

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
VAN YUZUNCU YIL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**THE DOWNFALL OF THE SOUTHERN ARISTOCRACY IN
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY***

POST-GRADUATE THESIS

Mehmet Faruk TOSON

VAN 2018

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Prepared By

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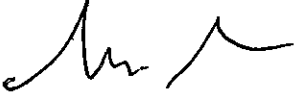
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(İmza)



Mehmet Faruk TOSON

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**WILLIAM FAULKNER'IN *THE SOUND AND THE FURY* ADLI ESERİNDE
GÜNEY ARİSTOKRASİSİNİN ÇÖKÜŞÜ**

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı William Faulkner'ın *The Sound and the Fury* adlı romanında Güney Aristokrasisinin çöküşünün analizini yapmaktır. Romandaki ana karakterler bir zamanlar Güney'de aristokratik ve zengin olan ataerkil Compson ailesinin soyundan gelenlerdir. Bu karakterler eskiden yaşadıkları şatafatlı hayatı artık yaşamıyorlar, ancak bunun yerine kendi çöküşleriyle yüzleşerek buna şahit oluyorlar. Güney aristokrasisinin çöküş sebepleri geçmişe büyük bir bağımlılıkta yatmaktadır. Aristokratlar toplumu ve aileyi bir arada tutan eski değerleri kaybettikleri için modernitenin getirdiği gerçeklerle başa çıkamazlar. Eski Güney ve Yeni Güney arasındaki çatışmalar bu çöküşü daha da kötüleştirir. Sonuç olarak, Compson ailesinin fertleri Güney ahlaki değerleri doğrultusunda yaşamayı başaramazlar. *The Sound and the Fury* Compson ailesinin detaylı çöküş hikayesini zihinsel engelli Benjy, materyalist Jason ve nevroitik Quentin olan üç Compson ferдинin gözünde sunmaktadır. Onların çöküşü, parçalanması ve kötüye gidişi uzun süren bir kavram olan Güney Aristokrasisinin çöküşünü göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Güney aristokrasisi, Amerikan Güneyi, Çöküş, Ataerkil, WilliamFaulkner

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**THE DOWNFALL OF THE SOUTHERN ARISTOCRACY IN
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY***

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyze the downfall of the Southern aristocracy in the novel, *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. The main characters in the novel are descendants of a patriarchal southern family, the Compsons, who were once aristocratic and rich in the South. These people do not live the life of luxury they were living in the past baroquely, however, they confront and witness their own downfall instead. The reasons for the downfall of the southern aristocracy lie mostly in their great dependence on the past. Because aristocrats lost their old values which cement the society and family together, they were not able to cope with the realities that modernity brought. The decline is also deteriorated by the conflicts between The Old South and New South. As a result, the Compson children fail to live in accordance with the Southern moral code. *The Sound and the Fury* gives a detailed story of decline of the Compson family in the eyes of three Compson children, idiot Benjy, materialistic Jason and neurotic Quentin. Their decadence, disintegration and deterioration show the end of a long-lasting notion, the Southern aristocracy.

Key Words : Southern aristocracy, American South, downfall, patriarchy, William Faulkner

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NOTE ON THE PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING

William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* is the primary source that is heavily utilized in this study. Some characters of the novel are of a Black servant family who use African -American dialect and sociolect. So, while quoting from them, I have stuck to the novel. In addition, as a characteristic of Faulkner's technique, misspelling and lack of punctuation are quite common in the novel; while citing from the characters, the quotations are given without any change.

PREFACE

The Antebellum aristocracy in the Southern America went through great changes after the Civil War. The aristocrat members of society lost their economic power and political clout over their subordinates. So, they began to decline. William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* is one of the novels which conveys the decline of an aristocratic family, the Compsons, in the New South. The aim of this study is to examine the downfall of the Southern Aristocracy in *The Sound and the Fury*. During the completion of this study I would like to thank my adviser Assist. Prof. Dr. Erdinç DURMUŞ for his support and guidance.

INTRODUCTION

Faulkner is one of the foremost American writers who has been acclaimed and recognized not only nationwide but also worldwide. Through his works, he had been the voice of the American South all his life. As a pioneer in modernism, his writings consist of innovative and experimental elements by means of which he presented the corruption and decadence of the society in the South. It goes without saying that Faulkner's writings are, first and foremost, highly modernist. The most remarkable sign of his being a modernist is that he competently presents interior monologues in a stream of consciousness form. They illustrate the experiences and alienation of man in fragmentations in the modern twentieth century world. He is excellent at distorting and breaking time frame in his works via reconstructing it with a new facet.

Most of the events in his writings take place in the fictitious world of Yoknapatawpha County. As a matter of fact, Yoknapatawpha County functions as a possible alternative to the real world. The characters in his works offer a great diversity; they might be former or runaway slaves, the descendant of slaves, the poor white, farmers, working-class Southerners and the aristocrats from old and traditional Southern families who bemoaned their past.

Faulkner, in his masterpiece, *The Sound and the Fury* depicts human failure and his depravity through loss, and the efforts of brave souls to prevent this loss by means of resorting to false myths and remedies which they use to conceal the truth. By this way, as a Southerner, on a large scale, Faulkner reflects the mindset of his contemporary society, which was nostalgic for old Southern tradition and at the same time for the universal truths it signified. As of eighteenth century, the American South has differed from the North in many ways. The American South has got a unique culture. This culture stemmed from the economy based on exploitation of slavery and white male patriarchal supremacy. The legacy of agrarianism in the South culminated in the traditional image of Southern aristocracy, which has since caused a kind of brooding on the lost Southern past, its values and moral code.

This thesis basically aims to give the reasons for the downfall of the Southern aristocracy in *The Sound and the Fury* not just in terms of social aspects but also familial aspects. Furthermore, in the first chapter the reader is enlightened about American modernism, a brief biography of William Faulkner and the condition of post-bellum American South.

The second chapter constitutes the theme of deterioration and loss with respect to familial blood line and Faulkner's technical elements and structural characteristics he used in the novel such as stream of consciousness and distortion of time, structure and truth.

The third chapter discusses the importance of Caddy Compson in the eyes of her brothers in *The Sound and the Fury*, the role of father figure in the old South with the example of Mr. Compson and the end of aristocratic Compson family, which is the core of this thesis.

CHAPTER 1

1.1. William Faulkner (1897-1962)

William Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi, on September 25, 1897, but then his family moved to Oxford, Mississippi, a place that he would call as Jefferson in his novels and stories. He used this place as a setting in nearly all his fiction. Faulkner descended from an old and prominent Mississippi family. His great-grandfather Colonel William Clark Falkner (the "u" was added to Faulkner's name by mistake when his first novel was published, and he kept the misspelling) came to Mississippi from South Carolina in the early years of the nineteenth century. Colonel Falkner would be one of the characters in his fiction as Colonel John Sartoris. He was a soldier in American Civil War. He wrote *The White Rose of Memphis* in 1881 and became known nationwide with this book.

Faulkner decided to join the army in 1918 on account of the fact that the war was on the agenda. But, he was rejected for service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Because he was too short. He did not give up his hope, so he went to Canada and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. But World War I came to an end, before he completed his training. So, he never fought in the war. And he had to go back to Mississippi. In Mississippi he attended the University of Mississippi, but only after few terms, he dropped out of it. Meanwhile, he tried various jobs and at the same time he was writing poetry and fiction.

A writer called Stark Young invited him to New York City's Greenwich Village. He found Faulkner a job as a bookstore clerk, but it did not last long. He returned to Oxford after a few months. Then he went to New Orleans, where he got a job running a boat which contained illegal spirits. There, he met the well-known American writer Sherwood Anderson, author of *Winesburg, Ohio*. When he saw how leisurely Anderson was living, Faulkner adopted the idea of becoming a writer, and Anderson helped have his first novel, *Soldiers' Pay* (1926), published. Since *Soldiers' Pay* did not become a financial success, Faulkner was once again compelled to find a

job. He found a new job on a ship. He spent quite a lot of time aboard in the Mediterranean sailing to France and Italy.

During his childhood, Faulkner was keen on reading and writing. However, he was not able to finish high school. As a teenager, he dated Estelle Oldham. Faulkner wanted to marry her, but her family did not approve of this. But then a different man went and proposed to her. Estelle's family urged her to marry this guy as his family was more eligible than Faulkner's family in their eyes.

In 1929, Estelle Oldham's marriage ended. So, Faulkner did not hesitate to marry her in a short time. She brought two children with her. Faulkner promised to support her and her children. Therefore, he began writing in abundance next few years. Three of his splendid novels—*The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), and *Light in August* (1932)—were published during this period. He did not make enough money to support her wife in spite of his various publications. What is worse was that her daughter Jill was born in 1933. This added to his financial collapse.

Faulkner was forced to publish as many works as he could in a short time in order to tackle his financial problems. So, he began to work in Hollywood as a screenwriter. Though it was not satisfactory for him, he stuck to it for a few years to pay off his debts. After returning to Oxford in mid 1930s, he wrote three novels — *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), *The Wild Palms* (1939), and *The Hamlet* (1940), in addition to several short stories. Although Faulkner had written some of the greatest twentieth-century works, his early works did not manage to be commercial successes. Yet, *Sanctuary* (1931) was an exception. His efforts to overcome his financial problems continued until the publication of *Intruder in the Dust* in 1948. After the publication, the novel was made into a movie. Robert Penn Warren writes in his article:

The great period of Faulkner's achievements from *The sound and the Fury* to *The Hamlet* overlaps ... with the Depression and the time of the premonitory shadows of World War II, with another time, that is, of deep cultural shock. The tension and changes in this time were acute. This is not to say that Faulkner specifically took the Depression as a subject, but it is to say that the Depression accentuated the issues of time and change which Faulkner had already located

as seminal for him. The sense of unchangeableness of the human condition which has characterized the life of the rural South even after World War II, was now suddenly with the Depression, changed. (245-46)

Much as only one of his works was being reproduced, Faulkner won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. He happened to be appreciated by literary critics, authors, teachers and many others in a short span of time. By means of this reward, he immediately found himself on the highest level of literary world. This was a total story of starting from scratch—from being an unnoticed writer to world-famous writer. In 1957, Faulkner was given a position as writer-in-residence at the University of Virginia. He gave informal lessons and speeches about his novels there. He shared his insights into his characters' personalities and his fictitious land he called Yoknapatawpha. In his article James L. Roberts writes about the rest of his life:

In June 1962, Faulkner was thrown from his horse and injured his back. He suffered intense pain and was admitted to Wright's Sanitarium, in Byhalia, Mississippi, on July 5. The next day — ironically the date of the old Colonel's birthday — he died, leaving behind him a body of work unsurpassed in twentieth-century literature.

Faulkner uses new techniques to express man's position in the modern world. The complexity of his narrative structures mirrors the complex lives we lead. Most of his novels and short stories probe into the mores and morals of the South, which he was not hesitant to criticize. In his early fiction, Faulkner views despairingly man's position in the universe. He briefly voices this same sense of futility and defeat in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech: "Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up?" Man is a weak creature incapable of rising above his selfish needs.

In his latter works, however, Faulkner's tone changes, and he emphasizes humankind's survival. He believes human beings to be potentially great, affirming that "man shall not only endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not

because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance." Penetrating deeply the psychological motivations for human beings' actions, Faulkner concludes that hope remains for our salvation from despair. (Cliffs Notes)

Faulkner also wrote about corruption in human conditions, racial suppressions and ethical issues, on which he put blame for the degeneration of the man. Ralph Ellison writes:

Indeed, through his many novels and short stories, Faulkner fights out the moral problems which was repressed after the nineteenth century, and it was shocking for some to discover that for all his concern with the South, Faulkner was actually seeking out the nature of man. Thus; we must turn to him for that continuity of moral purpose which made for the greatness of our classics. (277-78)

1.2. American Modernism

American modernist movement in literary world of America spans roughly between 1914 and 1945. As this period is roughly in between two World wars, it had a predisposition to give various subjects to many modernist writers and poets who were productive in their fields. The reason why they became so fruitful was that they were baffled by scores of cultural disturbing events that came after WWI. A good many of these writers were frustrated by the moral code of the society that was brought about by this war. A few years after WWI, the literary term “Lost Generation” was coined. The Lost Generation was made up of a group of people who were trying to find order and meaning in the world after WWI. These war-torn group of people put blame on the older generations for the inhumane and terrifying war and as a result of this, they resorted to a secular world view. In addition to this, the Lost Generation lost its identity, which caused it to be isolated from the society. As if the war itself was not devastating enough, the machines of the newly developing industrial world made the writers and poets feel the world evolving into a non-personal phase -an epoch of dehumanization. This change became a hindrance to artistic production and productivity. Despite this, “the enormous achievements of the American novel in the twenties were, of course, partly triggered by the war, which became a symbol for the cut-off of the past” (Fear and McNeil 233).

In order to run away from their society, many writers of the period went to other countries, which can be considered as a form of self -exile. For example, Ernest Hemingway left for Spain, where he came together with many other writers and comrades. Between 1914 and 1945, writers of this period mostly wrote about the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression. After WWI, American society experienced a fast transformation accompanied by affluence and great changes both economically and socially. The American society had new kinds of entertainment such as cinema. People started to express themselves via entertainment by going to parties.

Women wore short dresses, drank, partied with men and wore different hairstyles. These women were called flappers. Moreover, the women of this period were more liberated than ever. Thanks to nineteenth amendment, women gained the right to vote. In their article *The Twenties*, Jacqueline Fear and Helen McNeil denotes

that “Even more striking ...was the changing image of women: the flapper was and still is, one of the most compelling symbols of Twenties culture and society. Provocatively flaunting her bobbed hair, hiked skirt, cigarettes and bootleg, she personified the new woman, different in spirit and shape from her Victorian mother” (250).

The Harlem Renaissance also occurred during this time, as a great number of African Americans migrated from the south to the industrial North. African Americans started to be prolific in literature, art, and poetry as well as music. This time is also known as the “Jazz Age.” Many ideas of popular, influential African American writers like Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes had great impacts on future generations of African Americans that would struggle in the 1960s for equality during the Civil Rights Movement.

Along with the arrival of the Great Depression in 1929, the extravagant lifestyle lost momentum. People thought that it was a punishment for the lavishness of the 1920s. The stock market crashed in 1929, which led many businesses and banking system collapse in America. As a consequence, a widespread unemployment swept the entire nation. On the other hand, devastating droughts occurred, causing farmers to lose their crops and farms and eventually famine.

Modernist writers rejected old traditions and conventions. Their works were innovative and experimental. They felt the need to leave out religious beliefs, politics and everything that belonged to the old order. Ezra Pound’s work called *Make it New!* became the maxim of the modernist period. Philip Weinstein suggests that by “*Make it New!*” Pound famously urged his modernist peers, suggesting that the first task is to reflect on what they took to be “old.” At the onset of the twentieth century, a number of Western European artists took nineteenth-century cultural/aesthetic procedures to be “old” (342).

They thought that art could be a remedy for many problems that were not solved via religious efforts. As a guiding principle, art began to substitute for religion and brought a new understanding to humanity.

New experimental literary approaches emerged both in poetry and prose. In prose, a new kind of narrative technique was used under the influence of the realm of psychology: Stream-of-consciousness narration. It is used for exploring the depths of characters' inner conflict through disconnected, unpunctuated narrative. In the novels, the focus was on the mind rather than the actions. This was mostly used by novelist such as Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner and James Joyce. Such writers sought to define the concept of truth and reality. The plot of a story or novel fell behind the way it was narrated. Rebecca Beasley wrote:

Works by the writers associated most strongly with modernism—T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, for example—do seem to share some common features: a preoccupation with the city, rather than the country, a focus on the interior life of characters and speakers, and, as I've already suggested, an interest in experimenting with new ways of using language and literary forms. (Writersinspire)

When it came to poetry, it underwent some radical changes, too. Poems written in this period were written short and without rhyme. Ezra Pound established The School of Imagism. He encouraged writers to abandon traditional poetic language and literary devices. The poems are largely short, containing a few lines or phrases. They give the reader a small picture of a scene. The poets of this era emphasized on the description of anything as it seems in reality. Cary Nelson states this in his article, *Modern American poetry*:

...One of the Imagist movement's emphases was on extreme concision and on a certain Neutrality of description. Ezra Pound's 'In a station of Metro' (1913) with its title serving as the poem's first line, and William Carlos Williams's 'The Red Wheelbarrow' (1923) remain two of its defining texts.

Pound's poem is only two lines long:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough.

Williams's poem gets much of its effect from its line breaks and its careful placement of the poem on the page:

So much depends
Upon

A red wheel
Barrow

Glazed with rain
Water

Beside the white
Chickens (68-9)

1.3. The South: The Aftermath of The Civil War

Towards the end of the 19th century, the Southern states generated a huge income from their vast plantations in which cotton, tobacco and sugar cane were grown. So as to work these plantations, they exploited the labor force of black slaves who were brought from Africa. Meanwhile, the industrial developments in the northern and western states brought the system of free workers, which required abolishing slavery. But the South did not embrace the idea of abolishing slavery as they were using slaves in their plantations and farms. Fearing that they would eventually be forced to accept abolition of slavery, the Southern states tried to separate from the nation. So, this added to deepen the distinction between the North and South. In fact, the North and South had already been different from each other for a long time. Edward Ranson and Andrew Hook explain this:

The South had created an aristocratic, agrarian civilization; the North, a democratic commercial one. Totally different sets of attitudes and values animated the two sections. Essentially, the North was a materialistic society given over to the pursuit of money; Southern society gave its allegiance to such values as honor and personal integrity. Hence, where Northern society was an aggregate of competing individuals, the south was an aggregate of communities. (118)

The American Civil War was not a simple conflict between two opposing groups of people. Nor was it a war in which either side became literally the winner. It had tremendous effects on both the South and the North. Its paralyzing consequences lasted for many years to come. The majority of men were taken from farms, mills, factories, and croplands and were forced to fight one another. Behind them were women and children left at home. The number of casualties reached an alarming level on both sides. The places near the battlegrounds lost almost everything that was erected on: schools, farms, bridges and other public buildings, which in turn destroyed the superstructure profoundly.

In the North, since a great number of men headed to the front, their children, wives and parents had to cope with many problems they left behind amidst turmoil.

There were not enough people on the farms to work the plantations. It was mostly women who had to face these problems. They had to run the farms by themselves. Although the women were not enrolled in the armed services, they served for the North indirectly. They made clothes, looked after the wounded men and helped their men recover as soon as possible. Contrary to what was happening to the lower class of the North, the upper class never seemed to have been affected by the war. The elites went on throwing parties, organizing balls and every kind of lavishness available to them. Those who thought they would not survive in the hardship moved to big cities.

Although the war played havoc with the North, on the other hand, it brought many economic opportunities to northern citizens. There opened many factories manufacturing bullets, blankets, tents, shells and any other equipment related to the war. Young white men and immigrant men flocking to America from European countries such as Germany and Ireland could easily find jobs; for most of the adult white men were away.

It was the South that was damaged the most in the war. The war inflicted economic collapse, political change and social unrest upon the South, for much of the war occurred in its territories. In other words, the war shook the South to its foundations. The Union's army destroyed plantations, the crops and settlements and thousands of freed slaves headed towards Union lines since the slaveholders ran away from the Union army. Food production became a difficult task. So, the southerners were either tested by hunger or lost their assets -from their clothes to their slaves. The war led to far-fetched damage. The roads, homes, bridges and railways were destroyed, so the recovery of the South took but many years.

The worst effect of the war on the South was the one on the demographical system. Almost half of the white men who were at the age of military service were engaged in the war. As a result of this, there was virtually no one left behind on farms and plantations as male work force. It was hard for the southern society to get accustomed to changes in its population. At the outset, the wealthy people in the South like the ones in the North, went on living as though there was nothing happening around them. But later, they came to realize the vehement reality of the war. Owing to

Unionist General Sherman's march, the upper class of the South, which had not gone through hard times, tasted the bitterness of the war. It was the middle class and small farmers who took part in the war most. So, after the war, the political power of the landed gentry changed hands in favor of the small farmers. Now the small farmers had that power. But this change did not last longer because the aristocrats regained their power in the wake of Reconstruction.

When Union troops began to march forward to the South, the slaves were freed after Emancipation Proclamation. So, the changing role of slaves was the biggest and groundbreaking change for the southern community. In remote areas where the Union troops did not enter, blacks were still kept as slaves. Nevertheless, in these places the white male slaveholders were away and the slaves managed to enjoy an easier life to some extent. As the war was nearing the end, the Union government established the Freedman's Bureau to guide and help freed slaves in the South. After being freed, the former slaves formed new communities in the South.

Postbellum Reconstruction and the implementation of the liberation of slaves gave blacks some opportunities to have some political power. This changed the power balance in the white male dominant South remarkably; however, the white South did not let what it had slipped through its fingers. The American Civil War turned southern society upside down. It brought planter dominated social order, which was a great distinction of the South to an end for good. The South now had to accept the rules of the industrial world. C. Vann Woodward adds:

For the inescapable facts of history were that the South had repeatedly met with frustration and failure. It had learned what it was to be faced with economic, social and political problems that refused to yield to all the ingenuity, patience and intelligence that a people could bring to bear upon them. It had learned to accommodate itself to conditions that it swore it would never accept, and it had learned the taste left in the mouth by the swallowing of one's own words. (242-243)

In conclusion, American Civil War shaped the nation with some drastic social and economic changes which laid the foundations of the present United States of America. Ashley Kannan wrote a piece:

In my mind, the critical legacy of the Civil War was to bring about the recognition of different narratives in America. The Southern experience for Americans, particularly African- Americans, was different from their Northern counterparts. The post-Civil War reality for African- Americans was one steeped in discrimination through black codes and a racially stratified existence. White Southerners felt frustrated and resentment at the outcome of the war, particularly at the economic exploitation of the South at the hands of the North. On another level, industrialists of the North did make deals with former plantation owners, so that some level of power was felt by the former wealthy of the South. The effect of the Civil War was then to create different experiences about what it means to be an "American," for both people of color and White Americans. (Enotes)

CHAPTER 2

2.1. The Theme of Deterioration and Loss: Family and Blood

The dominant theme given in *The Sound and the Fury* is the tragic sense of loss and deterioration, which Faulkner employs by bringing together the childhood of the Compson children and their present daily life activities. The atmosphere of the work is full of hopelessness, desperation and nihilism. They inherited this from their miserable parents. Each of the three sections of the book is told by three brothers each. Their sister Caddy's being sexually mature destroys their world; however, she is the only sensible and lively character in the family. Michael Milgate denotes that:

In the Benjy section we recognize Caddy as the principal sustainer of such family unity as survives: we glimpse her as the liveliest spirit among children and natural leader, as the protector and comforter of Benjy, and even pacifier of her mother, and it is highly significant for us as well as for Benjy that she is persistently associated with such elemental things as the fire, the pasture, the smell of trees and sleep.... (305)

And her affairs with different men leads to her brother Quentin's disillusionment with his life. By means of the Compson family, Faulkner indicates that it is the loss of affection and love that cause modern society to corrupt and to go off the rails. In the light of Jason section, Faulkner seems to be in an attempt to describe modern man as being egocentric whose commercial pursuits are incessantly on the agenda and have replaced humanistic values. Jason symbolizes what Quentin stands up against. In other words, the world where Jason lives is the source of despair and frustration for Quentin and Mr. Compson. In his article, John T. Matthews explains this:

To be angry with Mr. Compson for drowning himself in liquor because such irresponsibility exhausts Jason's rightful patrimony might seem implausibly literal-minded-even for Jason-if it were not that he invariably interprets loss as

financial setback. Caddy's pregnancy merely means the expense of a wedding; her divorce costs him the promised job in Herbert Head's bank; Quentin's suicide wastes the tuition money gained from the sale of Benjy's pasture. Jason's need for impersonal, collectible, hoardable money springs from his inability to speak his grief. Versh's joke, like so much else in Benjy's section, accurately forecasts the intimate connection between crying and pocket filling, between grief and reimbursement. (376)

In order to support the excerpt above: Jason goes to sheriff to ask him to catch Miss Quentin and the man with red tie. The sheriff asks him: "What do you aim to do with that girl, if you catch them?" Jason Replies: "Nothing...Not anything. I wouldn't lay my hand on her. The bitch that cost me a job, the one chance I ever had to get ahead that killed my father and is shortening my mother's life every day and made my name a laughing stock in the town" (Faulkner 189). "Jason has not solved the Compson crisis. He has only silenced it. Like His brothers, Jason articulates a response to loss and deprivation" (Matthews 375).

One of the features of William Faulkner's families he describes in his works is that he always puts emphasis on family matters, their integrity and capability of passing on ancestral traits and the most striking one, their break up through losing traditional values. So, Faulkner mostly employs the theme of loss in the family and in the South. Arthur F. Kinney writes in his article, *Faulkner 's Families*:

Faulkner was obsessed by genealogy. So are all of his characters. More than race, gender, or class, it is the family that defines them, haunts them, and limits them: when young Bayard seeks liberty, it is freedom from the Sartoris family legend that he wants; when Jason Compson is overwhelmed with self-pity, it is because he feels the Compson family has left him with all the responsibility for its future; and when Ike McCaslin chooses to relinquish all of his inheritance, knowledge of his family's past recorded in commissary ledgers prevents him. For Thomas Sutpen, the world is reduced to dynasty. Bloodlines in Faulkner are stronger than land, fortunes, or reputation, stronger than social

standing or the lynching rope. When Fonsiba, exiled in Midnight, Arkansas, proudly proclaims “I’m free” (Faulkner 1990b: 268) – echoing the thoughts of Tomey’s Turl and Sam Fathers, Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy, Lucas and Mollie and Butch Beauchamp – we know she is not nor ever can be. Faulkner’s rough holograph sketch of the McCaslin–Beauchamp family shows irrevocable entangling alliances. The narrative axes of Faulkner’s fiction are heritage and legacy... (180)

It might not be wrong to say that blood determines what is doomed to happen to family members. It is expected from each family member to act in accordance with the legacy of ancestors, traditions and values of the (old) South. Irwing Howe puts this:

Clan rather than class forms the basic unit in Faulkner’s world. Pride in family and reverence for ancestors are far more powerful motives in behavior than any involvement with class . . . It is through [the] breakup of the clans that Faulkner charts the decay of the traditional South. Though the Compsons, Sartoris, and McCaslins, all landowners of prominence, begin roughly on the same social level, their histories from the Civil War serve radically different purposes. Their responses to modern life seem to illustrate the various moral courses that are, or were, open to the South: the chivalric recklessness and self-destruction of the Sartoris, the more extreme and tragic disintegration of the Compsons and, by way of resolution, the heroic expiation for the evil of the past upon which Isaac McCaslin decides . . . The Yoknapatawpha story is to be read more as a chronicle than as a group of novels [and stories]. It is concerned less with the struggle of the classes than with the rise and fall of the clans, and through its history of the clans it elaborates a moral fable whose source is Southern life. (8–9)

The Sound and the Fury, the masterpiece of Faulkner, tells of the story of the Compson family continuously and perseveringly in terms of blood and bloodlines. The genealogy of the Compsons is not told by an omniscient narrator. It is told through each character’s internalized mind and thoughts except for the last section told by

Faulkner himself. Quentin is madly obsessed with “this Compson blood” (Faulkner 66). It is Jason who distraughtly says, “blood is blood and you can’t get around it” (Faulkner 152). Upon leaving her daughter to Jason’s custody, Caddy says to him, “You’ll have to promise to take care of her, too – she’s kin to you, your own flesh and blood” (Faulkner 131). However, the moment Jason cannot make his niece Quentin behave the way he wants to, he says: “blood always tells. If you’ve got blood like that in you, you’ll do anything” (Faulkner 149). When he sees his idiot brother Benjy, he compares Benjy with old Compson forefathers, pointing out: “Blood, I says, governors and generals. It’s a damn good thing we never had any kings and presidents; we’d all be down there at Jackson chasing butterflies” (Faulkner 144). Mr. Compson humiliates Uncle Maury by insulting him and Mrs. Compson advocates him: “my people are every bit as well as born as yours” (Faulkner 28). And she thinks that the bad luck her children have is due to her unfortunate marriage and she changes Benjy’s name to Maury (a Bascomb name) in order to prevent him from being sent to Jackson, insane asylum. When Miss Quentin does not come home Mrs. Compson says: “It’s in the blood. Like uncle. Like niece. Or mother. I dont know which would be worse. I dont seem to care” (Faulkner 186). The day Quentin committed suicide he left a note to his family and when Caddy’s daughter Miss Quentin left home, Mrs Compson ordered Dilsey: “ Find the note ...Quentin left a note when he did it ” ...I knew the minute they named her Quentin this would happen” (Faulkner 176). Therefore, she regards Compson blood as responsible for the losses and frustrations she has experienced.

While constructing family relations and the line of the Compsons in *The Sound and the Fury*, in an interview, Faulkner told Jean Stein Vanden Heuvel that the novel gave him hard times and he said : “...Since none of my works has met my own standards, I must judge it [*The Sound and the Fury*] on the basis of that one which caused me the most grief and anguish, as the mother loves the child who became the thief or murderer more than the one who became the priest” (Faulkner 232). And he told her that “It’s a tragedy of two lost women: Caddy and her daughter.” When she asked him how *The Sound and the Fury* began, he answered how he started it and how the first image on his mind coaxed him to create the novel:

It began with a mental picture. I didn't realize at the time it was symbolical. The picture was of the muddy seat of a little girl's drawers in a pear tree, where she could see through a window where her grandmother's funeral was taking place and report what was happening to her brothers on the ground below. By the time I explained who they were and what they were doing and how her pants got muddy, I realized it would be impossible to get all of it into a short story and that it would have to be a book. And then I realized the symbolism of the soiled pants, and the image was replaced by the one of the fatherless and motherless girl climbing down the rain pipe to escape from the only home she had, where she had never been offered love or affection or understanding. I had already begun to tell the story through the eyes of the idiot child, since I felt that it would be more effective as told by someone capable only of knowing what happened, but not why. I saw that I had not told the story that time. I tried to tell it again, the same story through the eyes of another brother. That was still not it. I told it for the third time through the eyes of the third brother. That was still not it. I tried to gather the pieces together and fill in the gaps by making myself the spokesman. It was still not complete, not until fifteen years after the book was published, when I wrote as an appendix to another book the final effort to get the story told and off my mind, so that I myself could have some peace from it. (233)

A detailed and comprehensive account of deterioration of Compsons is given in the novel. This deterioration is a symbol of the downfall of patriarchy in the South. Due to the fact that the Compsons lack love, affection and compassion for each other, the members of the family, particularly the adults, are weak and lost in a society that is not valid anymore. Mr. Compson is an ineffective and cynical father that finds solace in alcohol, therefore he is unable to give the tenderness, understanding and security to his children. "Mr. Compson's theme has been the futility of human action" (Kartiganer 334). He has a nihilistic philosophy of life. In his point of view, life is mainly useless and this life lacks values and these values are meaningless. He tells his son Quentin that virginity is a meaningless thing coined by man: "He said it was men invented virginity not women" (Faulkner 50); "Women are never virgins. Purity is a negative state and therefore contrary to nature. Its nature is hurting you not Caddy and

I said That's just words and he said So is virginity ... "(Faulkner 73-74). Looking down upon human existentialism, he thinks "all men are just accumulations dolls stuffed with sawdust swept up from the trash heaps where all previous dolls had been thrown away the sawdust flowing from what wound in what side that not for me died not" (Faulkner 111). He also tells his son Quentin that "man is the sum of his misfortunes" (Faulkner 66).

The first loss that the Compson family experienced was the death of Damuddy, Compson children's grandmother. What constitutes the relationships between family members is based upon mothers and children. Self-pitying and hypochondriac Mrs. Compson fails to be an affectionate and a caring mother to her children except for her youngest son Jason. She is always complaining about how ill she is and how badly people around her treat her. Instead of her, Caddy and Dilsey -the good-hearted negro servant- take care of the family. For her son, Quentin, she is a loss. He says: "*If I'd just had a mother so I could say Mother Mother*" (Faulkner 109); "*If I could say Mother. Mother.*" (Faulkner 60).

Of all the Compson children, Quentin is the individual who is the most vulnerable and affected by the idea of the Old Southern values which are no longer available. He imagines the lives of old patriarchs like his grandfather who "was still on higher place" (Faulkner 111). He cannot accept present day notions and values whereby he cannot fulfill the role he wants to have. He has no power to return to those old days or to change things giving him restlessness. So, he seeks for comfort in thinking old days. He has a life that is spent without mother love and inspired by a father who sees everything in life meaningless. He is heavily under his father's influence which has a leading role in terminating his own life. That's why he is obsessed with his sister Caddy's honor, sins, promiscuity and time.

The older Caddy becomes, the more she becomes aware that she is surrounded by a cynical father and a whining mother who have given her nothing but false pride of the Compsons and hypocrisy. As a consequence, she is in an attempt to do what is contrary to assumed aristocratic values as an opposition to them. She struggles to break

free from social constraints. She becomes engaged in promiscuity and has sexual relationships with different men. When Quentin learns that she has lost her virginity to Dalton Ames, it is not the loss of commitment to the traditional values, it is the loss of Caddy herself. On account of the fact that Quentin is emotionally attached to Caddy, he potently reacts to her loss of virginity. He reacts to her: “do you love him ...did he make you then he made you do it ...Caddy you hate him don't you ...Caddy do you love him now ... then I was crying her hand touched me again and was crying against her damp blouse...are you thinking about him now ...I don't ...stop stop Quentin. you shut up ...you hear me...”(Faulkner 95-100). “Caught in Faulkner’s mind as she climbs out of the book, Caddy is the figure that the novel is written to lose, and to whom the writer may lose himself” (Matthews 374).

Despite the losses and worsening conditions of the Compsons, Faulkner still holds hope for future. Through Dilsey’s acts Faulkner refutes his pessimistic views of the modern man. Her generosity is contrasted with their (Compsons’) selfishness and egocentrism. She is down to earth. She is practical though she is slow. She has an unconditional love for the vulnerable ones. She is compassionate and loving towards minors and adults, specially Benjy, Miss Quentin, Caddy. She occasionally protects them from Jason’s cruelty and anger. She possesses such stamina that she can handle, sustain and control a family like Compsons. When Luster calls the Compsons “ Dese funny folks” and he claims he is lucky that he ‘aint none of em’. But Dilsey reprimands him by saying: “Lemme tell you somethin,nigger boy,you got jes much Compson devilment in you es any of them” (Faulkner 172). Here, she shows her belief in racial equality.

Ironically, Mrs. Compson criticizes her for being loyal and not walking away from all this work and humiliation of the Compson world every day without being paid: “You’re not the one who has to bear it,’ Mrs. Compson said. ‘It’s not your responsibility. You can go away. You don’t have to bear the brunt of it day in and day out. Dilsey said nothing” (Faulkner 169). As Faulkner told of her: “DILSEY. They endured.” (Faulkner 215). The pronoun ‘they’ he used refers to all the blacks. Her

endurance in silence contrasts with the sound and fury of the Compsons. Michael Millgate writes:

It is...tempting ,in the final section ,to see in the immensely positive figure of Dilsey , and the importance given to her, a certain over all reassurance and even serenity; but although the section does contain positives which to some extent offset the negations of the previous sections... her endurance is tested not in the acts spectacular heroism but in her submission to tedious...trivial demands made upon her by the Compson family.(309)



2.2. The Theme of Distortion: Time, Structure and Truth

Someone who is used to reading novels which are set in a classical chronology and progression, he or she will definitely find it hard to understand the time line and structure of *The Sound and The Fury*. "The opening pages of the text, so different from those we find in British imperial novels, do not position us in any kind of immediately meaningful relationship to the land" (Latham 255). I myself have read the novel four times in order to grasp the actual order of the events in the novel because the four sections are randomly and capriciously distorted. It is an absolute confusion for a reader as the novel starts with the Benjy section -narrated through the mind of a 33-year- old idiot. Cleanth Brooks puts forward:

The reader's impressions of *The Sound and the Fury* is not of an elaborately formal abstract structure but quite the reverse. Rarely has a novel appeared so completely disordered and unconnected and accidental in its concreteness. Benjy's section has notoriously seemed a clutter of facts and memories, hard particularities and irrational concretions, a cluster that illustrates nothing and points nowhere ...It is the apparent formlessness of so much of the book that has tempted the commentators to insist upon the underlying patterns. (292)

But after reading the other sections, we realize that Benjy section offers hints for other events like an introduction illuminating us and it must necessarily come first. Because were one of the other sections to come first, the events would lose their power to influence the reader.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner distorts the concept of time so that he can convey and accentuate the themes of his novel and details of the characters effectively. The reason why he uses this technique, in my point of view, could be that he would not be able to give his messages heftily to the world if he had used traditional story telling which has a linear time. Jean Paul Sartre claims that while most of the great contemporary writers, Proust, Joyce, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Gide, and Virginia Woolf, tried to distort time by depriving it of its past and future in order to reduce it to the pure intuition of the instant, Dos Passos, made of it a dead and closed memory and Proust and Faulkner simply decapitated it. They deprived it of its future, in other

words, its dimension of deeds and freedom (269). By means of distorting time specially in the first three sections, Faulkner describes each character's inner world without being told by an omniscient narrator. Faulkner's narration mostly revolves around past events, which have already happened. The past intrudes on the present on the sly. Therefore, "the past takes on a sort of super-reality; its contours are hard and clear, unchangeable. The present, nameless and fleeting, is helpless before it. It is full of gaps, and, through these gaps, things of the past, fixed, motionless and silent as judges or glances, come to invade it" (Sartre 267).

In the first section, it can be seen that Benjy's understanding of time evidently shows a simple mind which is easily influenced by external stimulants. Anything (voice, smell, noise, image etc.) around him can make him think something else or associate it with something else. In other words, he is under the influence of flashbacks. When he snagged on the same nail, Luster said: "Cant you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail." Meanwhile, Benjy's mind goes back to a similar scene he has lived with Caddy previously: "*Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said.*" (Faulkner 3). "The shifts are triggered by a nail, a fence, the coldness, - some objects or quality that abruptly springs Benjy into a different time zone, each one of which is as alive and real for Benjy as present" (Kartiganer 330). Thus, the reader has to infer that Benjy might have a mentally handicapped mind and the going back and forth between italicized text and plain text also shows the distortion of time in Benjy's already mentally ill mind. So, reading the first section gives hard times to the reader as there are many time shifts in his narration. Owen Robinson argues that "the creation of Benjy Compson serves as an extreme example of how Faulkner's language requires the reader to take a highly active role in the narrative processes, and to be more self-conscious of this activity than usual" (117).

In the second section, Faulkner employs distortion of time once again. Here, he uses it to report the mental state of another Compson sibling, Quentin. His mind is triggered by things which abounds with past events he lived with his family members, particularly the ones with his sister Caddy. Faulkner gives time shifts again between

plain text and italicized text and when we go to the end of Quentin section, Faulkner does not even use punctuations:

one minute she was standing there the next he was yelling and pulling at her dress they went to into hall and up the stairs yelling and shoving at her up the stairs ...get out of that water are you crazy but she didnt move her face was a white blur framed out of the blur of the sand by her hair get out now she sat up then she rose her skirt flopped against her draining she climbed the bank her clothes flopping sat down why dont you wring it out do you want to catch cold yes the water sucked and gurgled across the sand spit and on in the dark among the willows across the shallow the water rippled like a piece of cloth holding still a little light as water does... (Faulkner 94-95)

This lack of punctuations speeds up the development of this section and causes the time to be unclear without any limitations. The rapid dialogues with Caddy in his mind seem to have worsened his mental health on the last day when he is determined to commit suicide.

Apart from Faulkner's distorting the concept of time, Quentin is already obsessed with time. "Quentin does argue that time is merely a mechanical progression without inherent significance. He refers to objectively measured time and to the concept of causality of as masks concealing reality. There is a clock time and there is a real time" (Jehlen 322). ". . .Father said clocks slay time. He said time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life" (Faulkner 54). He even breaks the glass of his watch and removes its hands. He as if wants to seize and defeat the time. But his attempts prove to be pointless instead he keeps hurting himself. "Thus, Quentin's gesture of breaking his watch has a symbolic value; it gives us access to time without clocks. The time of Benjy, the idiot, who does not know how to tell time, is also clockless" (Sartre 266). Quentin's time has no future reference upon which likelihood of any actions is based. He is trapped between past and the present. Sartre again denotes:

What is thereupon revealed to us is the present, and not the ideal limit whose place is neatly marked out between past and future. Faulkner's present is

essentially catastrophic. It is the event which creeps up on us like a thief, huge, unthinkable - which creeps up on us and then disappears. Beyond this present time there is nothing, since the future does not exist. The present rises us from sources unknown to us and drives away another present; it is forever beginning anew. (266)

In the third section, we see Jason, one of the Compson children of whom Faulkner tells as “the first sane Compson” (Faulkner 212). For Jason time is money since he is a pragmatist. Faulkner uses time against him. He is late for stock market and he is late to catch his niece, Miss Quentin, who steals the money he has hoarded and runs away with a man with red tie. Jason’s being late shows his anger and abhorrence he has for his family.

At first glance, the sections and happenings in the novel seem to be a heap of events which look odd and do not have any connections with one another. When we analyze the novel holistically we come to realize that the four sections are connected to each other but at the same time they are not. Olga W. Vickery explains:

As Faulkner proceeds from one section to the next, there is a gradual clarification of events, a rounding out of the fragments of scenes and conversations which Benjy reports. Thus, with respect to the plot, the four sections are inextricably connected, but with respect to the central situation they are quite distinct and self-sufficient. As related to the central focus, each of the first three sections presents a version of the same facts which is at once the truth and a complete distortion of the truth. It would appear, then, that the theme of *The Sound and the Fury*, as revealed by the structure, is the relation between the act and man’s apprehension of the act, between the event and the interpretation. (280)

As explained in the extract above, the first three sections have facts which function by having two faces: one is the truth, the other is the distortion of the truth. “Different levels of “talking” brings to mind certain dynamics of *The Sound and the Fury*, wherein voices form and are formed by personal conceptions of truth, while our privileged

position as reader allows us to witness and partake of the unstable relationships between them” (Robinson 125).

Each character reports the events in terms of how he perceives the world and how these events affect them. “In their sections Quentin and Jason are extremely subjective, each imposing a distorted view on experience, in exact contrast to Benjy, who can abstract no order at all. The fourth section is the voice of the traditional novelist” (Kartiganer 328). Benjy’s language is direct and does not have interpretative qualities.” Benjy has made us aware of the distortions of the *literal*; his language is exact, free from bias. It is truth, not metaphor. Yet this exaggerated objectivism results in the most simplistic of moral designs. Quentin, on the other hand, has plunged into metaphor; but in doing so he reduces subjectivisms to an art of decadence: “symmetrical above the flesh” (Kartiganer 335).

Out of the people in the Compson house, Dilsey-the negro servant- is the only one to attain the truth of the world in which she lives. Her vision of t life is not distorted. She seems not to be affected by humiliations of the white folks and she is able to retain her unique personality without compromising it. She has a total submission to whatever life and time bring her. And again, as Olga W. Vickery suggests that “...The acceptance of whatever time brings, the absence of questioning and petty protests enables her to create order out of circumstance rather than in defiance of it, and in doing so she gains both dignity and significance for her life” (281). In this perspective Irwing Howe also writes:

...While Dilsey’s strength and goodness may be acceptable to traditional paternalism, she gradually assumes a role not quite traditional for the Southern Negro; she becomes, towards the end of the book, an articulate moral critic, the observer with whom action of the novel is registered and through whom its meanings are amplified. She is not merely the old darky in the kitchen clamping at the absurd and evil ways of the folks up front; at the climax of the novel she rises beyond that role, to a concern with universal problem of justice. (275)

2.3. Stream of Consciousness: Faulkner's Virtuosity

The term "stream-of-consciousness" was first used by William James in his work, *The Principles of Psychology*. "If we speak objectively, it is the real relations that appear revealed; if we speak subjectively, it is the stream of consciousness that matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own. In either case the relations are numberless, and no existing language is capable of doing justice to all their shades" (James 538). It refers to a technique of narration in which thoughts flow in the conscious mind of the character. Before the twentieth century, a writer used to convey the events to the reader with his voice and tell what the characters were thinking. But, with the help of stream-of-consciousness technique, the writer narrates the events as if he is inside the minds of characters in his works.

As mentioned earlier in the *American Modernism* part, this stream-of-consciousness technique is associated with modernist writers. William Faulkner is among those modernist writers who uses stream-of-consciousness in his works. *The Sound and the Fury* is one of these works, three sections of which abound in the narrations of stream-of-consciousness.

It is clear that Faulkner uses this technique skillfully. His virtuosity shows itself as he makes the readers wander into different strata of the Compson boys' minds. His style changes each time when he employs Benjy's images, Quentin's obsessions and Jason's monomania.

In Benjy section, Benjy's mind is triggered by random ideas and images surrounding him. He lives everything again and again in his mind. His sentences are short and simple. His ideas are jumpy, to which he does not add any comments. "Benjy reports the event with 'his camera-like fidelity'" (Millgate 301). The images around him cause him to jump from one thought to another. James L. Roberts writes:

Even while using this technique, Faulkner varies it with each section. For example, in the Benjy section, Faulkner's style is basically simple, which does not mean that the section is simple, but that each individual sentence is a rather simple and uncomplicated one. There are no difficult words because the

vocabulary of Benjy would naturally be simple. Since his mind does not function logically, Faulkner records the thinking in terms of basic images. Thus, when Benjy sees the gate or the barn, he remembers another event that happened at the gate or the barn. Likewise, his thought can be interrupted halfway through a thought; sometimes he can return to it and sometimes the thought is lost forever. Stylistically, Faulkner has created a powerful tour de force by suggesting the functioning of Benjy's mind, but he has still brought enough order to that mind so that the reader can follow his thoughts. (64)

When it comes to Quentin, his mind is complex and not clear. It contains many time shifts. Faulkner uses fragmentation, alienation, symbolism, italicized monologues and disjointed narrative to give the crisis Quentin is facing. His thoughts are ambiguous and require the reader to be active to comprehend the sequences of events because unbidden flashbacks pop up without any signs. His thoughts flow in long and complex sentences and jump from one idea to another very swiftly. The quotation below shows how complex and agitated Quentin's mind is and the level of confusion of his jumpy thoughts is easily comprehensible:

As soon as I turned off the light and tried to go to sleep it would begin to come into the room in waves building and building up until I would have to pant to get any air at all out of it until I would have to get up and feel my way like when I was a little boy *hands can see touching in the mind shaping unseen door Door now* My nose could see gasoline, the vest on the table, the door. The corridor was still empty of all the feet in sad generations seeking water. *yet the eyes unseeing clenched like teeth not disbelieving doubting even the absence of pain shin ankle knee the long invisible flowing of the stair-railing where a misstep in the darkness filled with sleeping Mother Father Caddy Jason Maury door I am not afraid only Mother Father Caddy Jason Maury getting so far ahead sleeping I will sleep fast when I door Door door* It was empty too, the pipes, the porcelain, the stained quiet walls, the throne of contemplation. I had forgotten the glass, but I could *hands can see cooling fingers invisible swan-throat where less than Moses rod the glass touch tentative not to drumming lean cool throat drumming cooling the metal the glass full overfull cooling the*

glass the fingers flushing sleep leaving the taste of dampened sleep in the long silence of the throat I returned up the corridor, waking the lost feet in whispering battalions in the silence, into the gasoline, the watch telling its furious lie on the dark table.(Faulkner 110)

The day he is to commit suicide, he is preoccupied with two devastating and equally complex ideas: his sister's promiscuity and his father's nihilistic views on life. Philip Weinstein writes:

Faulkner uses stream-of-consciousness to articulate the wracked nerves of Quentin's careening interiority – not his dailiness but his suicidal con-fusing of experiences, memories, fears, and desires: too intense to sustain for long. (June 2, 1910, the day of his monologue, is his death-day.) Faulkner draws on this technique to render the unspeakable, white-hot core of his characters' inner being. (346)

So, any other narration technique other than stream-of-consciousness might not be efficient and striking enough to give the mental state of Quentin. Regarding this, James L. Roberts writes:

Whenever Quentin's mind jumps back to some thought of the past, it is to these two subjects. If Quentin had been concerned with other things, his section would be far more complicated. And as we reread the section, we realize that every scene returns to these events. For example, Quentin is riding with Gerald when he remembers his embarrassing talk with Dalton Ames on the bridge, and suddenly he asks if Gerald has a sister. The fight that occurs is a result of Quentin relating his past question and the consequent fight with Dalton to the present situation involving Gerald. (64-5)

In Jason section, Jason's mind is not as complicated as Quentin's. His section shows the characteristics of a monomaniac. His mind is not triggered by images or impressions as Benjy's and Quentin's. His section flows smoothly. All he wants is to punish people and make more money.

Unlike the first three sections, the last section is given with the voice of a traditional writer. Faulkner changes his style once again to convey the events in an order so that he can tell the story in accordance with Dilsey. The sentences in this section are not complicated and ambiguous as the character of Dilsey is quiet and different from that of the Compsons.



CHAPTER 3

3.1. Candace Compson: Unidentified Determining Omnipresence

It certainly seems like that to have made Caddy a “voice” in the novel would have diminished her importance as a central, focal figure ... The novel revolves upon Caddy, but Caddy herself escapes satisfactory definition ...

Michael Millgate, *The Sound and the Fury*: [Story and Novel], p.306

Literally nowhere, Caddy is metaphorically everywhere. Her presence and /absence become diffused all over the world, pointing, like so many feminine figures of Faulkner’s earlier and later works, to an elemental complicity between Woman and the immemorial Earth.

Andre Bleikasten, ‘The Quest for Eurydice’, *The Sound and the Fury*, p.425

Instead of telling the story of Caddy from her own point of view, Faulkner chose to convey her story from the viewpoint of people around her. “Surely Caddy-the little girl -manufactured by the text never achieves the presence or substance of a real character” (Matthews 373). However, by doing so, Faulkner aimed to protect Caddy from being someone labeled as an average character with less importance. In *The Sound and the Fury*, we cannot see Caddy directly. We can see her only through her siblings’ relationship to her. This consists of accounts of Beny, Quentin and Jason. By means of her brothers’ reports we can tell about her character. Despite the fact that she never has got her own section in the novel, she is the central character and her actions control and affect her brothers’ actions radically. “For Caddy is exposed as a fiction within the fiction, her presence in the novel being rendered in such a way as to make

her appear throughout as pure and a poignant figure of *absence*... she is at once the focal and the vanishing point, the bewitching image around which everything revolves” (Bleikasten 422). Quentin drowns himself in the river, Benjy, who is retarded, has started to scream and cry more and more, Jason, who is obsessed with money, steals the money Caddy sends to her daughter. In this regard, Minrose C. Gwin suggests that “She is the text which speaks multiplicity, maternity, sexuality, and as such she retains not just on voice but many. They make Benjy bellow, and Quentin despair. They drive Jason to hatred” (412). Caddy has a very significant role in the novel. She is the sister or the woman that Faulkner wants to reach. “The motif of nympholepsy largely shapes Faulkner’s evocations of the sublime, as Faulkner himself sought to define a role for himself as artist that could also serve to draw and reinforce the lines between femininity and masculinity in an era of increasingly fluid boundaries between gender roles and identities” (Donalson 365). During an interview at University of Virginia Faulkner was asked why he didn’t write a section in the novel about in which Caddy tells her own story, he answered:

Unidentified participant: In *The Sound and the Fury*, the first three sections of that book are narrated by one of the—of the four Compson children, and in view of the fact that Caddy figures so prominently, is there any particular reason why you didn’t have a section with—giving her views or impressions of what went on?

William Faulkner: That’s a good question. That—the explanation of that whole book is in that. It began with the—the picture of the—the little girl’s muddy drawers, climbing that tree to look in the parlor window with her brothers that didn’t have the courage to climb the tree waiting to see what she saw. and I tried first to tell it with one brother, and that wasn’t enough. That was Section One. I tried with another brother, and that wasn’t enough. That was Section Two. I tried the third brother, because Caddy was still to me too beautiful and too moving to—to reduce her to telling what was going on, that it would be more—more passionate to see her through somebody else’s eyes, I thought. And that failed, and I tried

myself, the fourth section, to tell what happened, and I still failed. (233-34)

It is an undeniable fact that Caddy can be considered as a sort of mother. Even in the early scenes, Mr. Compson wants Caddy to deal with Benjy because Mrs. Compson is sick. Consequently, Benjy develops a strong love and need for Caddy. She replaces the love that is denied him by his own mother. Whenever Mrs. Compson tries to handle Benjy, it is only Caddy who can silence Benjy. She meets Benjy's basic needs, "I'll feed him tonight" (Faulkner 45). Her father asks Caddy to look after Benjy, saying: "are you going to take good care of Maury" (Faulkner 45). when her mother starts whining again, she asks her mother to go upstairs: "You go upstairs and lay down, so you can be sick" (Faulkner 41). Seeing the vacant of position of a mother, Caddy, at a very early age, has to perform the functions of a mother. Caddy has "contradictory faces: in turn sister and a mother, virgin and a whore, angel and demon, she at once embodies fecundity and foulness, the nostalgia for innocence and the call to corruption, the promise of life and the vertigo of death" (Bleikasten 429). Being a substitute mother is not the only role that is expected from her, she is also the one to whom many personal interests are directed:

Like Benjy, Quentin and Jason also turn toward Caddy, seeking to find in her some way of meeting needs ignored or thwarted by their parents...Quentin seeks to turn to his fair and beautiful sister into a fair, unravished...maiden. Lusting after an inheritance, and believing his Parents to have sold his birthright, Jason tries to make Caddy the instrument of a substitute fortune. (Minter 349-50)

Caddy's character starts to change as she becomes older. She comes to realize her anxious and whining mother and the weakness and cynicism of her father. She finds herself in an attempt to reject the life her family makes her to live in. As a form of rejection, she flirts with men with the aim of running away from the Compson world which abounds in false pride and vague imposed notions. She loses her virginity. This is something which is not favored and put up with in the context of Southern values. In the novel, we can see that her relationship with men is an intentional action. In this

sense, because she is nonconformist in her actions, she strives to break her shell and break free. To some extent, she becomes successful in gaining her independence. “Unlike her brothers Caddy establishes her independence and achieves freedom” (Minter 350). It is surprising Caddy’s daughter Miss Quentin also rejects the Compson values imposed on her. When Miss Quentin gets away with the money Jason hoarded, they go into her room. It is clear that she has never felt a part of the Compson world or has never lived the way she has been asked to “: It was not anybody’s room, the faint scent of cheap cosmetics and few feminine objects and the other evidences of crude and hopeless efforts to feminize it but added to its anonymity, giving it that dead and stereotyped transience of rooms in assignation houses” (Faulkner 176).

3.2. The role of the Father in the Old South: Mr. Compson

The Old South contains a hint of sentiment and nostalgia, a regret for world that is lost; the ante-bellum South is redolent of that classical civilization so proudly claimed by the Old South as its model, not only for much of its architecture, but its way of life. The rural and agriculture nature of the South, its one crop system, even the widespread use of slave labor, the lack of urban and industrial development, its pre-bourgeois or the pre-modern society, its poverty, its sense of failure, defeat or guilt: at different times all of these have been offered as explanations of the South's uniqueness.

Edward Ranson and Andrew Hook, "The Old South", *Introduction to American Studies*, pp. 107-110

The incidents which occurred after and before the American Civil War and Reconstruction Era brought about the fall of the role of the patriarchs in the Old South. That the Civil war ended, and the slavery was abolished caused the substructures of the patriarchy to decline socially and economically. When the slavery ended, slaveholding father's power was eliminated to some great extend and thus his rule came to an end. And this collapse deteriorated the role of the father within the family and society as a whole a great deal. Therefore, the southern fathers found themselves in a state of continual power loss. They "could not help but feel dwarfed by the formidable ghosts of their forefathers" (Bleikasten 121-22). Faulkner dealt with the father's downfall and its impact on next generations in the South. The old South only was visible through nostalgia and myths in the years after the Civil War. Instead of the fear and disillusion of slavery, there was a yearning for the time which was not altered by war and industrial pursuits. This yearning for the Old South formed a Southern Romanticism that was against the industrialization in the South after war. C. Vann Woodward claims that while the South began to adopt the industrial phase, "there developed a cult of archaism, a nostalgic vision of the past" (154) which was embraced by thousands of Southerners grieving for the Old South. These people who were

against the concept of an industrialized South began to set up the validity of Lost Cause. The old order that Southerners longed for was patriarchal in organization. Andre Bleikasten points out that “in the Old South the patriarchal family typified to a large extent the proper relations between ruler and ruled and so supplied the primal model for social organization and political government” (156). Hence, the father’s authority over his spouse and children was considered as law and he had the right to use this authority over his slaves, too. The slaveholder was father and master at the same time. So, he would expect the same submission from his family and his slaves no matter who they were, black or white. The father “presided over an extended family” (Bleikasten 156). The concept of extended family typified the pattern of class and race relations in the Old South. Despite the fact that the population of the South did not consist of plantation slave owners, “the patriarchal and paternalistic values of the ruling class permeated Southern society at large” (Bleikasten 156). And Richard H. King suggests:

The South was historically an agrarian society which lacked extra familial institutions. The plantation itself was conceived of as structured like a family. It was homogeneous and resolutely patriarchal in fact and in self-conception...The actual family was destiny; and the region was conceived of as a vast metaphorical family, hierarchally organized and organically linked by (pseudo-)ties of blood. (249-250)

The downfall of patriarchy is one of the prime themes William Faulkner employs with a wide range of narrations in his earlier novels. Gwendolyn Chabrier states that “Faulkner's children as presented in his work of this [earlier] period are often doomed to be the prisoners of the narrow lives their parents allowed them. They are portrayed as puppets, their parents the puppeteers” (116). These fictional fathers include the incapable Mr. Jason Compson in *The Sound and the Fury*, destined to “fail at everything he touched” (Faulkner 206). In Faulkner’s point of view, the Old South was inevitably associated with patriarchy and father’s hegemony in his household became an example how the Old South was ruled. As can be seen in *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner tells of the failure of the Old South by means the patriarchs’ (the example of Mr.Compson) failures. The disillusionment of fathers of the Old South

serves as a kind of outdated cultural process which was seeking to endure in a fast - developing modern world. As a result, this pursuit after old values prevents patriarchal fathers from preparing their children for the modern world.

Mr. Compson, the father of the Compson family, is lost in the now-obsolete thoughts and values of the Old South. His nihilistic views about the world is a hindrance for him to convey any useful value to his children. Therefore, he cannot prepare his children for the modern world and he continually preaches about the old values and imposes these values on them, endeavouring to make his children act the way he does. Gwendolyn Chabrier states that “the transmission of an outmoded code of ethics is a problem particularly plaguing to the twentieth- century South's upper classes, who have to adapt themselves to a value system based mainly on money rather than on the virtues at the heart of the of the pre-Civil War South” (107).

The Compson siblings also suffer from these inherited values. Because they are brought up by Mr. Compson whose nihilistic philosophy is not eligible for the modern world they are in. Of all the children in the Compson family, Quentin is the one who is affected most deeply and profoundly by Mr. Compson's old fashioned ideas. Whatever he does is related to his father's way of life. In the long run, even this causes him to be obsessed with his father's thoughts and ideas about life, which finally brings about his suicide, by drowning himself in the river. Faulkner uses unhappy and vehement endings of patriarchs' children as a metaphor for the Old south. Mr. Compson's nihilism is seen clearly in Quentin's behaviours and responds to outer world. Quentin cites his father's comment: “No battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools” (Faulkner 48).

As Jean Paul Sartre suggests “the past is never lost, unfortunately; it is always there, it is an obsession” (268). As for Mr. Compson, as can be seen in *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin considers his father's words so seriously and utters this: “Father said a man is the sum of his misfortunes. One day you'd think misfortune would get tired, but then time is your misfortune Father said” (Faulkner 66). Quentin indicates more of his obsession via a conversation with his father:

The strange thing is that man who is conceived by accident and whose every breath is a fresh cast with dice already loaded against him will not face that final main which he knows beforehand he has assuredly to face without essaying expedients ranging all the way from violence to petty chicanery that would not deceive a child until someday in very disgust he risks everything on a single blind tum of a card. (Faulkner 112)

While remembering his father 's explanations and comments about life, he starts depicting the things that are going to happen soon and as a result, he finds it meaningless to continue his existence in this world.



3.2. The End of an Aristocratic Family: The Compsons

... once the Compson lands and honor were intact, men were men and life was good; now even those who have retained their wealth only parody the old values.

Myra Jehlen, "Faulkner's Fiction and Southern Society", *The Sound and the Fury* p.323

Although there are many definitions of aristocracy available, the broader and short one can be: Aristocracy is a term referred to a group of people who are influential, powerful and wealthy in their milieu. Aristocrats have privileges in governments and administrations. While some of them are aristocrats by birth, others can gain this status later by retaining power, wealth and clout. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, it is written:

The distinction between aristocracy of birth and nonhereditary aristocracy is relative, because even in caste societies some low-born persons climb into the higher castes and some high-born persons slide into the lower castes. On the other hand, even in open aristocracies there is a tendency for the upper stratum to become a hereditary group filled mainly by the offspring of aristocratic parents. For example, among millionaires and billionaires living in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century, the percentage born of wealthy parents is notably higher than among American millionaires of the mid-19th century.

Those who constituted the majority of white population in the South were not aristocrats; but, they were yeoman farmers instead. So, one must remember that Southern aristocrats were not the majority residents of the South. But they represented the ideal social stratum, to which many ordinary people -especially yeoman farmers- wanted to belong. Indeed, some of these yeoman farmers managed to be aristocrats by gaining wealth and status. The aristocrats of the South can be considered nothing but as ordinary businessmen, who had to deal with many tasks such as: to actively take

part in sustaining the plantation, to travel long distances for marketing his goods etc. They even had to follow the crop prices carefully to make a good profit as the prices were volatile.

The myth that aristocrats in the South led life of leisure does not necessarily reflect the truth. This is maybe valid for their wives, children and their next generations. Because once they had a plantation, it needed many workers to work it and much work if it was aimed to make money through it. The yearning for the life of leisure and Southern moral code originated from England. Therefore, the planters felt themselves as the forefathers of English nobility who thus felt obliged to exercise the chivalry, courtesy, heroism in the South. Even though chivalry was a medieval notion, it became one of the most important elements of the Southern aristocracy and its etiquette. The Southern aristocrats regarded themselves as landholders who dominated their lands by means of their overseers; while their black slaves were working as if they had been their bond servants.

The antebellum Southern aristocrats and their wives had to hold some personality traits which were designated in the Southern moral code. Womanhood, piety, sinlessness, nobility and many other superior characteristics were sine qua non of Southern aristocrat women. They had the same education as the males. They were expected to be role models while raising their Southern belles and beaux. When the fathers, namely the masters, of the plantation were away, the mistresses were in charge of the house and the farm. They were responsible for maintaining and protecting honor, discipline, pride of their families in the South.

As mentioned in *The Role of Father in The Old South: Mr. Compson*, the dominance of patriarchal white males in the South began to fall after Civil War since aristocrats lost their supremacy and control over the lower classes- especially slaves. They insisted they should possess their rights of every kind of privileges. They lived a life different from the North. “while the rest of the nation was becoming increasingly heterogenous, the South prided itself on its aristocratic origins and bemoaned the destruction of the aristocratic way of life” (King 251).

The Sound and the Fury is the account of The Compson family, an old aristocratic Mississippi family that has previously led a better life than mentioned in the novel. Coming from the honorable Civil War Veteran, General Compson, the family has come on the brink of bankruptcy and eventually has been obliged to sell some of its pasture, which signifies physical and financial loss. The events in the novel take place primarily during a few days in 1928 and one section of the novel is set in 1910. Each narrator of the novel tells their actions in their eyes. From the first page to last page of the novel, it can be seen how family members condemn each other or external forces for their misery and choices in life. Upon reading the novel, one can see the appalling factors which bring about an aristocratic family's dissolution and its going out existing in history.

While reading the novel, we can see that *The Sound and the Fury* holds many themes such as corruption, degeneration and collapse of the Compson family. The narrative of each character in the novel is full of decline, which is accompanied and intensified by regrets, disillusionments, longing for the past and failures to gain their own identities. No matter how hard the Compson family tried to exist in line with their great forefathers, they were not able to find a place in the New South where commercialism started to reshape the society. The leading stimuli that caused their disintegration is their dependence on the past and on the Southern moral code. Due to the fact that Mr. Compson and Quentin had unattainable beliefs about past, they failed to fulfil their selfhood in the present world. And even Jason, who adopted the materialism of the 20th century, has not been able to find a better way of life in the new South. "The contempt he (Jason) feels for his family enables him to reject the past and embrace the New south which he does without recognizing in himself vulgar versions of materialism and self-pity we associate with his mother" (Minter 350). And, as a result of this, they had to become conscious about their incapability to discover their real identities and their primary roles in the world. They finally came to realize that society demanded a wide range of various roles from them, which constituted their identities. Each of them had their own rules upon which they based their lives and they preferred living in their own world rather than coexisting in harmony and loving each other. Consequently, they fell into oblivion.

The decadence and downfall of the Compson family is not merely that of an aristocratic family but it also indicates the decline of the degenerated modern man in society in which the modern man fails to be a part of a culture or a family. Cleanth Brooks, in his article, denotes that “the decay of the Compsons can be viewed, however, not merely with reference to the Southern past but to the contemporary American scene. It is tempting to read it as a parable of disintegration of modern man. Individuals no longer sustained by familial and cultural unity are alienated and lost in private worlds” (295).

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner shows us the collapse of the Compson House by means of some symbolic narrations. After Miss Quentin-Caddy’s illegitimate daughter- ran away from home, “...the clock tick-tocked, solemn and profound. It might have been the dry pulse of decaying house itself, after a while it whirred and cleared its throat and struck six times” (Faulkner 177). This excerpt is a reference to the “decaying house” of the Compson family in terms of both physical and metaphorical decadence. When Dilsey, Frony and Ben got back from church, Frony asked Dilsey why she was still crying, she answered: “I ‘ve seed de first en de last” and when they reached the gate of Compson house, “Ben began to whimper again, and for a while all of them looked up the drive at the square paintless house with its rotting portico” (Faulkner 185). This ‘rotting portico’ is gnawing on their existentialism.

Another catalyst that brings about the downfall of the Compsons is Mrs. Compson’s being ineffective in conducting family issues. She superficially possesses the Southern moral code -honor, piety, nobility- but she cannot apply it in reality. She finds it hard to meet her children’s needs, which results in her being self-pitying and hypochondriac. She is an egocentric mother, who values the concepts of being respectable and nobility more than anything. As mentioned earlier, she thinks that her son Benjy, who was born mentally retarded, is a kind of curse inflicted upon her to punish her. Of her children, she loves only her youngest son Jason whom she thinks as a Bascomb not a Compson. Consequently, her misconduct, selfishness, negligence in the family contribute to the downfall of the family to a certain extent.

On the whole, the process of exhaustion of the Compson family is not triggered by a single factor. Yet, it is a combination of misfortunes: Mr. Compson's nihilism and fatalism, Mrs. Compson's hypochondria and remissness of her family, Caddy's amorous and rebellious acts, Quentin's obsessions leading to his suicide and Jason's greed and obsession with money.



CONCLUSION

*...To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* Act V, Scene 5

William Faulkner is a highly modernist writer, who mostly deals with regional themes in his works such as the Southern moral code, honor, pride, nobility and the Southern aristocracy and its downfall with a modernist perspective. Regional though he might seem, with the help of his artistic virtuosity, he spices up his themes with an aspect of universality. As discussed in the respective chapters, *The Sound and the Fury* is one of the most comprehensive and significant novels by Faulkner in terms of conveying the story of a declining family, the Compsons, whose downfall symbolizes not only a decaying family but also a whole society, namely, the Southern aristocracy.

The quotation above is from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* from which Faulkner took the title of *The Sound and the Fury*. As it indicates, the life of the Compsons, who were once a prominent Southern aristocratic family, is nothing but a parody of their glorious past. Their present life does not promise anything noteworthy and dignified for the future. The aristocrats in the South became ineffective to reconcile with the notions of the New South. As for the members of the Compson

family, the consequences of their acts in the New South have led to their disappearance. Although there are various reasons leading to their downfall, the prime reason is their being heavily dependent on the South moral code.

Each of the Compson family members is unable to survive in the modern world as they cannot manage to fulfill their selfhood in the New South. Each of them has their own part in the ultimate destruction of a once aristocratic family. Mr. Compson's nihilistic philosophy and finding solace in alcohol generate a kind of indifference to the things happening around him. He fails to be an ideal father like an old Southern patriarch, who is expected to support his children and have them lead a happier life. Mrs. Compson's self-absorption and hypochondria prevent her from acting motherly to her children except for Jason whom she thinks as a Bascomb not a Compson. Caddy's affairs with different men and his father's fatalism cause his brother Quentin to be obsessed with women's virginity, familial honor, and the concept of time, which eventually makes Quentin drown himself in the river. He cannot do anything to react the situation he is in but kills himself to get rid of this tormenting world and family. After the death of Mrs. Compson, Jason, the youngest of Compson children, who is obsessed with money and control over his family, has also his part in the downfall of the Compsons: He sells everything, moves to a pair of offices which he has converted to an accommodable place before and gets rid of Dilsey and Benjy by sending him to State Asylum, Jackson in 1933 (Faulkner 213).

The main aim of this thesis was to prove the downfall of Southern aristocracy in *The Sound and the Fury*, which is one of the most representative novels of Faulkner dealing with the downfall of the Southern aristocracy with the aim of proving the notion of uncontrollable past and its impacts on present and the fatalistic aspects of the Southern moral code. Although it does not include the complete collapse of the given argument related to Southern aristocracy, by analyzing the characteristics of the aristocratic members of the Compson family, I believe the argument of this thesis is justified and proven sufficiently and it can give its future readers brief and well-organized information.

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Eğitim

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Doktora
Yüksek lisans	Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	2018
Lisans	Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	2007

İş Deneyimi

Yıl	Yer	Görev
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Yabancı Dil

İngilizce: İleri Seviye
Fransızca: Başlangıç

Yayımlar

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Hobiler

Edebiyat, sinema, müzik, seyahat