatest success came with the publication of the novel *Sophie's Choice* (1979) which focuses on the relationship between a young southern writer and Polish Holocaust survivor.⁵⁵

The younger generation of Southern writers was not united in any way and its writers met only accidentally. However, there was some attempt at organization and manifesto: in the early 1920s a small group of teachers and students at Vanderbilt University began meeting weekly to discuss their poems. They started to publish their own magazine of verse called *The Fugitive*. The main members of this group were Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren. They created a new literary tradition which was Southern (they refused the sentimentality of the local colour tradition). Their political and philosophical thinking can be seen in the manifesto *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*, by Twelve Southerners.

4.1. Robert Penn Warren

Robert Penn Warren is considered to be one of the greatest South's and also America's poets, novelists, biographers, teachers, scholar-critics and social historians and his works put a major influence on southern literature, and showed generations of students how to read and think about literature. In 1931 he published an essay on southern race relations *The Briar Patch*, which appeared in the collection *I'll Take My Stand*. His first collection of poetry, *Thirty-Six Poems* appeared in 1935. Themes that dominate not only Warren's poems but all his works are "lost innocence, fatal idealism, the inevitability of sin, the demand of forgiveness, the recognition of human complicity in all evil, the search for redemption, the hope against hope that lies in human relationship, the "awful responsibility of Time."⁵⁶ The poem that stands for all these themes is Warren's most complete work *Brother to Dragons*. His most recognizable work is *All the King's Men*, published in 1946. In this work, Warren created a character who was at the same time a narrator. This technique

⁵⁴ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 225-226

⁵⁵ *Southern Writers: A New Biographical Dictionary*, p. 390

⁵⁶ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 950

influenced many other southern writers including William Styron (*Lie Down in Darkness*), Walker Percy, and Richard Ford.

Warren's greatest influence on southern literature is measured in relation to poetry and his choice of language, including his violent lyricism, leaning toward narrative, and the storytelling dimension.⁵⁷ Similarly to William Faulkner, he chooses specific places of southern geography, and focuses on traditional southern values, such as honor, responsibility, and ethics.⁵⁸

4.2. Eudora Welty

Eudora Welty (1909-2001) is one of the most respected southern authors who influenced generation of southern writers such as Reynold Price, Anne Tyler, Lee Smith, Clyde Edgerton, and Bobbie Ann Mason. Her style was simple and elegant. In her writings she often paid attention to the concrete details of everyday life, to ordinary events and manners of her characters. Welty's characters were usually ordinary people who were often portrayed in humorous way. Sometimes she used physical qualities to show their interior feelings. She presents her characters objectively which allows readers to pass moral judgements of their own.⁵⁹ Welty argues that it is essential that characters are rooted in some historical and cultural place, but more important are feelings and truths that are challenged, and revealed through the fiction.⁶⁰

Her first full-length novel *Delta Wedding* was published in 1946. It portrays a plantation family and its detailed preparation for a wedding. This novel illustrates her "*merger of a modernist sensibility and style with a vivid regionality*,"⁶¹ which is an approach characterizing much of her fiction. Other influential work is her most famous short story

⁵⁷ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 951

⁵⁸ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 230

⁵⁹ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 956-957

⁶⁰ MONTEITH, Sharon. *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American South*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [2013]., p. 136

⁶¹ *Southern Writers: A New Biographical Dictionary*, p. 429

Why I Live at the P.O., which proved her most memorable character. Her first short story collection named *A Curtain of Green* was published in 1941.

4.3. Flannery O'Connor

Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964) is one of the most recognizable authors of modern southern fiction. Her themes and techniques she used in *Wise Blood* (1952), "*A Good Man is Hard to Find*", and "*Good Country People*" have become a model for many other writers. Three areas of her writing could be pointed out as the most influential, including her use of the grotesque connected with violence, her powerful religious thought, and her rich comic sense, often portrayed through the dialogue of ordinary people. O'Connor grotesque usually involves mixing of the humorous and the horrible, the absurd and the tragic. O'Connor also wants her characters to realize their spiritual disease, and need for grace in a material world. In such stories as "*Everything That Rises Must Converge*," and "*The Artificial Nigger*" she employs the South's race problems during the civil-rights period.⁶²

Similarly, to Eudora Welty, O'Connor believed that "*the art whether through humor, mystery, or both must articulate truth.*"⁶³

4.4. Tennessee Williams

Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) belongs to the first southern writers in the twentieth century who were internationally recognized. Williams is considered one of the region's leading playwrights, fiction writers, and poets, and although he is often compared to William Faulkner, who was also born in North Mississippi, their works are very different. To his most common themes belong the theme of displacement, loss, and dreaming of the past. Although he sometimes set his works in places as Rome or Tokyo, most of his works are set in New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta. In his writings, William's deals with human contrasts, such as violence and compassion, intolerance and understanding, and veracity and mendacity. William's characters are usually vulnerable people, who are not able to flow with the normative stream of society. To his most famous works belong *The Glass*

⁶² *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 600-601

⁶³ *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American South*, p. 136

Menagerie (1944), *Street Car Named Desire* (1947), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), or *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959).⁶⁴

4.5. Carson McCullers

Carson McCullers was born in Columbus on February 1917. During her career McCullers wrote short stories and novels. Among her most famous works belong *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1941) or *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1943).⁶⁵ In her books, Carson McCullers usually explored theme of man's problematic and painful existence. Man's life is usually presented at some critical point such as adolescence, loss of friendship, oncoming death, and leads to imaginary or real escape. In the second decade of her writing, McCullers's themes have changed, focusing more on "radiance" and "faith" than on "darkness" and "irony."⁶⁶ In the first decade of her career she mostly dealt with the "*spiritual isolation of the individual and the power of love to free him from this condition.*"⁶⁷ She was also concerned with the theme of loneliness which results from the lack of relationships with other people or with the self. In her novels, the search for self-identity parallels the search for ideal love.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ *The Companion to Southern Literature*, p. 963-964

⁶⁵ *Southern Writers: A New Biographical Dictionary*, p. 271-272

⁶⁶ BLOOM, Harold. *Carson McCullers*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986., p. 51-52

⁶⁷ BLOOM, Harold. *Carson McCullers*, p. 24

⁶⁸ BLOOM, Harold. *Carson McCullers*, p. 28-29

5. William Faulkner

5.1. Personal life

William Cuthbert Falkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi, on September 25, 1897. He was the firstborn son of Murry Cuthbert and Maud Butler Falkner and the great-grandson of William Clark Falkner, known as the Old Colonel. The Old Colonel did many things in his life and it was a life which left its mark. After the Civil war, the Old Colonel rebuilt his law practice and gained influence, power and prosperity as a banker and railroad developer. He was also a writer, best known for his melodramatic novel *The White Rose of Memphis* which was published in 1861. Joseph Blotner wrote about the Old Colonel and his influence on William Faulkner in 1974:

*“Lawyer, planter, soldier, politician, railroad builder, and writer – he truly excelled at none of them, but there was a dynamism in him which made him a legend (...) The great-grandfather would give his descendant priceless material for his work, and he in turn would confer upon his ancestor a kind of immortality.”*⁶⁹

Amongst William Faulkner’s works which were inspired by events connected with his great-grandfather, novels *Sartoris* (1929) and *The Unvanquished* (1938) can be mentioned. In these two novels, Faulkner fictionalized an assassination of the Old Colonel who was shot by his political rival.

Shortly after William’s birth, the Falkners moved from New Albany to Ripley, where Murry worked for the family owned *Gulf & Chicago Railroad*. William’s brothers Murry Charles (known as Jack) and John Wesley Thompson III (known as Johncy) were born there before the family moved to Oxford in 1902, where they started to live in the residence formerly occupied by Colonel J. W. T. Falkner. Maud Faulkner needed help in taking care of

⁶⁹ BLOTNER, Joseph. *Faulkner: A Biography*. One-volume ed., 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1991., p. 28

her three active sons so she hired Caroline Barr. She had been a house servant of the Young Colonel before going to work for Murry Falkner.

Caroline Barr became a second mother to Willie, Jack, and Johncy. They loved her stories and they loved her. She was a black woman who was born into slavery sometime around 1840 and she had been freed at sixteen.

William's third brother Dean Swift Faulkner was born in 1907. Maud Faulkner taught the brothers to read and introduced them to writers such as Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Grimm brothers, Shakespeare or Balzac. Although William was a bright child, he did not have a positive attitude towards school. He was rather learning by observing and experiencing. Faulkner started to write and read poetry sometime around 1910 and years later he began to write stories like those he was listening to, but even then he considered himself a "failed poet". His taste in poetry ran to Romantic, late-Romantic and even specifically Decadent verse. In his early poetry, he drew on his knowledge of English poetry of the nineteenth century.⁷⁰

William Faulkner grew up in a tense, emotionally edgy household in which his mother held dominion. William's father seemed to fail at everything he attempted. Weak or absent fathers modelled on Murry Falkner would recur in Faulkner's fiction; the theme of family decline would run through much of his work.⁷¹

In the summer of 1914, after dropping out of high school after the 10th grade, William had met his close friend and mentor Phil Stone. Stone was educated at the University of Mississippi and Yale. He educated Faulkner in literature, loaned him books and introduced him to classic and modern writers. Their relationship was pervasive – intellectual, aesthetic, social – and long-lasting, and it came at a crucial time in Faulkner's life.

⁷⁰ MINTER, David L. *William Faulkner: His Life and Work*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1997, p. 19

⁷¹ FARGNOLI, A. Nicholas., Michael GOLAY a Robert W. HAMBLIN. *Critical Companion to William Faulkner: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. New York: Facts On File, c2008., p. 4

In June 1929, William Faulkner married Estelle Oldham. Estelle was his childhood playmate and then his sweetheart for over a decade. She had wanted to elope with him but they failed to bring it off, and she had gone on to marry another man. She departed from Oxford, Mississippi and moved to Hawaii where she lived with her husband, Cornell Franklin. Shortly after the wedding, Estelle had returned to Oxford, first with her daughter Victoria and four years later with her son, Malcolm. Faulkner was still in love with Estelle and continued writing poetry for her.⁷² William and Estelle shared a love for poetry. His interest in it was fostered by his mother, who encouraged him to read English poets and who loved the work of Burns and nature poems such as Thomson's *The Seasons*.⁷³ William and Estelle's first daughter Alabama was born in 1931 but lived only nine days. Two years later, in 1933, their second daughter Jill was born. By this time, both her parents had drinking problems due to some financial issues.⁷⁴ During 1936 and 1945, William Faulkner spent some time in Hollywood, working for Warner Bros to get out of his financial problems. He co-scripted films as *To Have and Have Not* (1944) or *The Big Sleep* (1946).

When William Faulkner was wounded by Estelle's marriage to another man in 1918, he was determined to enter the Great War. But the air service of the U.S. Army turned him down because of his height. After that, he made his way to Toronto, pretended to be an Englishman, added "u" to his name and joined a flight training program with the Canadian air force. Although he did not earn his wings until late December 1918, he returned to Oxford in the role and uniform of a war veteran, full of stories of European flights.⁷⁵ In 1935, his youngest brother Dean died in an airplane crash. Faulkner blamed himself for the death of his brother because he was the one to introduce him to aviation.

In 1962, William Faulkner suffered some back injuries because he took a fall from a horse. He was taking painkillers and drinking heavily. Later that year, he was taken to sanatorium in Byhalia where he died of a heart attack on July, 6, 1962.

⁷² WEINSTEIN, Philip M. *Becoming Faulkner: The Art and Life of William Faulkner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012., p. 15

⁷³ BLOTNER, Joseph. *Faulkner: A Biography*, p. 36

⁷⁴ *Critical Companion to William Faulkner: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, p. 12

⁷⁵ *Becoming Faulkner: The Art and Life of William Faulkner*, p. 6

“He is buried in Oxford’s St. Peter’s Cemetery, at the foot of a hill and underneath a large oak tree, in a setting suggestive of the natural world that he loved so well.”⁷⁶

5.2. William Faulkner as a writer

As a writer, Faulkner was completely independent and preferred to live in isolation. As Daniel J. Singal wrote in *The Making of a Modernist* (1997), all his life, Faulkner would struggle to reconcile two divergent approaches to selfhood – the Victorian urge toward unity and stability he had inherited as a child of the southern rural gentry, and the Modernist drive for multiplicity and change that he absorbed very early in his career as a self-identifying member of the international artistic avant-garde. In light of this intricate structure of selfhood that Faulkner evolved, it should be no surprise that identity would take its place as a major subject of his fiction.

“Perhaps no other major American writer would struggle as hard as Faulkner did to become a Modernist, fighting to overcome the claims of family and region. His career would be spent gathering up the fragments of myth and culture that had been bequeathed to him in order to recast them into a workable identity that could withstand the new conditions of twentieth-century life and perhaps offer the possibility of heroic action. As with all Modernist quests, his struggle would fall short of success, but out of it would also come his greatest art.”⁷⁷

More than any other American writer, William Faulkner is associated with a region. Although he lived in Canada, New Orleans, Hollywood, and Virginia; although he lived briefly and visited frequently in New York and although he travelled through Europe and around the world - *“it was with a sense of place that he began. In addition to being strongly regional, the consciousness that dominates Faulkner’s fiction is strongly historical.”⁷⁸* For Faulkner, the story of region was inseparable from the story of family. Centering on family

⁷⁶ *Critical Companion to William Faulkner: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, p. 17

⁷⁷ SINGAL, Daniel Joseph. *William Faulkner: The Making of a Modernist*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c1997.

⁷⁸ *William Faulkner: His Life and Work*, p. 2

but extending beyond it is everywhere present in his fiction, from the Sartorises to the Compsons to the McCaslins.

William Faulkner loved the land where he was born, including the physical land as seen in all seasons and weathers. In Faulkner's novels and stories nature is sometimes merely background and seems important only because his works are set in the countryside. But nature is often much more than a background and has number of functions. "*Nature frequently reflects, and may even generate, a mood in man.*"⁷⁹ In spite of Faulkner's loving contemplation of nature, he expects man to struggle with it.

*"Between 1929 and 1936 William Faulkner published novels about childhood, families, sex, race, obsessions, time, the past, his native South, and the modern world. He invented voices for characters ranging from sages to children, criminals, the insane, even the dead – sometimes all within one book. He developed, beyond this ventriloquism, his own unmistakable narrative voice, urgent, intense, highly rhetorical. He experimented with narrative chronology and with techniques for representing mind and memory. He invented an entire southern county and wrote its history."*⁸⁰

During the years 1919 and 1920 William Faulkner enrolled as a special student at the University of Mississippi. In 1919, he wrote more and more. He wrote *The Marble Faun* which became his first book, although it would not be published until December 1924. The publication was arranged by his friend, Phil Stone. He also wrote "*L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*", his first published poem which appeared in the *New Republic* in August 1919. In November 1919, the student newspaper, *The Mississippian*, published his first short story *Landing in Luck*. In 1925, Faulkner went to New Orleans, where he met literary people, including Sherwood Anderson, who encouraged him to develop his own style, to concentrate on prose, and to use his region for material. In New Orleans, Faulkner wrote his first novel *Soldier's Pay*, which was originally titled as *Mayday*. In 1925, Sherwood

⁷⁹ BROOKS, Cleanth. *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country*. Louisiana pbk. ed. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1963., p. 30

⁸⁰ BAYM, Nina a Robert S. LEVINE, ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, c2007., p. 1858

Anderson recommended it to his own publisher, who published it in 1926. His second novel named *Mosquitos* was published in 1927 and it was a satire on New Orleans intellectuals.

In 1929 novel *Sartoris* was published. It was originally written as *Flags in the Dust* but it was rejected by the publisher. In this work Faulkner focused on the interconnections between a prominent southern family and the local community. According to David Minter, *Flags in the Dust* is the first novel in which Faulkner drew directly on family legends. He created a character named Gail Hightower, whose life revolves around moments out of his family's past.⁸¹ The Sartoris family as well as many other characters appeared in later works, and the region, renamed Yoknapatawpha County, was to become the locale of Faulkner's imaginative world.

Yoknapatawpha County with its capital Jefferson is a whole fictional region, which is based on the real Lafayette County and its capital Oxford. This mythical tract of land is present in all of his major works. He even drew various maps of this area.⁸² Yoknapatawpha is a county in northern Mississippi. Except for the storekeepers, mechanics and professional men who live in Jefferson, all the inhabitants are farmers or woodsmen. A few of them live in big plantation houses, but more of them live in wooden farmhouses. But most of them are tenants, no better housed than slaves on good plantations before the Civil war.⁸³ According to Malcolm Cowley (1946) Faulkner might have divided his work into a number of cycles. One about the planters and their descendants, one about the townspeople of Jefferson, one about the poor whites and one about the Negroes. All the cycles or sagas are closely interconnected.

In the two stories "*That Evening Sun Go Down*" and "*A Justice*", Faulkner introduced the Compson family. In 1928, he began to write a story named "*Twilight*" about Candace Compson and her brothers Quentin, Jason and Benjy, the genesis of *The Sound and the Fury*, which was published in October 1929.⁸⁴ *The Sound and the Fury* is divided into four

⁸¹ *William Faulkner: His Life and Work*, p. 16

⁸² *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 229

⁸³ FAULKNER, William and MALCOLM COWLEY. *The Portable Faulkner*. New York: The Viking press, 1946., p. 5

⁸⁴ *Critical Companion to William Faulkner: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, p. 9

parts, each of them has a different narrator, each supplying the different piece of the plot. Three of the narrators are brothers Benjy, Quentin and Jason, who lost their sister Caddie.

*“While the story moves out to the disintegration of the old southern family to which these brothers belong, its focus is on the private obsessions of the brothers, and it invents an entirely different style for each narrator.”*⁸⁵ Only the last part, which is told from a traditionally omniscient point of view, provides a sequential narration.

In October 1930, *As I Lay Dying* was published. The manuscript of this novel was written in a very short time. Like *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), it is organised around the loss of a beloved woman, of a mother. The “poor white” Bundren family takes her body to the town of Jefferson for a burial. *“The family’s adventures and misadventures on the road are comic, tragic, grotesque, absurd, and deeply moving.”*⁸⁶ As Cleanth Brooks wrote in 1963, Faulkner mixed together *“the grotesque and the heroic, the comic and the pathetic, pity and terror, creating a complexity of tone that has proved difficult for some readers to cope with.”*⁸⁷

Neither *The Sound and the Fury* nor *As I Lay Dying* were very popular. However in 1931, Faulkner’s work *Sanctuary* attracted considerable attention. It is a sensational work about sex, gangsters, official corruption, and urban violence. *Sanctuary* is not only a gangster novel, it is also something of a detective novel, because the meaning of certain events is not revealed until the end and the plot is full of sudden and surprising developments.⁸⁸ In this predominantly Gothic novel, Faulkner destroys the traditional linear development of a detective story, and lets each of his heroes experience their own, that is subjective, sense of time. New narrative techniques are associated with this new philosophical concept. Faulkner works both with the stream-of-consciousness method and with the variation of points of view.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, p. 1859

⁸⁶ *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, p. 1859

⁸⁷ *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country*, p. 141

⁸⁸ *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country*, p. 119

⁸⁹ *Lectures on American Literature*, p. 228

As William Faulkner continued to produce his greatest works, *Light in August* was published in 1932. “Light in August counterpointed a comic pastoral about the pregnant earth-mother figure Lena Grove with a grim tragedy about the embittered outcast Joe Christmas, who may or may not be racially mixed; it interrelated individual psychology and cultural pathology.”⁹⁰ The characters in *Light in August* are in tension with nature, and some have even been deformed and perverted in a struggle against it.

In October 1936, William Faulkner published his considered masterpiece, *Absalom, Absalom!*. The novel chronicles the rise and fall of the Yoknapatawpha County planter Thomas Sutpen, the ruthless would-be founder of a southern dynasty after the Civil War. The story of Thomas Sutpen is related by four different speakers and each of them is trying to find the meaning of the story. “Like Faulkner’s earlier novels, *Absalom* is simultaneously about an individual, about the South, and about itself as a work of fiction. But the emphasis shifts from the private psychology that dominated in earlier work to social psychology: to the collective mind of the South.”⁹¹

With World War II., Faulkner’s work became more traditional and less difficult. He began to write about the rise, in Yoknapatawpha County, of the poor white family named Snopes. *The Hamlet* was the first of three novels devoted to the Snopes and it was published in 1940. It was followed by *The Town*, which was published in 1957. Faulkner closed out the Snopes chronicle by *The Mansion*, published in November 1959.⁹² Faulkner’s final work, *The Reivers*, was published in 1962. It is a nostalgic return both to Yoknapatawpha and to childhood.

Being one of the greatest American authors, William Faulkner was awarded many prizes. In 1949 he was awarded Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1951 he won the National Book Award for *The Collected Stories of William Faulkner*.

⁹⁰ *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, p. 1859

⁹¹ *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, p. 1859

⁹² *Critical Companion to William Faulkner: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, p. 17

He was also awarded the 1955 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction along with another National Book Award for his novel *A Fable*. He was posthumously awarded his second Pulitzer in 1963 for *The Reivers*.⁹³

One of the most celebrated and discussed things of Faulkner's works is his use of language. His use of linguistic innovations and modernistic tropes such as stream of consciousness and narratives in which events unfold via the perspectives of multiple narrators does much to add to the Gothic atmosphere of his works. This use of techniques could seem difficult and disorienting and his works may not be the easiest to read.

⁹³ *William Faulkner Biography* [online]. A&E Television Networks [cit. 2018-06-05]. Dostupné z: <https://www.biography.com/people/william-faulkner-9292252>

6. William Faulkner's Short Stories

In comparison with Faulkner's novels, which are structurally innovative, his short stories are mostly traditional in structure, nevertheless innovations in point of view and the use of narrators are also evident in his short stories. Most of them are related to the novels in setting, theme, and characters, and some of them were developed into novels. Faulkner's short stories are available in three collections. *Knight's Gambit*, a collection of six detective stories, was published in 1949. The following year, forty-two pieces were published in *Collected Stories*, and the third volume, *Uncollected Stories*, edited by Joseph Blotner, was published in 1979. It consists of twelve stories that were not included in any previous collection, and thirteen unpublished pieces.⁹⁴ Although Faulkner wrote short stories primarily to make money, "he brought to that genre the vision and skills that created the novels."⁹⁵

He wrote most of the short stories in his most productive period: the late 1920s to the early 1940s, which was the time when Faulkner was a realistic writer, and his primary interest was in the individual. He wrote about human's struggle for self-expression, freedom, and integrity, and about social forces that shaped a human being, his thinking and behaviour. Up to a few exceptions, most of the short stories are set in the village of Jefferson, Mississippi. He focused on the American South, Southern society, Southern history, Southern attitudes and values, Southern social classes, and Southern problems.⁹⁶ In his narratives he reflected his interests, such as morality, nature of evil, trauma resulting from the loss of innocence and the discovery of evil, human sexuality and death, familial relations, the nature of time, and the conflict between the natural and the social.

One of the most important things in Faulkner's fiction, both novels and short stories, is the setting. In *Collected Stories* (1950), Faulkner divided forty-two stories in six groups,

⁹⁴ VOLPE, Edmond Loris. *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2004., p. xii

⁹⁵ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 1

⁹⁶ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 2

basically geographical: The Country, The Village, The Wilderness, The Wasteland, The Middle Ground, and Beyond.

Characters from the group “The Country” are residents of the countryside around Jefferson. These characters are usually poor white farmers, who were admired by Faulkner for their integrity, independence, and acceptance of the hard farming life. Stories in “The Village” deal with upper-class characters, prosperous families, and descendants of early settlers in the region. In these stories, Faulkner focused on the tensions within and among the social and economic classes in the village. In the stories of “The Wilderness” Faulkner dealt with the aboriginal people of Mississippi. He portrays them as simple people who are not influenced by abstractions of Southern society. Short stories included in “The Wasteland”⁹⁷ are about World War I and its influence on the men who fought in it and lost their illusions. Stories in “The Middle Ground” section (with one exception) are either set beyond Jefferson’s county or present time is in another period than the time that Faulkner was writing. The last category called “Beyond” includes stories that are set beyond the borders of the United States and the ones that are beyond the bounds of reality.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ William Faulkner derived the title from T.S. Elliot

⁹⁸ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 3-6

7. A Rose for Emily

A Rose for Emily is Faulkner's first short story which was published in a nationally recognized magazine. It appeared in 1930 in the April issue of the *Forum*. It was later included in *These 13* (1931), *The Portable Faulkner* (1946), *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950) and in *Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner* (1962). In *Collected Stories* it was included in the part "The Village." It belongs to Faulkner's most appreciated, and most anthologized short stories. *A Rose for Emily* is told from the first person plural point of view by an unnamed narrator, which suggest that the narrator is speaking from the collective perspective of the town.⁹⁹ The story is divided into five parts and Faulkner interrupts the chronological order, opening the story with Emily's funeral and then focusing on her life and past. The story is traditionally set in Jefferson, in Yoknapatawpha county.

A Rose for Emily is a story about Miss Emily Grierson, a story which explores themes such as tradition, loneliness, isolation, living in the past and the inability to let go and adapt to changes. The tone of the story is mysterious and dark with the elements of gothic and horror as it includes dark descriptions of an old mansion, a murder, a rotting body, and also the theme of necrophilia, which is a sexual act with the corpse of another human being.

Miss Emily Grierson came from a wealthy family and throughout her life she was dependent on her father. Relationship between Miss Emily and her father is one the important themes, as it affected her present and future life. During her life, Emily Grierson was not seen in a company of any man because according to her father no one was good enough for her. Her father's attitude and perception of their family is expressed in a following line: "*the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such.*"¹⁰⁰ This suggest that the Grierson family might have felt superior to the rest of the families in town and therefore they did not accept anyone else among them.

⁹⁹ FARGNOLI, A. Nicholas. a Michael GOLAY. *William Faulkner A to Z: The Essential Reference To His Life and Work*. New York: Facts on File, c2002., p. 195

¹⁰⁰ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily: Růže pro Emilii*. Přeložil Josef SCHWARZ, přeložil Zdeněk URBÁNEK. Praha: Garamond, 2016. Unabridged., p. 14

The Griersons were even isolated from the rest of their relatives as Emily's father had fallen out with them. After her father's death she began to live in isolation and did not want to accept the truth about her father. She was living in the past where her father was alive and that was what she claimed for three days after her father's passing. The inability of letting go of the past is expressed in the last sentence of the second part, which says: "*We remember all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.*"¹⁰¹ Although her father enabled her to have a relationship, he was the only thing she had left. The omnipresence of Emily's father even after his death is seen in a crayon portrait of him standing "*on a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace.*"¹⁰² The portrait was later present at Emily's funeral, suggesting that he was the only man to be in her life.

Another sign of living in the past is pictured in a scene where Emily does not want to pay her taxes because Colonel Sartoris freed her from paying. Colonel Sartoris died and when the new generation, with its more modern ideas wanted her to pay, she told them to see Colonel Sartoris. In Emily's mind Colonel was still alive although he was dead for ten years. When she received a letter concerning the taxes, she replied with a letter written "*on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink.*"¹⁰³ Using an archaic paper could be interpreted as another example of living more in the past than in the present.

The contradiction between the old and the new, between traditional and the modern and between the present and the past is evident throughout the whole story. Miss Emily is not able to adapt to the changes of a modern society and therefore she represents the traditional approach of Southern society. In the first part the narrator describes Miss Emily as "*a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town*"¹⁰⁴, which also suggest that although she lived a lonely life in isolation, she was an inherent part of the town.

¹⁰¹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 16

¹⁰² FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 10

¹⁰³ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 8

¹⁰⁴ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 6

Her death could be understood as the end of the traditional society and the beginning of the new, modern era. She is also referred to as a “fallen monument” which indicates that in the past, in the traditional generation she might have been admired, but in the present time she is at the bottom of the society and most of the people pity her, often saying “poor Emily.”

Another example of better past is evident in the description of Emily’s house and in the descriptions of her appearance. The descriptions of the past are connected with splendor compared to descriptions of the present which express decay.

At first, the Grierson’s mansion is described as *“a big, squarish house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most selected street.”*¹⁰⁵ This description points out the bygone magnificence of the house and the street. The words “white” and “lightsome” could relate to a brighter and easier past. In the present the house is described as *“a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse – a close, dank smell. It was furnished in heavy, leather-covered furniture.”*¹⁰⁶ The dark and the dust picture Emily’s home as a scary, gothic place representing decay.

Emily’s house is not the only thing to be pictured in a mysterious and gothic tone. The description of Emily herself is parallel to the decaying house she lives in, which is shown in a following paragraph where Emily is described as:

“a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been seen merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost

¹⁰⁵ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 6

¹⁰⁶ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 8

in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough”¹⁰⁷

According to her appearance, Emily seems to be strange, dark and gothic person. Everything that once used to be white is now covered in black. In some ways her appearance might be said to be grotesque concerning her small, fat figure with small eyes which looked like pieces of coal in a dough.

The most gothic scene of the story comes at its end. During her life, Miss Emily was able to meet only one man, Homer Barron. Everyone in the town believed that Emily would marry him, but after some time Homer disappeared and Emily stopped going out of her house permanently. After her funeral, it is revealed that Emily killed her lover with arsenic, kept his rotting body in a locked room and slept beside him for forty years. Due to her position, no one would even suspect her of committing such thing. Emily was desperate for human contact, for love. She wanted to belong to somebody, not to feel lonely and for her, killing Homer was the only way to achieve her goal and spend a lifetime with a man. One of the things that could have led Emily to a murder was the influence of her father. She knew that he enabled her to be in a relationship even after his death. In the story is also mentioned that Homer did not want to get married and therefore she could have decided to insure his love by poisoning him.

Throughout the whole story, Emily lives more in the world of the dead than in the world of the living. The only sign of life in her home and life is represented by the Negro man, her servant, who was the one to reveal her secret.

The meaning of a “rose” in the title could be interpreted in several ways. In one sense, the rose could represent Homer. When he lay in the rose-colored bedroom as a dried rose, it could serve as a relic of the past. In another sense, the rose offered by the narrator could represent a final tribute to Emily. In ancient history a rose served as a symbol of silence, secrecy and privacy which could be linked to Emily’s private, silent life lived in

¹⁰⁷ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 10

isolation.¹⁰⁸ A white rose is also a symbol of purity, which could have the connection with Emily's virginity, although this information is not confirmed but only deduced from the context.

A Rose for Emily depict some of the features of Southern gothic, such as the return of the past, buried secrets, dark places and characters, or isolation. With the theme of necrophilia, *A Rose for Emily* belongs to Faulkner's most controversial short stories.

¹⁰⁸ GETTY, Laura J. *Faulkner's A ROSE FOR EMILY* [online]. The Explicator. Washington, 2005

8. Red Leaves

Red Leaves belongs to Faulkner's most anthologized short stories. It was first published in October 1930 by the *Saturday Evening Post*. The story was later revised for *These 13* (1931) and included in *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950) and *Selected Stories of William Faulkner* (1962). Parts of the story were used in revised form in *Big Woods* (1955) as a prelude for "The Old People."¹⁰⁹ The story is divided into six parts and four of the six sections are devoted to the Chickasaws. In the Indian parts, Faulkner used a great deal of dialogue, using the simplicity of the Indian's speech and therefore creating the sense of a primitive culture.¹¹⁰ The story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator. It is set sometime before the Civil War, before the land that was to become Yoknapatawpha County, had been completely settled by whites.¹¹¹

In *Collected Stories*, the story is included in "The Wilderness," in which Faulkner dealt with the aboriginal people of Mississippi. There are four short stories which are dedicated to Indians, all included in the "The Wilderness." Among these stories are *Red Leaves*, *A Justice*, *Lo!* and *A Courtship*. Faulkner's treatment of Indian life is usually not very accurate. He often confuses the customs of the two Mississippi tribes, and labels Indians in his works indiscriminately as Chickasaws or Choctaws. Some characters are first labelled as Choctaws and later appear in other stories as Chickasaws. It is the case of Francis Weddel, who was mentioned as a Choctaw chief in *Mountain Victory*, and then as Chickasaw chief in *Lo!*. The Mississippi Indians were also not cannibalistic as Faulkner portrays them in *Red Leaves*.¹¹² Indians are also mentioned in Faulkner's other works, such as *Go Down Moses*, *Requiem for a Nun*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *The Town*, and *The Reivers*.¹¹³

Concerning the title of the story, William Faulkner explained it as symbolism:

¹⁰⁹ SKEI, Hans H. *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, c1999., p. 136

¹¹⁰ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 141-142

¹¹¹ NOLEN, Larry. *Faulkner Friday: "Red Leaves" (1930)* [online]. 2012

¹¹² HOWEL, Elmo. William Faulkner and the Mississippi Indians. *JSTOR* [online]

¹¹³ HAYASE, Hironori. *Faulkner's Depiction of Indians* [online]. Saga University

“The red leaves referred to the Indian. It was the deciduation of nature which no one could stop that have suffocated, smothered destroyed the Negro. That the red leaves had nothing against him when they suffocated him and destroyed him. They had nothing against him. They probably liked him, but it was normal deciduation which the red leaves, whether they regretted it or not, had nothing more to say in.”¹¹⁴

In this quotation, Faulkner not only explained the meaning of the title but also the reason for the burial ritual of the Negro slave. According to the burial tradition, the black slave must die after the death of his chief. It is a natural life cycle, just as the law of nature decrees that fall and spring follow summer and winter. Humans are part of nature, and in the pattern of natural existence all living things must die.¹¹⁵

The story deals with the death of an Indian chief, Issetibbeha, and the pursuit of his black slave who must be buried with his master. It was an important tradition for Indians. Even though the slave knew that his death is inevitable, he tries to resist his own death as he wishes to live. The slave’s escape is not meant to be a serious attempt to avoid his capture. It symbolizes motion, resistance to death, and motion and resistance mean life.¹¹⁶ Food and water could be other symbols of life as he slave tries to eat and drink before his death. It represents a certain struggle for life, which is lost as the Negro cannon swallow. The slave’s escape could be seen as another example of tradition as it always happens after the master’s death.

While two other Indians, Three Basket and Louis Berry, try to find the slave, they are discussing their attitude towards slavery. Three Basket criticizes slavery and refers to the good old days when slaves were not a part of Indian community. For Indians, slaves represent burden as they have to think what to do with them. They do not see any benefit from their coexistence. Their attitude is pictured in a following quotation:

¹¹⁴ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 138

¹¹⁵ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 138

¹¹⁶ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 142

*"I have said all the time that this is not a good way. In the old days there were no quarters, no Negroes. A man's time was his own then. He had time. Now he must spend most of it finding work for them who prefer sweating to do. They are like horses and dogs. They are like nothing in this sensible world. Nothing contents them save sweat. They are worse than the white people."*¹¹⁷

Another almost similar opinion appears later again in Three Basket's and Louis Berry's conversation, as they talk about the world and their society:

*"It is being ruined by white men. We got along fine for years and years, before the white men foisted their Negroes upon us."*¹¹⁸

Although slavery is presented as a burden for the Indians, they keep slaves for profit. The Indians were first introduced to slavery through Issetibbeha's father, Doom, who travelled from Mississippi to New Orleans which was a European city. Doom tried to cultivate the land as the white people did. After his death, Issetibbeha became owner of the land, and did not know what to use the blacks for. The Indians even discuss if they should eat the Negroes, but they decided that:

*"They are too valuable; remember all the bother they have caused us, finding things for them to do. We must do as the white men do."*¹¹⁹

Eventually, they decided to follow the white men's example, clear the land, plant food, raise more Negroes, and sell them to the white men for money although they did not know what to do with the money. William Faulkner explored the theme of corruption, and the influence of the whites and money. The corruption of the Chickasaws begins as soon as the whites enter their lives, causing the decline of traditional and natural life among the Indians. They adopted the white's attitude towards the Negro slaves, but ironically, the

¹¹⁷ FAULKNER, William. *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*. New York: Vintage International, [1995]., p. 314

¹¹⁸ *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*, p. 323

¹¹⁹ *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*, p. 319

Chickasaws are led by chiefs with black blood as Issetibbeha's as well as Mocketubbe's mother was of the black origin.¹²⁰

After selling forty slaves, Issetibbeha travelled to New Orleans and then to Paris, from where he brought a gilt belt, a pair of girandoles, and a pair of slippers with red heels. The slippers could symbolize power as they belonged to the Man. Issetibbeha's son, Mocketubbe often tries to get his feet into the slippers and later he had stolen and hidden them. The slippers may symbolize a conflict between Issetibbeha and Mocketubbe as Mocketubbe wanted to be the Man and feel powerful. By stealing the slippers, Mocketubbe symbolically stole his father's power. He insists to wear them even though cannot breathe as he feels pain every time he puts them on. Despite that he cannot even move, which may suggest the exact opposite of power.

In *Red Leaves*, William Faulkner portrayed an Indian community corrupted by the influence of the whites. He explored the theme of traditions, traditional and natural way of life and its decline, the theme of power, and man's resistance to death and struggle for life.

¹²⁰ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 140

9. Dry September

Dry September is one of Faulkner's most famous short stories and many critics consider it to be one of his best. Its original title was "*Drought*" and it was first published in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1931 and then included in *These 13* the same year. In 1950 it also appeared in *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* in the section called "The Village", in which Faulkner usually dealt with tensions among the social and economic classes in the village. Although *Dry September* belongs to one of Faulkner's shortest stories, it is divided into five short sections. The first and the third sections deal with the rumor and men's reaction to it, sections two and four focus on a character of Miss Minnie Cooper, and the last part is set in McLendon's home. Like many of his short stories and novels, *Dry September* is set in Jefferson, the capital of fictional Yoknapatawpha county. The story is narrated in third person by an unnamed narrator.

Dry September is a story of many themes, such as the theme of gossip and rumor, oppression, prejudice, justice or violence. Violence originates in the tense relationship between the whites and the blacks, as the whites are usually oppressors who are violent to their former black slaves, which often culminates in lynching organized by a white mob. Even though slavery was abolished, racism and social inequality was still current. The theme of violence is shown in many Faulkner's works, for example in *Light in August*, *Go Down Moses* or *Intruder in the Dust*.

The story of *Dry September* begins on one Saturday evening in a barber shop where men of Jefferson are gathered and discussing a rumor which spreads quickly among all residents of the town. It is a rumor about a black man Will Mayes who is accused of raping a white woman Minnie Cooper. In the first paragraph, the rumor is said to spread "*like a fire in dry grass*"¹²¹, which suggests how urgent it is, how quickly it goes throughout the town and that it just like fire affects everyone. This is only one of the examples of symbolic connection between the weather and the situation in the story. The connection with weather can be seen even in the first line of the story – "*through the bloody September*

¹²¹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 158

*twilight*¹²² – where the word “bloody” could refer to the bloody action that followed the violent lynching of Will Mayes. Also the men in the barber shop decided to act very quickly and irrationally which could be compared to the quick spreading of fire. Another reference to the dry weather is noticeable in a part where one of the men in a barber shop says: “*It’s this durn weather. It’s enough to make a man do anything. Even to her.*”¹²³ This proposition confirms that Minnie Cooper is considered to be an unattractive woman and is therefore highly unlikely that she would be raped. On the other hand, it looks like the man is on Minnie’s side and believes that due to the unbearable weather Will Mayes would be able to rape her. It could be said that the drought brings despair into the character’s lives and plays a significant role in the whole story.

Most men in the barber shop, except one of the barbers, named Henry Hawkshaw, believe the rumor, that a black man took advantage of an innocent white woman. None of them know what exactly has happened but they stand by Miss Minnie Cooper and claim that a white woman could not lie, therefore her claim must be taken seriously. Some of them do not even care if the story is true. They want to take some action, which they call justice, against a black man, because something similar could happen in a future. The theme that Faulkner is exploring is sometimes referred to as the White Goddess concept. It is a concept in which a white Southern male believes that a white Southern woman cannot tell a lie. An absolute lack of evidence or proof is not decisive in forming their opinion.¹²⁴ This concept concerning a white woman and a rape appears not only in *Dry September* but also in *Light in August* or in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which is also structured around lynching of a black man, caused by an accusation that he raped a white woman.

The main character to organize the lynch mob is John McLendon. Some of the men might not have been fully convinced that the accusation is true. But when McLendon comes in, he convinces everyone (except Hawkshaw) that justice must be done. When someone suggests gathering some facts before and accuses Minnie Cooper of spreading lies in the

¹²² FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 158

¹²³ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 160

¹²⁴ MCMANUS, Dermot. "Dry September by William Faulkner." *The Sitting Bee*. The Sitting Bee, 13 Aug. 2014. Web.

past, McLendon is outraged and replies: *“What the hell difference does it make? Are you going to let the black sons get away with it until one really does it?”*¹²⁵ This might suggest that even McLendon does not believe the rumor. But based on the White Goddess concept, it is not important for him. He wants to be in the superior position and wants others to follow him as he is desperate for some action. The most significant theme in this behavior is the theme of prejudice, deeply connected with the Southern society. One rumor is applied as a general truth to all black men who should not be trusted but should be punished. In the end of the story, when McLendon returns home, he is the one who is cruel and violent to his own wife.

Another dominant theme in the story is the theme of justice. The only one who stands for justice and is not affected by prejudices of Southern society is Henry Hawkshaw, the barber. He tries to convince the others, that Will Mayes is a good man, but no one listens to him and due to his position, he is called a “niggerlover”, which is very offensive for a white man. Hawkshaw wants justice and is the only one who wants to find out the facts and get the sheriff involved. Although he tries to stand for justice he is powerless in comparison with McLendon’s persuasion skills and his need for blood. Hawkshaw and McLendon could be understood as two opposites, where Hawkshaw represents justice and calm, reasonable behavior and McLendon stands for violence and wild nature. Their divergent attitudes are expressed in a line where Faulkner writes: *“They looked like men of different races.”*¹²⁶ When the men in the barber shop decided to find and lynch Will Mayes, Hawkshaw followed them, still hoping he could reverse the situation. Regardless Henry’s attempt to save Will, the mob takes Will into the car and plans to kill him. Hawkshaw wants to get out of the car which could symbolize his fear or giving up hope. Although there is not explicitly written that Will was murdered, one can assume from the situation where the lynching mob returns without him. After Will’s death the situation seems calm and the “bloody twilight” changed into the moon which *“was higher, riding high and clear of the dust at last.”*¹²⁷

¹²⁵ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 164

¹²⁶ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 164

¹²⁷ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 180

Concerning one of the central characters, Miss Minnie Cooper, it could be said that she is in a “Dry September” of her life. Her life is at a point where everything is empty and therefore she seeks any kind of attention. The lost attention is expressed in part where Faulkner writes that *“the sitting and lounging men did not even follow her with their eyes any more.”*¹²⁸ Due to her sexual frustrations she spreads the rumor, not thinking about the consequences. In order to be noticed and feel wanted, as she was during her younger years, she is the one to cause Will’s death. She always wore bright dresses, which could be understood as an attempt to bring something bright and colorful into her unfulfilled life.

By letting out the rumor she again became the center of attention because *“even the young men lounging in the doorway tipped their hats and followed with their eyes the motion of her hips and legs when she passed”*, which shows Minnie as an object of sexual desire. When she was in the theatre she began to laugh hysterically, which could be caused by the movie picturing *“beautiful and passionate and sad”*¹²⁹ life which Minnie does not have or simply by the events that happened.

The story of *Dry September* involves typical features of Southern literature, including the theme of racial issues and the white supremacy, which is deeply rooted in Southern culture and its history. Among other dominant themes appear violence, prejudice, justice or the theme of sexuality.

¹²⁸ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 172

¹²⁹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 184

10. That Evening Sun

That Evening Sun belongs to one of Faulkner's most reprinted, anthologized and appreciated short stories. After its rejection in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1930, it was later published in March 1931 in the magazine *American Mercury*, under the title *That Evening Sun Go Down*. It was later included in *These 13* (1931), *The Portable Faulkner* (1946), *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950), *Selected Stories of William Faulkner* (1962) and in others.¹³⁰ In *Collected Stories* it was included in the part "The Village." *That Evening Sun* is no exception and is also set in Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha county, in Jefferson. The story's title is taken from a song called "St. Louis Blues" by William Christopher Handy, which starts with line: "I hate to see that evening sun go down."¹³¹

The story is divided into six parts and is narrated 15 years after by Quentin Compson, who was nine at the time. As an adult he looks back on the world of his and his sibling's childhood. According to Hans Skei, he either looks back at a period of security and innocence, or he relives to story because he wanted to understand what went on and because he is aware that as a mature man he would have acted differently.¹³² The Compson family previously appeared in Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and later appeared in the novel *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936).

That Evening Sun is a story about the Compson family and their laundry woman Nancy, which explores theme of innocence, fear of death, and the theme of prejudices and racial inequality, deeply rooted in Southern society.

The story begins with a comparison of a present life with a life 15 years ago. Quentin Compson recalls "*quiet, dusty, shady streets full of Negro women*"¹³³ who were gathering laundry for white families and carrying it on their heads. He compares the past with current, more modern age, where the laundry is gathered in special automobiles.

¹³⁰ *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 178-179

¹³¹ *William Faulkner A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Life and Work*, p. 231

¹³² *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 183

¹³³ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 190

According to his narration it seems that he considers the past better than the present, more innocent and simpler. He looks at the past with nostalgia, which is rooted in southern community. Contradiction between the past and the present is also pictured in a short story *A Rose for Emily* (1930).

In the first part, Quentin is remembering Nancy, a Negro woman who used to do the washing for the Compson family. When their cook Dilsey was sick, Nancy did the washing and cooked for the family, therefore she spent quite a lot of time with them. Much of the story develops around her character and her paralyzing fear of being killed in the dark by her husband Jesus. Nancy is pregnant probably with a white man's child and was not faithful to Jesus. Although Jesus left her and left the town, Nancy believes that he came back to take a revenge and cut her throat. One night, Nancy is scared to go home alone, because she believes that Jesus is waiting for her in the dark. There is a connection with the story's title as she is frightened the most after the evening sun goes down. She claims that she feels him although she has not seen him. Mr. Compson agreed to walk her to her cabin together with Quentin, Caddy and the youngest Jason. The children make fun of each other of fearing the dark as Nancy, because they are not fully aware of Nancy's reason for her fear. On her way home, Nancy said: "*I aint seen him, and I aint going to see him again but once more, with that razor in his mouth.*"¹³⁴ This proposition confirms that Nancy is not sure if Jesus is out there but she is sure that he will come for her and kill her. One night, Nancy was sitting in the kitchen making a strange sound, described as: "*it was like singing and it wasn't like singing, like the sound that Negroes make.*"¹³⁵ She was so frightened and so convinced that Jesus is waiting for her to go home alone, that she was crying out of fear. As she is afraid to go home by herself and Mr. Compson cannot go with her, she tries to convince the children to go to play to her house. She knows that once she is alone, Jesus will come for her. At the end of the story, Nancy is left alone in her cabin, making that sound of fear again and waiting for her death. The theme of fear is probably the most significant in the story.

¹³⁴ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 202

¹³⁵ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 204

At the end Quentin asks: *"Who will do our washing now, father?"* It may suggest that he is aware that Nancy will not come back and that he expected her death, although he is more concerned with the laundry than with Nancy's life, confirming that a Negro's life had very little value in that time.

The value of Negroes' life and the superior position of the whites toward them is one of the major themes appearing in the story. Throughout the story, there are many examples of the mistreatment of the blacks, which was still evident in the time of its writing. First of all, the Compson family automatically expects Nancy to make breakfast for them when Dilsey is sick. The Compson children even threw stones to Nancy's window to wake her up because their father said so. Another example of inequality is seen in Nancy's episode with Mr. Stovall. Nancy asked him for her money, but Mr. Stovall (who is probably the father of her child) knocked her down and kicked her teeth. Although the situation was witnessed by a marshal, Nancy was the one to be arrested. The injustice in this situation is evident. Mr. Stovall was the cashier in the bank and Nancy was only a Negro. Due to his skin color and his social position, he was not punished. When Nancy was in jail, she tried to commit suicide by hanging herself. The jailer found her and after that he beat her and whipped her. It is another example of mistreatment of the blacks, especially women. The racial intolerance is also represented by Mrs. Compson. She disagrees with Mr. Compson walking Nancy home at night. Although she is safe and Nancy could be in danger she said: *"You'll leave me alone, to take Nancy home? Is her safety more precious to you than mine?"*¹³⁶ She later added: *"How much longer is this going on? I to be left alone in this big house while you take home a frightened Negro?"*¹³⁷ These propositions suggest that Mrs. Compson feels to be in a superior position. She does not care about Nancy's life or fears, she only thinks of herself although it is inappropriate in this situation. The last illustration of the relationship between the black and the whites is pictured in Jesus' conversation with Nancy. Jesus is not allowed to enter the Compson's house. In their conversation he said something that perfectly shows the racial inequality:

¹³⁶ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 200

¹³⁷ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 204

*"I cant hang around white man's kitchen, but white man can hang around mine. White man can come in my house, but I cant stop him. When white man want to come in my house, I aint got no house."*¹³⁸

Nancy's attitude toward her position in the society is expressed in a sentence: *"I aint nothing but a nigger"*¹³⁹ and in *"I wont be nothing soon. I going back where I come from soon."*¹⁴⁰ This suggests that Nancy accepts not only her low social status but also her upcoming death.

The last theme explored in the story is the theme of innocence which is represented by the Compson children. Throughout the story there are many situations when they do not understand the adult conversation. For example, when Jesus refers to Nancy's belly as to a watermelon, they do not realize she is pregnant. When Nancy told Jesus that *"it never come off of your vine, though,"*¹⁴¹ Caddy does not understand that it means that Jesus is not the father. During the story, they are asking many questions, suggesting that they cannot fully understand the adult world with all its fears and complications. They are usually more concerned with their own fears. The perception of reality through children's perspective is also typical for Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

That Evening Sun brings a complex picture of Southern society, as it deals with the theme of racial inequality, which was still one of the major issues at the time. William Faulkner also briefly touched the difference between the past and the present, which is often explored by southern writers. Concerning differences, the author also explores the clash between adult's fears and children's innocence.

¹³⁸ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 196

¹³⁹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 198

¹⁴⁰ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 208

¹⁴¹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 196

11. Mountain Victory

Mountain Victory appears among Faulkner's most successful short stories and is regarded as his best writing about the Civil War. The story was first published in 1932 by the magazine *Saturday Evening Post* and was later revised and included in *Doctor Martino and Other Stories* (1934).¹⁴² It was later included in *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950) and in *Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner* (1962). In *Collected Stories* the story is included in the part called "The Middle Ground." Stories in this section are usually set beyond Jefferson's county with a different present time than the time of its writing, which is the case of *Mountain Victory*.¹⁴³ Unlike other short stories, the story takes place in Tennessee mountains. It is divided into eleven parts and is narrated in a third person by an unnamed narrator. The story has an absolute unity of time, place and action. It lasts from evening to morning, it is set in a cabin in the Tennessee mountains, and it engages few characters, all contributing to the final tragedy.¹⁴⁴

As the story takes place shortly after the end of the Civil War, the theme of war and its consequences and presence even after its end is one of the most significant themes in the story. Other themes appearing in the story are loyalty, prejudices, or the influence of the past.

The story begins after the Civil War, when two men approach a cabin in Tennessee mountains, seeking for a place to rest. One of the men (Weddel) was a Confederate soldier who traveled with his black servant. They asked the family in the cabin for lodging, not knowing that one of the men fought on the Union side. As he saw the cloak of a confederate soldier, he went to get his rifle. This opening scene sets the main theme which is evident throughout the whole story. The theme of war and the division that comes after its end. Although the war is over, it is not over for Vatch. He treats Weddel with hostility as he still sees him as an enemy fighting on a different side of the war. He is reminded by his father that the war is over but he is so influenced by it that he cannot let go even though he fought

¹⁴² SKEI, Hans H. *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, c1999., p. 108-110

¹⁴³ *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner: The Short Stories*, p. 6

¹⁴⁴ *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 110

on the winner's side. He still lives in the past and is not able to change his attitude in the present. Most of Faulkner's characters carry with them the burden and the blessing of the past. It can be the Civil War, family matters, lost pride, guilt or regret. These characters must adjust this past and their own present in order to have freedom in the future, or to have a future at all. Weddel, the wounded war veteran on his way home, is another example of this.¹⁴⁵ Weddel expected that the war is over, and the only thing he wants is to come back home, go back into the past and try to live again as he did before the war even though he does not certainly know if he still has a home. Weddel relationship to the past and to life itself is pictured in a following quotation:

*"And so I am running away, ... It means that I am still alive. Still alive, since I still know fear and desire. Since life is an affirmation of the past and a promise to the future."*¹⁴⁶ For Weddel, the ability to be afraid means to be in touch with truth and to truly live.

In one moment, Vatch calls Weddel *"you damn nigra"*¹⁴⁷ as he thinks he is black due to his darker skin color, not knowing Weddel's half Choctaw origin. Weddel responded: *"So it's my face and not my uniform. And you fought four years to free us, I understand."*¹⁴⁸ It suggests that Vatch is hostile not only towards confederate soldiers but also towards black people. The theme of prejudice and racial intolerance is one of the themes which is explored in the short story. At the beginning of the story, Jubal, the Negro, is described almost like an animal or a grotesque creature. He is referred to as *"shapeless something larger than a child,"*¹⁴⁹ and *"a creature a little larger than a large monkey."*¹⁵⁰ This shows that Jubal was taken as something less than a human due to his skin color. Another example of the racial prejudice is portrayed when Weddel is advised by Vatch's father to leave, but

¹⁴⁵ *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 111

¹⁴⁶ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 88

¹⁴⁷ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 48

¹⁴⁸ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 48

¹⁴⁹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 34

¹⁵⁰ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 36

Weddel refuses because Jubal is too drunk to ride a horse now. The father's answer is: *"Leave him here. Leave him one horse, and you ride on. He is nothing but a nigra."*¹⁵¹

This shows that a Negro's life had no value in that time. The mistreatment is not only the case of the blacks but also the case of women who are often subordinate to men. Vatch's younger sister is often beaten and treated poorly which causes an admiration for Weddel. She dreams of better life and of marrying Weddel. Similarly to his sister, Hule also tries to convince Weddel to take him and his sister to Mississippi as he wants to start a new life. It could be said that both of them lost their loyalty to their family as they were attracted by Weddel's behavior and by the vision of a new life.

Another theme which Faulkner deals with in the story is the theme of loyalty. A certain degree of loyalty can be recognized in Weddel's relationship with Jubal. Although Weddel could leave without him and save his life, after four years Jubal is more to him than just a Negro and an ex-slave, therefore he decided not to leave him. For Weddel, Jubal is a *"member of an oppressed race burdened with freedom."*¹⁵² On a larger scale, Jubal is loyal to Weddel. Throughout the story, Jubal is always on Weddel's side and feels protective of him. His loyalty is most evident in the last scene where Weddel is shot death.

*"Then he too moved and, still on hands and knees, he turned and scuttled to where Weddel lay beneath the sorrel and crouched over Weddel and looked again and watched the second man backing slowly up the path, loading the rifle."*¹⁵³

This quotation shows how much loyal Jubal was to Weddel. He could have tried to save his own life but instead he stayed with Weddel's body even though he knew he was going to die.

¹⁵¹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 78

¹⁵² FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 68

¹⁵³ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 106

As an author of the American South, in *Mountain Victory* William Faulkner dealt with the Civil War and its aftermath. Another typical theme for a Southern writer which appears in the story is the theme of mistreatment of the blacks, the theme of loyalty, and the influence of the past. *Mountain Victory* is not the only short story with the half Indian main character. Indian characters appear also in *Fox Hunt* (1931), and *Hell Creek Crossing* (1962).

12. Barn Burning

Barn Burning is considered as one of Faulkner's best short stories. It was first published in *Harper's Magazine* in June 1939. It was originally planned to be used as the opening chapter of *The Hamlet* (1940), the first of three novels devoted to the Snopes, which was followed by *The Town* (1957) and *The Mansion* (1959). The short story was later reprinted in *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (1950) and in *Selected Stories of William Faulkner* (1962).¹⁵⁴ In *Collected Stories* it was included in the part called "The Country," in which Faulkner usually explored lives of poor white farmers living in the countryside around Jefferson. The story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator. Concerning the name of the central character, the name Sartoris previously appeared as a title of Faulkner's novel *Sartoris* (1929), which was originally written as *Flags in the Dust* and which is based on Faulkner's great-grandfather.¹⁵⁵

Barn Burning is a short story about the Snopes family. It explores family relationships among "a mother, father, aunt, two pairs of sisters, an older brother, and ten-year-old Sarty."¹⁵⁶ The main theme of the story is the family conflict between father and the youngest son and an intrapersonal conflict within Sarty himself. Among other themes appearing in the story, loyalty and justice could be mentioned. It also establishes the distinctions between classes, between those who own property and those who do not, and between races.¹⁵⁷

The story begins in a store which serves as a temporary court for a Justice of the Peace. Abner Snopes, Sarty's father, is accused of burning a barn, but due to the lack of evidence, Abner Snopes is only advised to leave the country. During the court comes Sarty's first conflict between the loyalty to family and justice. Although he knows that his father's actions are wrong, he sees the Justice as "our enemy, ourn! mine and hisn both! He's my father!"¹⁵⁸ In this moment, Sarty stands behind his father. The fact that he considers

¹⁵⁴ William Faulkner A to Z: *The Essential Reference to His Life and Work*, p. 14

¹⁵⁵ William Faulkner: *His Life and Work*, p. 16

¹⁵⁶ *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 57

¹⁵⁷ *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 57

¹⁵⁸ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 108

father's enemy his own enemy shows his loyalty to him. However, when he was summoned to testify, *"he felt no floor under his bare feet,"*¹⁵⁹ as knew he would have to lie, he felt nervous, torn between loyalty and justice. His hopeless situation is expressed in a following thought: *"He aims for me to lie, he thought, again with that frantic grief and despair. And I will have to do hit."*¹⁶⁰ Luckily for Sarty, the case is dismissed before his testimony and therefore he did not have to lie. After leaving the court room, a group of boys called Sarty's father a barn burner. He started to fight with them in order to defend his father. The conflict within Sartoris is evident, as in one moment he doubts his father and a moment later he fights for him. For Abner Snopes, the family bond and the loyalty to his own blood is very important as he tells Sartoris the following advice, suggesting that he should always put family first, otherwise he will have nobody:

*"You're getting to be a man. You got to learn. You got to learn to stick to your own blood or you ain't going to have any blood to stick to you."*¹⁶¹

Sartoris tries to understand his father's passion for fires and why he does what he does. According to the narrator, the boy is too young to fully understand and therefore offers an explanation himself, saying that the history beyond his father's behavior is rather complicated, going deeper in his past and being of crucial importance for his life, representing power and control, which is described in a following part:

*"that the element of fire spoke to some deep mainspring of his father's being, as the element of steel or of powder spoke to other men, as the one weapon for the preservation of integrity, else breath were not worth the breathing, and hence to be regarded with respect and used with discretion"*¹⁶²

The Snopes family is often moving from one place to another. That may cause a need for a stable place or it may suggest that it does not matter where they are, as long as they

¹⁵⁹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 110

¹⁶⁰ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 112

¹⁶¹ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 120

¹⁶² FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 118

are together. This time, the Snopes arrived at de Spain's house which was different from others. For Sarty, the mansion was:

*"big as a courthouse. They are safe from him. People whose lives are a part of this peace and dignity are beyond his touch...the spell of this peace and dignity rendering even the barns and stable and cribs which belong to it impervious to the puny flames he might contrive"*¹⁶³

This quotation suggest that Sarty believed that the family living in such house could be protected from his father. The house might represent a hope for the family. Sarty also refers to it as to a "courthouse," comparing it to the place of justice. It shows that Sartoris stands for what is right, disagrees with his father and hopes it is going to be different this time. Nevertheless, Abner Snopes does not feel any respect towards the mansion. When entering the house, Snopes is asked by the black butler to clean his shoes before walking on the rug. Abner's reaction is *"get out of my way, nigger."*¹⁶⁴ He disobeys the request as it comes from a black man. He feels to be in superior position to the black butler although he is not in a better social position. His superiority is based only on a skin color.

At the end of the story, Abner decided to burn Major de Spain's barn as he wanted to feel more powerful. But this time, Sarty wants to do the right thing and decides to go against his father and warn Major de Spain. He is held by his mother, but his aunt tells her to let him go, or she will warn de Spain herself, which shows that Sarty was not the only one who disapproved of his father's behavior. His aunt also chose family over justice. After warning de Spain, Sarty ran away. As he chose justice over family, he knew he could not come back. Without family, without his blood, he was left alone in the world. In the final scene, he feels grief and despair as he thinks of his father. It shows that his bond to the family is still strong. He is left with the idea that his father might have been killed as he heard a gunshot. Nevertheless, his father's death is rather speculative and not confirmed.

¹⁶³ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 124

¹⁶⁴ FAULKNER, William. *A Rose for Emily*, p. 126

Faulkner short stories are often uncertain concerning character's possible death. It is the case of Abner Snopes as he later appeared in *The Hamlet*.¹⁶⁵

In *Barn Burning* William Faulkner explored some of the major themes of Southern literature. The most significant theme in the story is the theme of family and its importance in life. He deals with the theme of justice and the difficulty of choosing between justice and family. The theme of class and racial conflict also briefly appeared in the story.

¹⁶⁵ *Reading Faulkner's Best Short Stories*, p. 56

Conclusion

One of the main aims of this diploma thesis was to characterize the tradition of literature American Southern literature and provide an overview of its main features, themes, and authors.

The first chapter of the thesis deals with the development of American Southern literature and provides its characteristic features including the historical and geographical consciousness, storytelling tradition, religion, race and slavery, and the responsibility to family and community. Additionally to these features, the conflict between the past and the present, and the sense of justice are also among recurring features in the works of American Southern writers.

The second chapter provides an overview of the typical literary genres of the South. American Southern literature could be considered as a genre itself, but there are certain literary forms, organizing motifs, and stylistic conventions that are considered as typically southern. Among these genres are the plantation novel, the slave narrative, southwestern humor, southern pastoral and counter-pastoral, southern modernism, and grit lit. Part of the chapter is a subchapter which deals with southern grotesque. In the twentieth century, southern authors of literary grotesques who incorporated into their fiction elements of grotesque humour were William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Erskine Caldwell, Walker Percy or Cormac McCarthy.

The third chapter focuses on the development and features of the literary category of American Gothic as it influenced American Southern literature. Gothic fiction deals with the return of the past, buried secrets which destroy the present, it pictures extreme circumstances of terror and oppression, and explores themes such as cruelty, fear, or sexual degradation. All of these features are evident in American Southern literature as well.

The fourth chapter provides an overview of American Southern writers and tries to establish typical features of Southern writers. Most of the authors lived in the South permanently, with the exception of Carson McCullers, Tennessee Williams, and Truman Capote, who lived at different places in the U.S. and also in Europe, but their writings remained Southern.

Robert Penn Warren, similarly to William Faulkner chooses specific places of the southern region, and focuses on traditional southern values, such as honor, responsibility, and ethics. Eudora Welty often paid attention to the details of everyday life, to ordinary events, and ordinary people who were often portrayed in a humorous way. Flannery O'Connor brilliantly mixed grotesque with violence, the humorous and the horrible, the absurd and the tragic. In some of her works she dealt with the racial problems in the South during the civil-rights period. Tennessee Williams employed themes such as displacement, loss, and dreaming of the past. He dealt with human contrasts, such as violence and compassion, intolerance and understanding, and veracity and mendacity. His characters are usually vulnerable people, who are not able to flow with the normative stream of society. As for Carson McCullers, she dealt with man's problematic and painful existence often presented at some critical point such as adolescence, loss of friendship, or an oncoming death. She was also concerned with the theme of loneliness which results from the lack of relationships with other people or with the self.

The fifth chapter deals with the character of William Faulkner as he is the author of the analyzed short stories. The chapter focuses on Faulkner's personal life and provides an outline of his works. The following chapter provides an introduction to William Faulkner's short stories.

The main task of the thesis was the literary analysis of Faulkner's six short stories: *A Rose for Emily* (1930), *Red Leaves* (1930), *Dry September* (1931), *That Evening Sun* (1931), *Mountain Victory* (1932) and *Barn Burning* (1939). Each story contains a short description of its publication history and then deals with the most important themes and features.

In *A Rose for Emily*, William Faulkner introduced some of the most typical features of Southern gothic. He dealt with the return of the past and the inability to adapt to the present, with buried secrets, dark places and characters, or isolation. With the theme of necrophilia, *A Rose for Emily* belongs to Faulkner's most controversial short stories.

In *Red Leaves*, William Faulkner portrayed an Indian community corrupted by the influence of the whites. He explored the theme of traditions, traditional and natural way of life and its decline, the theme of power, and man's resistance to death and struggle for life. Indians are also mentioned in Faulkner's other works, such as *Go Down Moses*, *Requiem for a Nun*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *The Town*, and *The Reivers*.

The story of *Dry September* involves typical features of Southern literature, including the theme of racial issues and the white supremacy, which is deeply rooted in Southern culture and its history. Among other dominant themes appear violence, prejudice, justice or the theme of sexuality. All of these themes are typical for William Faulkner's stories.

That Evening Sun brings a complex picture of Southern society, as it deals with the theme of racial inequality, which was still one of the major issues at the time. William Faulkner also briefly touched the difference between the past and the present, which is often explored by southern writers. Concerning differences, the author also explores the clash between adult's fears and children's innocence.

As an author of the American South, in *Mountain Victory* William Faulkner dealt with the Civil War and its aftermath. Another typical theme for a Southern writer which appears in the story is the theme of mistreatment of the blacks, the theme of loyalty, and the influence of the past.

In *Barn Burning* William Faulkner explored some of the major themes of Southern literature. The most significant theme in the story is the theme of family and its importance in life. He deals with the theme of justice and the difficulty of choosing between justice and family. The theme of class and racial conflict also briefly appeared in the story.

All of the analyzed stories secure Faulkner's position of one of the main figures of American Southern literature. Although he is usually recognized as an author of novels, each of the analyzed short stories brings a complex picture of Southern society. In most of the stories he dealt with racial inequality as it still was one of the major issues at the time of Faulkner's writing. He also focused on the importance of family, on the conflict between the past and the present. He explored the theme of sexuality, justice, violence, and loyalty.

On the one hand, Faulkner remains the most outstanding representative of literature of the American South because of the realistic portrayal of the features of both the region and its inhabitants. However, his contribution to Modernism and experimental way of writing have made him a substantial part of the American literary canon.

Resumé

Jedním z cílů této diplomové práce byla charakteristika literatury amerického Jihu, včetně hlavních znaků, témat a nejvýznamnějších autorů.

První kapitola práce se zabývá vývojem literatury amerického Jihu a poskytuje přehled hlavních znaků, mezi které patří historické a geografické povědomí, tradice vyprávění příběhů, náboženství, rasa a otroctví a odpovědnost vůči rodině a komunitě. Za další typické znaky lze označit rozpor mezi minulostí a přítomností a smysl pro spravedlnost.

Druhá kapitola poskytuje přehled žánrů, které jsou považovány za typické pro literaturu amerického Jihu. Ačkoliv by literatura amerického Jihu mohla být považována za samostatný žánr, existují určité literární formy, organizační motivy a stylistické konvence, které jsou považovány za „jižanské.“ Součástí kapitoly je podkapitola věnovaná žánru grotesky, mezi jejích hlavní představitelé 20. století patří William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Erskine Caldwell, Walker Percy nebo Cormac McCarthy.

Třetí kapitola se věnuje vývoji a charakteristickým znakům literární kategorie americké gotiky. Gotické příběhy jsou o návratech do minulosti, o pohřbených tajemstvích, které ničí přítomnost. Zobrazuje příběhy plné teroru a útlaku a zabývá se tématy jako krutost, strach či sexuální dezintegrace. Všechny tyto rysy jsou patrné i v literatuře amerického Jihu.

Čtvrtá kapitola poskytuje přehled nejvýznamnějších představitelů jižanské literatury a snaží se stanovit znaky, které jsou těmto autorům společné. Většina těchto autorů strávila život na Jihu, s výjimkou Carson McCullers, Tennessee Williams a Trumana Capote, kteří žili na různých místech v USA i Evropě, avšak jejich díla zůstala jižanská. Robert Penn Warren si podobně jako William Faulkner vybírá specifická jižanská místa a zaměřuje se na tradiční hodnoty jako je čest, odpovědnost a etika. Eudora Welty často věnovala pozornost detailům každodenního života, běžným událostem a obyčejným lidem, které často zobrazovala humorným způsobem. Flannery O'Connor ve svých dílech prolínala groteskní prvky s prvky násilí, humorné s hrozivým a absurdní s tragickým. V některých svých dílech se také zabývala rasovými problémy. Tennessee Williams se ve svých dílech zabývá tématy jako je ztráta, snění o minulosti, kontrasty jako násilí a soucit, intolerance a porozumění, věrohodnost a mravnost. Jeho postavy jsou obvykle zranitelní jedinci, kteří nejsou schopni přizpůsobení se společnosti. Carson McCullers se ve svých dílech zabývala strastiplnou

existencí jedince, jehož život byl často zobrazován v jistém kritickém bodě, jako například dospívání, ztráta přátelství či blížící se smrt. Dále se zabývala tématem osamělosti, která plynula z nedostatku vztahů s druhými či se sebou samým.

Pátá kapitola se zabývá osobností Williama Faulknera, jelikož je autorem analyzovaných povídek a jedním z hlavních představitelů jižanské literatury. Kapitola se zaměřuje na autorův osobní život a poskytuje přehled jeho tvorby. Následující šestá kapitola podává obecný úvod k jeho povídkové tvorbě.

Hlavní náplní této diplomové práce byla interpretační analýza šesti vybraných povídek Williama Faulknera: *Růže pro Emilii* (1930), *Červené listy* (1930), *Suché září* (1931), *Když slunce zapadne* (1931), *Vítězství v horách* (1932) a *Hořící chlévy* (1939). Každá povídka obsahuje úvodní část týkající se historie její publikace a dále se zabývá jejími nejdůležitějšími tématy.

V *Růži pro Emilii* představil William Faulkner některé z nejtypičtějších témat jižanské gotiky. Zabýval se vlivem minulosti na přítomnost, skrytým tajemstvím, temnými místy či izolací jedince. Jelikož se zabýval také tématem nekrofilie, patří tato povídka mezi autorovy nejkontroverznější.

V *Červených listech* se zabýval životem původních obyvatelů pod vlivem bílého obyvatelstva. William Faulkner se v této povídce zabýval tradicemi a tradičním, přírodním způsobem života a jeho úpadkem, tématem moci, odolnosti člověka vůči smrti a bojem za život. Tématem původních kmenů se autor zabýval jak v povídkách, tak v jeho románové tvorbě.

Suché září zahrnuje typické rysy literatury amerického Jihu, včetně otázky rasových problémů a nadřazenosti bílého obyvatelstva, která je hluboce zakořeněna v jižanské kultuře a historii. Mezi dalšími tématy se objevily předsudky, násilí, smysl pro spravedlnost nebo téma sexuality. Všechna tato témata jsou pro Williama Faulknera příznačná.

Povídka *Když slunce zapadne* přináší ucelený obraz jižanské společnosti. Zabývá se tématem rasové nerovnosti, rozdíly mezi minulostí a přítomností a odlišným vnímáním skutečnosti a strachu dětmi a dospělými.

Povídka *Vítězství v horách* se odehrává těsně po skončení občanské války a zabývá se tak jejími důsledky. Dalšími tématy objevujícími se v příběhu jsou rasismus, oddanost a vliv minulosti na přítomnost.

V povídce *Hořící chlévy* se William Faulkner zabýval tématem rodiny a jejího vlivu a důležitosti v životě člověka. Dále se zabývá rozporem mezi spravedlností a věrností rodině. Okrajově je také zmíněno téma rasových a třídních rozdílů.

Všechny analyzované povídky vykazují typické rysy literatury amerického Jihu. Ačkoliv je William Faulkner uznáván spíše jako autor románů, ve svých povídkách přináší komplexní obrazy jižanské společnosti. Ve většině povídek se zabýval rasovou nerovností, neboť toto téma bylo stále velmi aktuální. Zaměřil se také na význam a vliv rodiny, na rozpor mezi minulostí a přítomností, a dále se zabýval násilím, smyslem pro spravedlnost a loajalitou.

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