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CADDY, THE ETERNAL *WHORE*. A GENDERED REVISION OF WILLIAM FAULKNER'S NOVEL *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*.

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The writer's first obligation is to tell the truth

William Faulkner

Summary

The document analyzes William Faulkner's novel The Sound and the Fury from a gender perspective, focusing on the character of Caddy Compson. The novel reflects the decline of the Compson family, which serves as a symbol of Southern society after the Civil War and the Great Depression. Through Caddy, Faulkner critiques the patriarchal roles imposed on women, portraying her as a figure caught between the pursuit of freedom and family expectations. Caddy represents the "eternal puella," a woman who defies conventions by rejecting her traditional roles as wife and mother, yet she cannot fully escape family constraints. Throughout the story, the Compson family undergoes moral and economic destruction, with women, especially Caddy, becoming victims of social repression and machismo. The novel also explores the fragmentation of individual truths, as each family member has their own version of reality, highlighting the complexity of human experience. Faulkner, ahead of his time, reveals how patriarchal oppression stifles the development of women, emphasizing the tensions between traditional roles and the need for female liberation. The analysis suggests that the failure of the Compson family mirrors the collapse of Southern society and its inability to adapt to new social and economic paradigms.

Keywords: eternal puella, patriarchy, feminism, dysfunctional family, William Faulkner

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INTRODUCTION

The Compson house in Jefferson, capital of Yoknapathawpha, an imaginary place in the southern United States, was built when one of the ancestors became governor, hence its name, *The Governor's House*. Over the years it had been neglected, in need of painting, repairs and missing valuable paintings and furniture that had been sold to pay debts and make ends meet.

The Compson family, with its long historical tradition of heroes and, also, of failures, collapses, like the house itself, before the implacable reality of its economic ruin. This fall goes hand in hand with a moral fall. Not "moral" in the Judeo-Christian sense, but in the philosophical sense of lack of internal coherence, of lack of a family identity. This prevents them from developing healthy intra- and extra-familial connections and guarantees the continuity of suffering from generation to generation.

The writing of William Faulkner (1897-1962) raises the central experience of the existential fact in modernity: failure. For the author all reality exists only in language and this is difficult to understand because words have also lost meaning. In modernity, anything can be affirmed and that is "the truth". For the Compson family, the protagonist of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), there is not only one truth but multiple: that of each of its members. It could be called "the point of view", but it is much more complex since it implies for each one an *ethos,* a personality in the Greek sense, a way of being, a unique inner reality that does not correspond to that of others.

Development of the research.

The Sound and the Fury shows a dysfunctional family as a reflection of the world. William Faulkner wanted to show the collapse of a family due to atavistic and cultural causes that included addictions, promiscuity, suicide, incest, marriages of convenience, mental retardation, hypochondria. At the same time, he explains that this collapse is also caused by the severe economic crisis of the country that exposed the racism, classism and machismo in the backward societies of the southern United States at the time and that are a reflection of all societies that in the midst of crises show their darkest aspects.

The Compsons seemed to have their backs turned to the profound problems they were experiencing on a daily basis and, also, to the problems of a country that was suffering one of the greatest economic debacles in history with the "Crash" of the New York Stock Exchange in 1929, but which, in the South, could be traced back to the progressive dismantling of the

traditional means of production of the large estates due to the American Civil War, which ended in 1865. Disconnection is the key word. They had become disconnected from themselves and from a country whose economic crisis was sweeping away the lifestyle of the Southern aristocracy, with its productive plantations and its entourages of farm laborers.

The only way for the Compsons to survive in the midst of their hopelessness was for the eldest son, Quentin, to attend a prestigious university and become a lawyer and for Caddy, the only daughter of the four sibling group, to make a good marriage to a wealthy man. Toward these goals the Compsons aimed without thinking of this son's and daughter's own needs. They imagined that in this way they would guarantee the continuity of the family prestige, but what happened was just the opposite.

At the hinge moment of the novel, when the boy and girl were ready to fulfill the traditional roles assigned to them, the unexpected happened and everything changed. Caddy did not "fit" the traditional wife pattern and fell in love with a traveler, Dalton Ames, a man passing through her town and with him she conceived a daughter. Dalton Ames soon abandoned her to her fate and Caddy managed to marry Herbert Head, a wealthy banker. However, she could not hide for long that her pregnancy was the result of a previous relationship and Herbert Head immediately asked for a divorce. For his part, Quentin, at Harvard, tormented by this pregnancy of his sister and by his own lack of emotional tools to break away from family demands, committed suicide. Faulkner's critique points to the failure of the human being who assumes patriarchal roles and is unable to see beyond them because of his own existential anguish.

Gender perspective

In terms of the feminine, the image presented by the author was ahead of the writing proposals with a gender perspective at a time, 1929, in which to speak of female freedom was a bet on tenacious criticism. The author, with a unique sensitivity towards women's problems, subject to family atavisms, joined the nascent feminist criticism of the patriarchal roles imposed on the women of his time. Faulkner's work can be reviewed with this new look. The author also departs from traditional roles and accepts a new masculinity that rejects the submission of women to male power and gender violence.

Her character, Candace Compson, embodied the only redeemable thing about that family. She was the "soul" who refused to participate in the degeneration of the clan and who made her own way in the world. Although, as the author rightly states, Caddy will always look back to watch over her family. She will remain emotionally tied by invisible threads to the Compsons. She will suffer for years the scorn of her mother, Caroline, and her brother, Jason, a people who rejected her both for the failure of her marriage and for her free way of life after the divorce, but who needed her money to survive. That suffering saw its end when her daughter, Miss Quentin, the baby born to her from her relationship with Dalton Ames, whom she had to give to her family to avoid social rejection for being a single mother, grew up and revolted against Jason's authoritarianism and violence and Caroline's coldness during her upbringing.

Caroline appears at the beginning of the novel as a traditional mother who tried to comply with the family and social demands of her time, choosing a "good match" to marry, but who was

unable to continue in that role of "good mother and wife" when the family ruin and the economic and social changes that sank her country occurred together. She suffered from a rare disease that she said could only be treated with camphor and rest. So she isolated herself in her room, leaving the care of her children and the household to Caddy and Dilsey, her aging black maid. Caroline, with her hypochondriacal isolation, could not represent an inspiring female role model, so Caddy knew what example to follow in life and bowed to her parents' demands.

Caddy experimented with love relationships. Her failed marriage prompted her to live far away, to work, to try to rebuild her life with a second marriage to a Hollywood mogul, a reference to the nascent show business industry. She wanted to show herself as a winner, to live again in the world of appearances of her ancestors, but, in the end, she realized that this was not her way either. Yet, in the midst of the mistakes, she somehow made her dream come true. Ever since she was a child Caddy had felt the urge to leave the bosom of her family: "`I'll run away and never come back,' Caddy said. I started to cry. Caddy turned and said `shut up'" (Faulkner, 2008).

This freedom of the divorced daughter was not well seen by the traditional Compson who began to treat her practically as a delinquent. In this novel William Faulkner exposed the problems of the "liberated" woman of his time. He made a great literary break with an experimental writing in which he exposed the psychological, but also the social as the main causes of failure and human pain. Many women identified with this new approach, others were shocked: "In this case, the desire for realism clashes with another desire: that of the representation of exemplary female roles in literature. The feminist reader of this period not only wants to see her own experiences reflected in the novel, but also strives to identify with strong, impressive female characters." (Moi, 2006)

Faced with the impossibility of adults to order the world, the figure of Caddy emerged as the only one capable of understanding and assuming the motherhood delegated by Caroline, psychologically incapable of being a mother. There is a critique by the author of false motherhood, one that is the result of a process after courtship and marriage and not a motherhood born of a feminine desire to bring another human being into the world. In this way motherhood is seen more as responsibility and burden than as creative joy. That responsibility of mothering can be shifted to another member of the family, in this case, to the child Caddy, or to service personnel, such as Dilsey. Dilsey could barely manage the house and Benjy, the younger brother who suffered from mental retardation, although today it could be considered autism, was left in charge of his sister Caddy. A special bond of dependence developed between these two siblings. Especially on the part of Benjy who, when Caddy ran away from home, was left helpless looking for her in the meadows that had once belonged to the family and were now golf courses.

When golfers called their *caddies*, the young men in charge of carrying the golf equipment, Benjy thought of his sister who was called by that nickname, remembering that: "Caddy smelled like the trees when it rains" (Faulkner, 2008). (Faulkner, 2008).

The association with nature, characteristic of the American narrative, presents Caddy as the virginal that must be kept pure because she symbolizes the good and noble part of the

family. She is archetypally the representation of the *parthenos* goddesses, the virgin goddesses of the Greeks, linked to nature, a place of continual renewal, with its cycles of birth, growth, death and seed transformation. Quentin, the older brother, and Benjy, the younger brother, seem to be the only ones in the family who realize the importance of keeping this feminine center pure and untouched. Nature appears as life itself and its cycles. In Caddy's case, she will soon leave the virginal aspect to become, first a surrogate mother to her siblings, and then a mother to her own daughter. For Quentin, on the contrary, those cycles marked by the clock given to him by his father are cycles that indicate the impossibility of life because they are burdened by a dismal family legacy. That is why he clung to Caddy, like Benjy, as one who clings to the life he knows he will soon abandon because Quentin commits suicide too young.

For each of the brothers, Caddy represents something different. Through his biased view of Caddy, the author makes one of the central points of his thinking: there is no single truth. Nor is there a single idea or a single emotion. Everyone has "their own truth". The image of Caddy as a child climbing the pear tree trying to look out of a high window inside the house where the adults are watching over her grandmother is symbolic. Caddy inadvertently shows her dirt-stained panties. Each of his brothers reacts differently: for Quentin it is a premonition of his future promiscuity and he becomes distressed; for Benjy it is just an image of something hidden by the girl, a beloved sister whom he would never criticize because she loves him and takes care of him as his own mother did not; for Jason, instead, it is the confirmation that his sister is "dirty", because the feminine is something dirty. In Jason's character the author summarizes the rejection of the feminine, racism and classism typical of highly hierarchical societies. "What I'm saying is that this one should be down there in the kitchen, instead of in her room, throwing paint on her face and waiting for six blacks who can't even get up from a chair without a plate full of meatloaf to hold them up, to make her breakfast." (Faulkner, 2008)

Everyone had an opinion about her, but Caddy has no voice in the novel. Her whole personality is constructed from the interpretations of others. The author does not let her express herself. She is the only character of the four brothers who does not have a monologue or a chapter like all the others. Everyone can think what they want about her, except herself. In this way the author exposes and opens the debate to the various interpretations of the feminine in the patriarchal society in which women have been constantly silenced.

The woman appears in *The Sound and the Fury* as a figure that must accept the projection of others and must comply with certain predetermined roles, that is why she is depersonalized: changeable, variable, loving, promiscuous at times, mature and wise at other times, depending on each person's experience with the feminine.

Likewise, the author highlights the marginality of women within the family group and, by extension, in modern societies. It is the blindness to the important role of women both in family cohesion and in the construction of inclusive and advanced societies. Faulkner did not elaborate a theory about this marginalization, but he placed Caddy in an inferior position to her brothers and, at the same time, paradoxically gave her the role of greater relevance within the family.

This position of inferiority is explained by Dr. Linda Schierse Leonard with the archetype of the eternal *whore*. She is the woman who is an eternal adolescent, a breaker of schemes, a seeker of her freedom, experimental, immature, lacking in self-confidence, incapable of producing and of achieving her empowerment. Her emotional response is always inadequate. She is expected to be a "big girl", not to develop her full feminine potential, to remain attached to the primary authority figures, such as the father and mother at home, either a severe authority or a negligent one, unable to set limits and leading the daughter to excesses or to develop a fragmented personality.

Another form of manifestation of the archetype of the eternal *whore* could occur when experiencing the absent father. This causes a wound that will lead to the repetition of inappropriate behavior patterns. The wound also stems from the patriarchal society, Faulkner seems to say, which ties women to collective or institutional authority figures. Caddy suffers within her home, but she also suffers as she clashes with the norms and expectations of a society that does not understand her need for freedom.

"Feminine is an expression that many women are rediscovering and repurposing, based on their own experiences. Women have begun to realize that men have defined their femininity through their conscious, culturally conditioned expectations of women's roles, and through their unconscious projections onto women" (Leonard, 2005).

Caddy is a fundamental figure in William Faulkner's novel. This character receives both the projections of the closed family world and the expectations of an outside world deeply convulsed by the economic crisis that shook the foundations of society. In both, she assumed inadequate roles by bending to the expectations of others. The same family neurosis of her mother, father and siblings led her to try to escape by constantly establishing secret ties with passing lovers whom she barely knew. A pattern of behavior was thus established that led her directly to failure. Perhaps a desired failure in order to escape with some traveler. This is how Faulkner explains Caddy's failure, very different from that of her mother, Caroline. In the latter, the failure translates into a stuckness and inaction, in imagined illness, in her daughter it is a crack that allows the passage towards a new consciousness.

Caddy knew no other way to be a woman. She will let herself be carried around like a puppet in a false representation or parody of what "family" is, only to fail. A few months after the birth of her baby Quentin, whose name is the same as his older brother's, she returned home and gave the child into the care of Caroline and Jason III, her father, knowing that both were unfit to care for a child. It will be old Dilsey who will be entrusted to care for the child. Upon the death of her father, her brother Jason took over control of the money coming into the household, mainly from the sale of parcels of land from the vast Compson estate and also, not least, from remittances sent by Caddy for his daughter. Jason had the ambition to enrich himself with these remittances and shady dealings in the stock market. In this way he confiscated for himself all the money that came in claiming that since he worked in a store, it was his.

As if by fate, Caddy, through her daughter, Miss Quentin, relived the torment caused by her family. Unable to see her because she was denied, Caddy saw in the child the same abandonment she had suffered, together with her brother Jason's violence towards the girl who

was becoming a very rebellious young woman. She did not say anything, she did not complain about that injustice. The "secret pact" that Caddy had established years ago with the members of her family, a pact taught to her by her father, reappeared.

Jason III, the father, was a man who was overwhelmed by the so-called "family life". For him it was an appearance and not a conscious choice. This is a recurring criticism in Faulkner: people who prefer to live in the world of appearances rather than face reality.

A descendant of an important southern aristocratic family, heir to large estates, Jason Compson was a brilliant lawyer who never dared to practice his profession beyond what was expected for a perfect southern gentleman who was supposed to have wealthy clients who would hire him exclusively for inheritance and land matters. The crisis came, shattering the fortunes of the planters, and he failed in his life project because of the same change in the economic model that even the Compsons refused to accept. Jason III turned to drinking and selling plots of land to support himself. He was the last link to the family wealth and now represented the downfall:

> ...spent the day sitting with a cut-glass bottle full of whiskey and a litter of Horatii and Livy and dog-eared Catullus, composing (it was said) satirical and caustic panegyrics on his fellow citizens both living and dead, who sold the remainder of the estate, except the fragment containing the house and orchard and the half-ruined stables and a servants' cottage where Dilsey's family lived, to a golf club for a cash sum with which his daughter Candace could celebrate her wedding in April and his son Quentin could finish a course at Harvard and commit suicide the following June in 1910.... (Faulkner, 2008).

Far away was the social consumption of parties and gatherings. Jason's drinking by the sideboard where he kept his liquor was dark, silent, pained, like the shadow that seemed to pervade his home every night. He saw his failure as an adverse fate and looked forward to illness and death as a way of escape from a world he had ceased to understand.

One of those nights of drinking, the girl Caddy found him pouring from the bottle. Then Jason indicated with his eyes and with a hand gesture that she should be quiet: "hush, *hush*" (*hush hush, Caddy*). (Faulkner, 2008). And so he made Caddy an accomplice in his vice. He made her a participant in his drama of consumption, a form of perversion that leaves traces in the girl's psyche.

> Similarly my father drowned his magic in alcohol. He gave me his magic and that was the positive part of his legacy. But as I saw him change, I also saw the magic turn into degeneration. First I reacted by denying that magical promise with my attempt to control everything. And then, as control began to crack, I identified with my father's self-destructive side." (Leonard, 2005).

At that point, Caddy lost faith in the world of the masculine. The father is the one in charge of making sense of the world, but Jason III, too immersed in his failure, was incapable of doing

so. The wound in his daughter was born along with the need to "not grow up," to remain the eternal *puella*, the "daddy's girl," so as not to have to acknowledge the painful darkness of the father that will extend to all things masculine and cause her to search tirelessly and equivocally for a protective lover to embody the role of a father who failed her as a child. "Many of my female clients I have heard tell my own story: the experience of an alcoholic father that leads to a distrust of all men, issues of shame, guilt, and lack of self-confidence" (Leonard, 2005).

William Faulkner, anchored in modernity and in the use of language, elaborated for Jason III a discourse that made him detestable. This character shows a vain, meaningless and futile world, so he could justify his alcoholism. Jason did not talk about his financial problems, much less his emotional ones. He never acknowledged them. It was society that made him conflicted, it was politics, it was the economy, it was the shortage of clients for his law firm. He did not want to practice his profession, he lacked clients and those he had only wanted land transfers and inheritances. For him it was a nuisance and did not fulfill the expectation of achievements for having been a descendant of statesmen and men of war. He becomes paralyzed in his consumption, stops practicing his profession and drinks. These aspects of paralysis do harm to the individual, and even more so in changing societies towards more complex societies where the consumer will soon feel completely lost.

Jason III fought a lot with his wife, belittling her in his speech, "Don't be stupid." (Faulkner, 2008). For her part, Caroline showed a kind of tragic madness that forced her to always speak like the protagonist of a play, with set phrases and mannered phrases. It was a neurosis that was evident in her speech. The language Faulkner used for each of his characters was symbolic. It showed their subjectivities.

Victimization was Caroline's trademark: "Don't you know what the doctor said, "Look at me, I'm suffering too, but I'm not so weak as to kill myself with whiskey"" (Faulkner, 2008). (Faulkner, 2008)in other words: "I'm better than you".

To this, Jason would respond cynically. "Next time you're going to bring me a priest." (Faulkner, 2008). Then Caroline would burst into tears and Jason would go down to the sideboard where he kept the whiskey.

In this short exchange Caroline's hidden anger and contempt for her husband is revealed. This contempt had to do with money: now Jason was not a good provider and she could not live the life of afternoon tea and social gatherings that she desired. She calls him "weak," not because of his drinking, but because he could not provide. That is, that if he provided and drank nothing would happen. Therein lies her hypocrisy.

The alcoholic Jason can no longer work. His mistreatment of his wife comes both from the rejection of the role of "judge of life" that Caroline wields every time there is a confrontation between them, but basically because the alcoholic, the consumer of any drug, loses all family and social ties. He is unable to maintain meaningful relationships with anyone. He has no friends or enemies, only superficial relationships that either accompany him in his consumption or, at least, do not prevent or criticize him. The alcoholic's only friend is the bottle.

For her part, Caroline reflects the world divided in two: "the insiders", her immediate family, "the outsiders", the rest. The border is invisible and immovable and marks the life of the clan. Every *outsider*, the outsider, is dangerous. This will make the children incapable of relating to anyone else but each other.

Authority, like anger, the "fury" in the novel's title, is constantly passed from one partner to the other, each evading their emotions and their responsibilities to the boys and to Caddy. They seem to say to each other, "I can't take care of the boys because I'm drinking, I can't either because I'm sick."

Thus they establish a challenging relationship to see who submits and who gets the power. Even when Caroline asks Jason to put the children to sleep because she has a headache, Jason calls Dilsey, the maid, to do it. It's a clear challenge to his wife's demands: he won't be subdued.

When the couple reaches a breaking point, Caddy (or sometimes Dilsey) appears to take over and organize the world. Then the couple washes their hands of each other and goes their separate ways. Sometimes Caddy, even as a child, is Dilsey's helper, sometimes it is Dilsey who helps her. For example, Caddy lies in the same bed with Benjy so that Benjy won't cry and Dilsey puts a board between the two to avoid possible incest because she knows this has been going around the family for some time. She suspects that Benjy's retardation is the end result of some family inbreeding from the past, some blood crossbreeding with close relatives.

Faulkner points to a poorly lived childhood as the basis of many social problems and human relationships. These are chaotic childhoods in absorbing family nuclei where the "survivor's personality" develops, a personality linked to the biblical image of Moses rescued from the waters and helped by strangers in order to find his salvation later on. Thus the victim-savior axis is activated. The victim needs help, but, at the same time, he feels that he can "save" others through an intervention that places him on a level with the divine. It is an omnipresent and immense power that is only perceived by the individual in his or her actions of "rescuing" the other. This role is determinant of the actions and implies an inadequacy to public life. In the family it can serve as a unifying principle, but in societies it creates relations of inequality that are difficult to maintain.

Within the household, Caddy is a central figure. As a child, she had known the family's shadow, but she had to keep quiet. Not only the shadow of her father Jason, but of her mother, Caroline, who was always ill, and of the confused and emotionally violent relationship between them. Caroline considered her husband useless because he had not shown the economic achievement that was expected of him, not realizing that the traditional society they came from was collapsing around them and that they were both unable to accept and embrace the change. Both were guilty, but only the girl realized it.

The daughter saw firsthand the mother's disdain for her father and that sowed even more distrust toward men and toward romantic relationships in general. Thus the message she was given was that she would only function in the sphere of her family of origin. This incapacitated her for happiness and for the formation of a home of her own.

Another aspect that is also important is the maternal wound Caddy saw in her retarded brother Benjy. Caroline did not love him because she considered him a blemish in a world of such social demands. Benjy exposed the sin of a family that should be perfect and, therefore, was not worthy of love or care. That "sin" had to do with incestuous relationships in previous generations. Caddy reacted to this injustice with compassion and took care of him as a child, understanding the helplessness of this human being who did not understand what was happening to him. "What's wrong, Benjy," said Caddy, "tell Caddy. She'll do anything. Go on." (Faulkner, 2008).

Likewise, Caddy recognizes an almost incestuous closeness to his brother Quentin. The young college student was filled with anguish, with fears of separation from the family, of losing his sister or of her getting lost in promiscuity with the night travelers who came to town. She saw a shadow in the mirrors in which her sister's image appeared. He wanted to protect "his honor" from the constant passing lovers to whom the girl gave herself, but his anxiety was so great that it bordered on the incestuous. He even went so far as to propose to Caddy to say that her precocious pregnancy was his, something to which the girl vehemently objected.

Finally, she had seen the wickedness and ambition of Jason, the third brother. She did not trust him when he gave her money for her daughter's upkeep. She sensed that he did not spend it on the child, but pretended to her mother that he had earned it himself in order to throw it in the face of others that "he supported" the family. He also knew, or sensed, that Jason kept a good chunk of each remittance for himself. Caddy accepted this situation just as she had had to accept so many other shady aspects of her family because it was impossible for her to look out for her own daughter. At least, that's how she experienced it in her time and because of the many complexes that made her unable to fight.

Caddy, in her victim-savior complex, saw herself as both the sacrificial victim and the "heroine" who would rescue her people (like Moses her biblical people). She moved from one role to another according to the circumstances. Thus she remained tied to her role as an eternal *whore*. When she married the banker Herbert Head, she did so with the security of her brother Benjy in mind, for his future when he was older, and for the security of her father, Jason III, so that he would have a decent pension in his old age. As a "warrior woman" she will have the power to reverse the distorted order of her family and turn the wheel of fate in her favor. She was deluded because none of her family members were willing to "let themselves be saved" by her. They were only waiting for her deliveries to please immediate economic expectations, but beyond this her struggle/sacrifice was in vain.

The author seems to be saying that the role of the victim/heroine within the home causes the child, as the child grows up, to make wrong and self-destructive decisions. One of the worst decisions Caddy made was to give her only daughter, still a newborn, to the home from which she had escaped, a great inconsistency because she was giving up another sacrificial victim to be destroyed by the atavistic forces of the Compsons. However, she thereby maintained the role of primary victim. By creating a bond of economic responsibilities with the Compsons, but without any exchange of affection, not even the right to go and see her daughter whenever

she wished by express prohibition of the father and, upon his death, of the mother, Caddy condemned herself to pain.

The people of the southern United States seemed to be lagging behind in the emerging and thriving country that would see the arrival of the twentieth century as a world power in the production of consumer goods and finance. In the South, people did not understand the new world they were living in, the new paradigms that emerged. They remained attached to the exclusionary customs, but above all they remained attached to the ancestral pain that summarized all the failure of past generations. The Compson are the paradigm of this failure. Everything they devised or did failed. The author thus confronts his characters with *agonistics*: the struggle for survival that is typical of daily life in the Western world. Thus he shows the tragic sense of existence.

> It is obvious to see, throughout history, that the family, society and the collective have demanded and have been interested only in triumph. It seems as if in the confusion created by the need to survive, -survival-, triumph were the most extreme of the luminous pole that Western man lives. This polarization has left behind the opposite pole, where a great part of our nature has been buried, without realizing that we survive if we have a connection with our nature, if we can make it the leader of our own survival. Seen from the polarization that the collective consciousness entails, when it falls under the term failure it is repressed and discarded" (López Pedraza, 2000). (López Pedraza, 2000).

The lack of connection with one's own nature, even more so when failure occurs, drives the problem of escapism through alcoholism, among the many addictions that exist in the modern world: addiction to work (the "*workaholic*"), to the consumption of processed foods, to illegal drugs, to promiscuity, to gambling addiction (compulsive gambling), among others. Faulkner understood the bitterness that any consumption of any of its members leaves in the members of a family. It is even more serious if it is the father who is the consumer, since it produces the inadequacy to public life because it condemns the family members to hide "the secret", to lie for the other, and thus become an accomplice and to normalize consumption.

In all families there are unwritten codes, codes of desired or undesired behaviors that are known in silence, without anyone having to remember them. In the conformation of the addict's family, of the addict, there are different patterns. The restriction of emotions is favored in order to protect the peace of the family. These patterns represent very heavy burdens that the sons and daughters, as they grow up, assume as their own. Young men must be successful and women wealthy, even at the expense of their emotions and their true desires, but they always fail because they are split between what they feel and what they "should feel". Denying emotions then appears as a need to lie, to do things hidden, behind the scenes: Caddy's promiscuity, Jason's larceny and gambling addiction, the imaginary illness of the mother, Caroline, the detailed planning of a suicide, like Quentin.

Sons and daughters can be symbolically imprisoned in the home where there has been consumption and continue to behave all their lives as children waiting for the father to start

drinking and leave them to their fate or, sometimes, to become violent, or to do and say strong things, which is what happened to Quentin when the father's words when he gave him a family watch pushed him to suicide. "It was Grandfather's and when Father gave it to me he said, Quentin I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire...(...)...Because a battle is never won. They are not even fought. The battlefield only reveals to man his own stupidity and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and imbeciles." (Faulkner, 2008).

The addict's family is an addicted family. Alcohol is the organizing principle of domestic life. They are families with adaptive behaviors that over time become destructive (rescue, withdrawal, escape, withdrawal, return to rescue). And the family will try to maintain stability, will try to save itself by creating "scapegoats" within itself.

Caddy has signed a pact with the family since early childhood: to maintain coherence and unity. She is the organizing principle, the soul, even though the father and his alcoholism exert an emotional control of concealment: "*hush*, *hush,* shhh, shhh, nothing is happening here". It is an authoritarian and coercive power that prevents the free growth and proper maturation of emotions so that the children can go out into the world and find their own meaning in life.

The eternal *whore* is the woman who always remains a girl. Caddy will play the same game of seduction and abandonment many times, with different men, repeating herself over and over again in a recurring and neurotic experience. Later, in the Appendix, the author will explain that she went on to marry a Hollywood director and then left for Europe. Caddy, as the immature young woman, will always see the possibility of happiness, "I will be happy there, later, in the future".

Faulkner's view of his own character, in comments he makes at the end of the novel, in the Appendix, is as follows

> ...she was cursed and she knew it, she accepted fate without seeking it or avoiding it. She married two months pregnant, with a baby whom she and Quentin had already named Quentin, male or female, married in 1910, to an "extremely desirable" young man from Indiana whom she had met on vacation, divorced in 1911 at her husband's request. She married a wealthy Hollywood mogul in 1920. They divorced by mutual consent in 1925. Disappeared in Paris by the German occupation in 1940, she was still beautiful and possibly rich. Blackmailed by Jason she never returned to the Compson mansion." (Faulkner, 2008).

After her flight to Europe, Caddy was not heard from again until a picture of her was found in the newspaper. She was on a street in Marseilles, the richest street in the trade, in a convertible, with a fine silk scarf covering her head, a sealskin coat, she was an ageless woman with a slender man at her side wearing high-grade German General Staff medals.

Caroline, for her part, grew old untouchable, not allowing the children's conflict to enter her sickroom. If they reached her, she would break down. In the end she left power in the hands of Jason, the worst of her sons, and he became a terrible being who exercised it without control

over the weakest. When his father died, he had Benjy castrated, repressed, persecuted, abused and threatened Miss Quentin, already a teenager, whom he hated because she represented for him another stain on the family honor, just like Benjy. Caroline turned her back on all this. She defended neither her son nor her granddaughter. She made like Pontius Pilate. That Holy Week in which Faulkner's entire novel takes place, Caroline condemned Miss Quentin and washed her hands. Knowing she was condemned, she fled from the Compson house with a boyfriend who worked in a circus and with a booty she managed to steal from her uncle Jason's room: the money her mother had always sent for her.

Jason blames Miss Quentin for a lifetime of misery. He looks for a scapegoat, as Caddy once was, in order to deal with the discomfort of an unhappy existence: "The bitch who left me without a job, without the only chance I ever had to get ahead, who took my father's life and who is shortening my mother's day by day and who has made my name the laughingstock of the town." (Faulkner, 2008)Jason replied to the sheriff in anger at the failure of the family's plan to marry Caddy off to a wealthy banker.

That Maundy Thursday, the day of Christ's torture, ends the cycle of mistreatment in the Compson household towards Caddy and her daughter, Miss Quentin. The image of transformation through pain, a Christic transformation, appears. On that day Miss Quentin fled the home and reappeared on Easter Sunday, Christ-like, in another town. Caddy will no longer embody the eternal *whore* but a woman who will now seek to make a life for herself in exile.

Miss Quentin also frees herself and exchanges the family yoke for love in a process of psychic recovery. As a criticism of religion, Faulkner did not have her resurrected next to the father God, who would be Dalton Ames, but next to a man who worked in a traveling circus. Irreverent as Faulkner was, he interpreted resurrection as a pragmatic "reinvention" of the person in order to be able to adapt to the necessary changes in life.

Thus the rebellious daughter closed the cycle of Caddy's suffering. The father was desacralized and the secret she had been forced to keep for life lost importance. The circus performer that her daughter, Miss Quentin, accepted as a partner is a symbolic image of the creative and irreverent masculine that goes through life assuming constant change. There was redemption because the wound of the feminine was transformed. Caddy will now no longer need to remain tied to the nuclear family or to establish any more false relationships or for the purpose of keeping up appearances. Her daughter's escape was an act of bravery that released the intricate knot of hostile family relationships and gave her a role reversal.

Conclusions

William Faulkner was ahead of the studies on women with this great character, Caddy Compson, a specular character of the family shadow and that, nevertheless, was the center and the coherence of life. It is not possible to speak of a gender perspective in the author since the novel was published in the early twentieth century, when feminist struggles were still incipient. However, the author did have a deep understanding of women's problems and tried to show the injustice of the traditional life of women in the south of the United States in his time and

reflected in his novel the life of many women trapped in emasculating and infantilizing roles in backward societies. She wanted to show them different ways out, she criticized discrimination, classism, but above all machismo and the need for women's submission to ensure the proper functioning of a social model that in the end turned out to be a great failure.

When the final separation from her family group occurs, Caddy can finally heal the wound. However, all possibilities remain open. Once returned home with a newborn child, perhaps she will return in the future to help her mother, Caroline, die well, or to watch over the suffering Benjy who, in the end, had been committed by the cruel Jason to a prison-like public sanatorium where Benjy screamed in despair every day.

Family ties are hard to break, Faulkner seems to say, from the south, a metaphor for the past, it is hard to escape. Caddy with her goodness and her beauty, with her insecurities and her greatness, with her own world in tow, will have crossed many bridges before she returns, if she does, to the source of the wound, Jefferson, and then nothing will ever be the same.

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