

Chapter I: Introduction

William Faulkner and *Absalom, Absalom!*

The present research is a study of William Faulkner's eighth novel *Absalom, Absalom!* published in 1936. The novel richly depicts the features of gothic because it is replete with the elements of suspense, mystery, horror, terror, the double role, mental isolation and tension and murder. The use of gothic elements, racial prejudice comes in the way of Sutpen's ambitious design, and he begins to repudiate his wife and infant son upon discovering that they are part-Negro and also it encompasses the mysterious engagement of Charles Bon with his own half-sister Judith. The novel further explores how gothic subverts the social reality not only for the blacks but also for the whites.

Having the gothic elements, the novel has picturized the condition of every character who is found in the mysterious world, psychological horror as well as physical torture and most of them try to flee from suspense and mystery but they cannot and finally involve in the destruction. The novel *Absalom, Absalom!* goes beyond what is generally found in family relations as it presents the dark brooding themes of passion, secretion and human fallibility in order to subvert the social reality. Because of their suspicious on activities compel the readers to be sure the novel is absolutely gothic that always presents the dark side of the society.

About the text, Faulkner informs us that we are reading "Modern Gothic", a type of work that differs considerably from the traditional gothic novel as claimed by them by saying that in gothic there will be psychological horror as well as physical torture and murder. Faulkner claims that the novel adheres closely to the framework of everyday circumstances. Modern gothic gives the writer more freedom to present the truth of society and how the social beings try to stay far from reality. They always

give priority to their own position not to their love and relation. Faulkner tells us that this story actually conflicts between two races the white and the black to establish the noble family dynasty to the southern Aristocrat's denial of racial equality. During that time racism is founded on the belief in one's racial superiority over other. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and practices that define people on racial basis. It involves a generalized lack of knowledge as it implies negative beliefs and attitude. It uses the inflexible assumption that differences are biologically determined and therefore inheritably unchangeable.

The protagonist Thomas Sutpen becomes envious of the tidewater aristocracy in the South and resolves to emulate the wealthy planters of the region while moving with his family from the mountains to the tidewater region of Virginia. The race, gender and the burdens of the past comes in the way of Sutpen's ambitions design. So he begins to repudiate his wife Eulalia, the daughter of planter and son, Charles Bon upon discovering the reality that they are part-Negro while knowing the truth, he thinks that he can never achieve his "design" with a wife because of her blood. So he leaves and runs away from there. Because of his inability to accept the blacks as equal humans leads him to the failure of his noble aim.

Faulkner has polarized two racial conflict. It is the polarization of the good and the evil, of virtue and sin, and of freedom and domination. Thomas Sutpen settles into his plantation after getting married with Ellen, now known as Sutpen's Hundred plantation. In love and war, Ellen bears two children Henry and Judith. In 1859, Henry enters the university of Mississippi. There he meets and becomes close friend with Charles Bon, not knowing Bon was his half-brother. When Bon spends Christmas at Sutpen's Hundred, he meets and initiates a betrothal with Judith which Henry seems to approve. While coming to marry with Judith, Charles Bon is

murdered without giving any reason that brings the end of Henry unacceptably. The death of Charles is taken as good over the evil because he is going to marry his own half-sister. Due to the Gothic, not only Charles Bon but also Judith are unknown about the reality of Bon's murder.

Sutpen falls through innate deficiency of moral insight, but the error, which he commits, is also socially derived and thus illustrates the flow which dooms with equal finality, the aspiration of a whole culture. The founding and fall of dynasties that is, through biblical analogy, is brought to the reader's attention very early in the novel. The tone and flavor of the old Testament continue to pervade *Absalom, Absalom!* war and violence, lust and murder, hatred and revenge, sin and retribution, pride and ignominious defeat—all these themes thread their way through Faulkner's novel as they do through those books of the old Testament referred to generally as the historical and prophetic books just as these books of the bible are concerned with the early days of success brought him increased favor in Saul's court. Sutpen, comparably drives away the mutinous Negro slaves from the Frenchman's sugar plantation in Haiti, thereby gaining favor from himself in a "royal" house.

William Faulkner now is recognized as one of America's greatest novelists of the 20th century. In each of his novels published between 1929 and 1936, it seems as though fiction is being reinvented. He writes various issues such as family, childhood, obsession, time, sex, race, the native south and the modern world. Faulkner is not isolated Aesthetic Phenomena, but is the man who inherited a strong and ambivalent family legend, who never got along with his father, less deserted him, who felt himself displace in his life. Judith comments:

Faulkner's work reflects, and is strongly influenced by the events and tension in his own life. Since the tensions are more significant than the

external events, the study is necessarily psychological literacy criticism is no so notoriously beset with pitfalls that it is worthwhile to point out things. (634)

In *Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner brings many of his previous characters together and tells again the story of the downfall of a family, the Gothic tragedy of the house of Thomas Sutpen and his grand design. In this regard, Mr. Breit writes:

It is a terrible Gothic sequence of events, a brooding tragic fable . . . was it the "design" that had devoured Sutpen and prevented him from avowing the very thing that would have saved the 'design', was it something in the south itself, in its social, political, moral, economic origins that was responsible for Sutpen and for all the subsequent tragedy? Quentin can make no judgment. . . .who had delicacy of feeling and capacity for love and gifts for life. (qtd. in Brooks 186)

Michael Millgate views the novel as the design of establishing a noble family dynasty as having fatal flaw. He believes that this flaw results from Sutpen's lack of humanity feeling towards other fellow human being. He says:

Sutpen's mistake, of course, is inherent in the design itself, in the monstrosity of its attempt to make human flesh and blood conform to the rigid contours of an abstract idea. His failure was a man lives in his refusal to regard even his own family as other than the instruments of his design. His failure as a southerner lies in his refusal to regard the Negro as human being. (58)

Peter B. High takes the novel as a modernist one as he remarks, "like all the other novels this one is set in Yoknapatawpha country. It is a huge, historical story. Thomas Sutpen's plans to establish a great family. But psychological illness, over

ambitious and a family tragedy destroy his plans” (135). Similarly, Donald M Kartiganer's perception of Faulkner is that of a modern writer, hence concern with flux and change, and that disjointed fragmentary form is used to communicate the Dionysian chaos which is reality. It is a serious misleading to look for myths, linked imagery, consistent themes or any other pattern in Faulkner's work. It is however, legitimate and necessary to enshrine him in the pantheon of modernist writers.

Minrose C. Gwin argues that Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* reverberates with cries of endlessly reenacted racial wounding that fail to dissolve into history or advance to the future and that blur lives between subjects, objects and action. He further says:

The ever-shifting voice emerging from those wounds is one that underscores the limits of history its inability to inarticulate, comprehend or assimilate the catastrophes and slavery, and that raises many of the questions of agency, responsibility and witnessing that so bother Faulkner's most history haunted protagonist like Quentin Compson. (21)

Cleanth Brooks has argued that Thomas Sutpen espouses a "design" that he does not understand it with yankee abstraction and calculation, that, he is, indeed foreign to the culture in which he is located. So he attributes Sutpen's failure in his design to his overreaching ambition, pride and vanity. In this regard, Holman says:

If, however, Sutpen's destiny is shaped by his destructive over reaching ambition, it is certainly the quality of life in the south and particularly the issue of slavery and the inhumanity of racial discrimination that are the mechanics by which his hubris is brought low. (542)

William Faulkner is famous for his unique narrative technique that he employs in his fiction. "In *Absalom, Absalom!* many of the important uses of figurative languages are associated with the interpretations of the narrative weakness" (Swigart 77). Different narrators narrate the story of the novel. Similarly, Tobin Patricia examines the narrative strategy Faulkner employs in the novel as:

Absalom, Absalom! offers obstacle upon obstacle to the seeker either continuity. For the reader whose novelistic expectations might reasonably include a chronological narrative related from a single point of view which illuminates a more or less recognizable reality. The novel presents its material fragmented in time and distributed among multiple narratives, each with a passionate involvement that produces differing version of mutual subject. (265)

In this way, the critics, who have reviewed Faulkner's novel from various perspectives, have enriched the meaning of *Absalom, Absalom!*. The majority of critics have appreciated the book for its quality of being closed to the reality. However, apart from all these, the present research work finds this text replete with gothic elements that subvert the social reality.

The present research work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter gives an introductory outline of the research. The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality that is going to be applied. It deals with the origin, development and feature of the Gothic. The third chapter is textual analysis that tests the working hypothesis with evidences from text. The fourth chapter includes the concluding remarks of the previous chapters.

Chapter II: Methodology

Gothic: Origin and Meaning

The Gothic existed long before it became a genre word. It can be traced to various historical, cultural and artistic precedents. In origin, it is a race-term, referring to the Goths who, from their tribal homelands in Germany or Scandinavia, invaded central and southern Europe and helped to bring down the Roman Empire. For the Renaissance scholars who recovered Roman culture, the Gothic meant whatever was pre-Roman. For Italian art historian Vasari, it meant non-classical architecture, built in the perpendicular or pointed arch style, and during from the twelfth centuries. The Gothic novel, is a specialized form of historical romance, a form of fantasy about past history and alien cultures which has a meaning for its present audience through a variety of cultural and political reflects. Many 17th and 18th century works are believed to have served as precursors to the development of the Gothic tradition in Romantic literature. The plays of Shakespeare such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* which feature supernatural elements, demons and apparitions. The term was applied first in the derision to the taste for destructions and picturesque survivals especially from the middle ages.

Throughout the 18th century and beyond, such counter classical and medieval associations made 'Gothic' operates as a sort of swear word. It suggests all things primitive, barbarous and savage. Similarly, it designated a historical period, known evocatively as the 'dark ages'. This darkness was post-classical, clearly, but also pre-Enlightenment or pre-Reformation. In the light of modern advances in civilization, the Gothic past represented an era of ignorance, irrationality, and superstition. At present Gothic has been taken from its own areas. As a result, many scholars have attempted not only to search out its origin, but also its meaning.

Jordan, the 6th century historian of Goths proposed a theory that the entire German tribe and their institutions and other characteristics were Gothic. German tribesmen were generally "Goths", who had migrated from Scandinavian to Europe. His theory was taken as "Scandza Theory" that was the first to relate Gothic. This theory opened the gate for the revival of the interests in Gothic antiquity. Elucidating this view, Samuel Kliger writes in *The Goths in England*.

The Goths, consequently, are in Jordan's theory, the aborigine folk who spread over Europe and Asia and dividing into two large branches- the Visigoths and ostrogoths were also known in later history by their various separate names, Hume, Vandals, Combarbs etc. Thus the application of the term Gothic to denote all Germans seems entirely appropriate [. . .]. (177-88)

For relating the beginning point of Jordan's theory in England, the Gothic was traditionally dated in Bede author of historic ecclesiastical and the Anglo-Saxon chronicle in 449.

Similarly, the tradition of indulged instability was later cultivated by Thomas Warton, in *The Pleasures of Melancholy* (1747)

When the world,
Is clad in Midnight's raven-colour'd robe, mid hollow chancel let me
watch the flame of taper dim, shedding a vivid glare O'et the wan
heaps: while airy voices talk along the glimmering walls or ghostly
shape at distance seen, invites with beckoning hand my lonesome step,
through the far-winding vaults. (42-9)

Same way the etymologizing way of the 17th century writers especially William Somner, John Speed, Sir Henry Spelman established the Gothic as

descriptive of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes and one of the three Germanic tribes which invaded England. In the connection with Gothic history, this process helps us to recognize that Gothic institutions were thought to be democratic. It also makes clear that the Gothic freedom which flourished in England assumed everything opposed to civilized Augustan classicism of contemporary England. Thus we can come to a point that "Gothic" originally referred to Germanic tribe and had a complicated history with wide varieties of meanings of the term Gothic but there were not found any satisfactory meaning of it. Actually the term has got its complicated history and origin so some define it in eulogistic sense while others in dyslogistic.

Describing the term "Gothic," Devendra P. Varma in *The Gothic Flame* adds:

The term Gothic is usually associated with the frost. Cramped strength, the shaggy covering and the dusky plumage of the northern tribes and the 'Gothic' ideal wrought in gloomy castled and somber. Cathedrals appeared dark and barbarous to Renaissance mind. At the close of the so-called dark ages, the word 'Gothic' had degenerated into a term of unmitigated contempt: it marked a sheer and was intended to imply reproach. (10)

For the definition of Gothic, Leslie Fielder in his essay "The Substitution of Terror for Love" viewed differently. In his words, "originally 'Gothic' was a thoroughly pejorative word, not only applied to whatever belonged in fact to rude 'medieval' times i.e. any period before the sixteenth century, but also to any surviving mode of speech or behavior considers unworthy of enlightened modernity" (136).

Likewise, Edmund Burke's treatise *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideal of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) introduced the concept of increasing appreciation for the nature of experiences characterized by the 'sublime' and 'beautiful'

by depicting and then engaging in experiences comprised of elements that are contrary in nature, such as terror death and evil. A literary Davis Morris, believes that the Gothic fiction addresses the horrific, hidden ideas and emotions within individuals and provides an outlet for them. The strong imagery of horror and abuse in gothic novel reveals truth to us through realistic fear not transcendental revelation. Same view depicts Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her essay, "The Structure of the Gothic Convention", adds that the idea of a protagonist having a struggle with a terrible surreal person or force is a metaphor for an individuals struggle with repressed emotions or thoughts.

Critics have disputed whether the Gothic novel is light or serious minded? deep or superficial? coherent or incoherent? escapist or engaged? reactionary or revolutionary? permissive or repressive? To some Gothic novel is best analyzed as a set of formal codes or textual practices. To other, on the contrary, it is best analyzed as an expression of psychological drives or ideological regimes. These two methods could be restated as discursive and symbolic approaches to the form. The first is implicit in the castle of Otranto, which Virginia Woolf describes as 'a parasite' an artificial commodity, produced half in joke in reaction against the current style, or in relief from it. The second has found powerful allies in psychoanalysis cultural materialism and feminism and can site as contemporary evidence the dream origins of Gothic texts and their uncanny appeal to what Addison calls those secret terrors and apprehensions to which the mind of man is naturally subject. Much recent criticism of the Gothic novel has been those terrors in socio-political terms, following David Punter's suggestion that there is a very intense, if displaced, engagement with political and social problems.

In this way, the term "Gothic" is an ambiguous one, incorporating many shades and combination of association, it is an intersection of religious belief of aesthetic taste and political inclination.

Feature of Gothic Novel

The Gothic novel took shape mostly in England from 1790 to 1830 and falls within the category of Romantic literature. Gothic literature can be traced to various historical, cultural and artistic precedents. Figures found in ancient folklore such as the Demon Lover, The Cannibal Bridegroom, The Devil and assorted demons, later populated the pages of 18th and 19th century Gothic novels and dramas. In addition many 17th and 18th century works are believed to have served as precursors to the development of the Gothic tradition in Romantic literature. These works include plays by William Shakespeare, such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, which feature supernatural elements, demons and apparitions, and Daniel Defoe's "An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions" (1727), which was written to support religion and discourage superstition by providing evidence of the existence of good spirits angles and other divine manifestations and by ridiculing delusions and naïve credulity. While these elements were present in literature and folklore prior to the mid-eighteenth century, when the Gothic movement began, it was the political, social and theological landscape of 18th century Europe that served as an impetus for this movement.

During the Renaissance, European rediscovered Greco-Roman culture and began to regard a particular type of architecture which now denotes the medieval type of ecclesiastical architecture, characterized by the use of pointed arch and vault that split across Western Europe between 12th and 16th centuries. Through out the long run, it was acknowledged that the first appeal of the Gothic revival in literature was primarily architectural. The middle age had influenced literature more strongly

through its architecture. Gothic churches and old castles have medieval literary influences on many authors and thrill mystery and wonder came much more from Gothic architecture and buildings than from any others. However, Gothic is a conglomeration of its character as John Ruskin states, "Pointed arches doesn't constitute Gothic's vaulted roofs, nor flying buttressed, nor grotesque sculptures, but all or some of these things with them when they come together so as to have life" (qtd. In Verma 14). So, it is interesting to sketch out the late 18th century, and justify the title "Gothic Novel."

The Gothic was available as a term of either abuse or endearment is fundamental to the writing gathered under its name. Equally fundamental is the spirit of opposition in which the semantics of 'Gothic' developed. *The oxford English Dictionary* suggests that "romantic" as opposed to classical, was a meaning acquired by 1762. Just three year later, Walpole managed to turn the negative implications of Gothic to a similarly positive advantage, in English literature's first example of 'A Gothic story'. By identifying appeals to the marvelous with the free play of the writers 'fancy', the castle of Otranto laid claim to a freedom from aesthetic restriction- especially, from the restriction of both matter-of-fact realism and new classical rules, the one being described as a feature of English fiction.

When the term "Gothic" was applied to fiction, the term lost all its connotations of medieval and became synonym for the grotesque, ghostly and violently supernatural. The savageness of Gothic stood for wildness and roughness which showed the image of race full of wolfish life and imagination full of vigour. The Gothicness of romance was, therefore, based on gloom, wildness, fear and horror. The Gothic architecture, its pinnacles and fretted surfaces stimulated and rebelled the minds of the mid 18th century, who saw in the Gothic art the grandeur of wildness as

well as the novelty. These features became the inspirations for Gothic novelists. So, a curious mind can see the close and agglutinative relationship between Gothic romance and Gothic architecture because its spirits were the primary source for the Gothic novel. The Gothic spirit like the spiritual assurance, the unknown obscure breathing of mystery, the sources of splendor and completion were drawn by the inquisitive spirit of Gothic novelists.

The Gothic architecture, with its spiritual power, makes beholder aware of his nullity suggesting that life maintains its greatness from there. That's why, the Gothic attitudes relate the individual with the infinite universe. Therefore, from the tension between human and divine emerges the world of Gothic in the Gothic mystery. The Gothic mystery finds the greatest value in Gothic novel. Because the providing of "the mysterious provided the *raison d'etre* of the Gothic novelists, who took an important part in liberating the emotional energies that had been so long restrained by common sense and good form". In the same Gothic Cathedrals with the pervading qualities of some great spiritual power express subtlest intersectional attitude to make the characters massively terror- stricken ones. So, when the Gothic novelist attempts the same, he remembers the grand design of cathedral and tries to blend into his novel the same ingredients of fear and sorrow, wonder and joy, the nothingness as well as infinitude of man. The reader then is terror stricken and lost and is carried away in the wall of fantasy and morbidity.

The heyday of the British Gothic novel is framed by the anti-Catholic Gordon note of 1780 and the Catholic Emancipation Bill of 1829, with a French Revolution dedicated to secular reason in between: and many texts offset catholic superstition against protestant rationality. Like the classic- Romantic antithesis that is contained in the word Gothic, this religious divide can be seen as another version of the

polarizations in the Enlightenment thinking. The antithesis of Grecian and Gothic building became a standard way of describing the dichotomy between 'classic' and 'Romantic' art- the one dedicated to principles of order, proportion and completeness, the other to irregularity, vastness, and indeterminacy. Gothic architecture seemed to speak to unenlightened states of mind and so also to correspond to obscure or unexplored recesses of consciousness.

Moreover, Gothic architecture has a variety of characteristic; it has a gloomy grandeur, and an atmosphere as well as color, which evokes terror, suspense and gloom. These characteristics have a great effect upon the mind playing upon the ingrained primitive elements of nature and superstitious fear. The Gothic novel touches the imagination with impressiveness and solemnity which evokes the sensation of awe. Giving terror of close association with Gothic architecture, ingredient of fear arises only with the union of Gothic spirit with gloom that becomes the dominant atmosphere of the Gothic novel. This is possible only when it contains elements directly associated with Gothic architecture: castles, convents, subterranean values, grated dungeon and ruined piles. Later gothic machineries have been developed out the earlier varieties so, the whole possession of Gothic novel is designed to quicken the imagination that chills the spine and curdles the blood. That's why the cavern joined the castle and convent, the Gothic tyrant by banditti, the vaults, and galleries by dark forest at midnight, and the love affairs by the haunt of howling specters. The castle nearby surrounding forests, lusing of the banditti, thunder and lightening in addition with devils and black magic, evil monks, the tribunal inquisition, secret societies, enchanted wands, magic mirrors with the phosphorescent flow; imposed sufferings on an innocent heroine by crud and lustful villain as well as magical curses are also used to quicken the imagination. As such, the above-discussed

characteristics, no doubt, are identified as the stock devices of the Gothic novel. In this regard, the expression of Robert D. Hume in *Gothic versus Romantic: A Reevaluation of the Gothic Novel* is quotable:

It is usually assumed that all Gothic novels are much the same and that the form is defined by the presence of some stock devices. These "Gothic trappings" include hunted castles, supernatural occurrences . . . secret panels and stairways, time-yellowed manuscripts and poorly lighted midnight scenes [. . .]. (282)

The element of terror is associated with the Gothic castle, which is an image of power of darkness and isolation. The castle with dungeon, secret passages, winding stairs, oubliettes, sliding panels, and torture chamber recalls the scent of ancient chivalry and tells us a moral of departed greatness. The castle inspires us with melancholy as well as sacred enthusiasm. The ruined castle is frequently displayed in the Gothic novel, because it is not only the symbol of domestics' misery but also the fact that it contributes to the picturesque, which frequently appears in the Gothic novel because the convention of "ruin played a great part in creating a special atmosphere of awe and horror" (Neil 105). Unlike the Gothic castle, the Gothic villain, who has been born as an adjunct to the ruinous castle and whose function is to frighten the heroine, is the active agent of terror. Besides the villain, the characters are either endowed with diabolic villainy or pure angelic virtue that evokes either hatredness or pathos. The features of the landscape are affected by the atmospheric conditions. A supernatural effect, on the other hand, is built up of the accumulation of successive details: wild and desolate scenery, screeching owls, hovering bats, feudal halls, tempest and so on. The effectiveness of romantic settings, the continuous spell

of horror, the color of melancholy, physical suffering and emotional awe are labeled as the conventional Gothic traits.

In architecture the Gothic Revival got underway in the 1740s by converting ecclesiastical and medieval Gothic to domestic and gentlemanly uses, as in Walpole's *Strawberry Hill*, Beckford's *Fonthill Abbey*, and Scott's *Abbotsford See Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, (417-18, 747). Even though, the Gothic novel deals with the sublime and the supernatural, the underlying theme of the fallen hero applies to the real world as well. Burke's philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757) contradicts Locke's lucid explanation of the commonly held, and in Locke's view irrational, association of darkness with ghosts and goblins. Burke's feeling facing down of Locke implies the kind of historical shift which has been often associated with the rise of Romanticism. Eino Railo has commented that 'the whole terror romantic movement resolve itself as it were, into an experiment with Edmund Burke's theory which attempts to awaken by suggestion the emotion of suspense, fear and terror.

Development of the English Gothic Novels

The Gothic fiction is a race-term referring to the Goths who, from their tribal homelands in Germany or Scandinavia, invaded central and southern Europe and help to bring down the Roman Empire. It took shape mostly in England from the 1760s to the 1830s and falls within the category of Romantic literature. The Gothic is far from limited to this set time, as it takes its roots from former terrorizing writing that dates back to the middle ages. It was nourished by the whole of European literature and tradition. The literary interest in Elizabethan, Shakespeare drama as well as Jacobean drama, and the fictions of sensibility evolved by the French Abbe prevest, which were later on elaborated by Baculard d' Arnaud became the playground for the English

Gothic novels. E. A. Baker in *History of English Novel* makes this point clear as the notes, "The exciting adventures, the violent emotions, the gloomy scenes, forests and antres, castles, dungeon, and graveyards, in the Abbe's novels and play and stories of Baculard, were to be the distinctive feature of Gothic romance throughout its course" (5:175).

Gothic novels seek to undermine, manipulate or critique the logic of enlightenment rationalism even as they appeal to it for classification, where the result seems too nearly superstitions, or is stigmatized as credulous the fiction tends to adopt a skeptical or forensic stance towards the possibilities it opens up. German writers, who had appetite for the middle ages, provided a vase quantity of materials which were freely utilized to enrich and elaborate the English gothic fiction. The gothic novel definable only by reference to its diversity and plurality? In effect, the history of Gothic is a history of subgenres. Gothe and Schiller developed three genres the writer, rouge and schnauzer romance. Gothe's *Totz von Bleching* or "Gotz with Iron Hand" (1773) introduced vogue romance medievalism and tyrannical barons. The second type of genre (Rauder), which is often called robber novel, was introduced by Schiller in his *Die Rauber* (1781). It contains banditti, monks, inquisitor's tortures, haunted towers, and yelling ghost as well as dungeons and confessions. The third German genre, Schauer romance was a later development that assimilated characteristic of the Ritter and Rubber in its violent machinery motives, characters and atmosphere. The English Gothic machinery, combined with the materials of the movements initiated by Goethe and Schiller. Gothic novel from the first established specialized excitements of its own. And it was these that made it the first fully popular literature for a newly enlarged reading public. The genre's added value, and a key to its popular success, lay in combining the fear and suspense which already had a home

in the Gothic aesthetic, with sex and violence – which had a more remote ancestry, in oral ballads and Shakespearean or Jacobean tragedy.

The English Gothic machinery, combined with the materials of the movement initiated by Goethe and Schiller, brought the Schauer-Romance at its height, which became dominant in the English Gothic novels. The Gothic worlds depicted fears about what might happen, what could go wrong, and what could be lost by continuing along the path of political, social and theological change as well as reflecting the desire to return to the time of fantasy and belief in supernatural intervention that characterized the middle ages. The English Gothic influences on German and French literature were also noteworthy as Devendra P. Varma in his *The Gothic Flame* states:

When English Gothic fiction reached its efflorescence by 1789, the German Gothic was still lagging a decade behind England in its maturity. It is a factor worthy of note that the supernatural came to be explained in Germany only after 1800: Whereas, Mrs. Radcliff's supernatural explication was introduced in England in 1789. (33)

Gothic narratives were also used to depict horrors that existed in the old social and political order—the evils of an unequal, intolerant society. In Gothic narratives writers were able to both express the anxiety generated by this upheaval and, as Burke suggested, increase society's appreciation and desire for change and progress. The orientated allegory or moral apologue as practiced by Addison in *The Vision of Mirza* (1771), and Samuel Johnson in *Reseals* (1759) gave some color to Gothic romance. Galland's translation of *The Arabian Nights* (1717) and *Persian Tales* (1714) provided color and splendor for many literary works of England and especially to the Gothic novel. Elucidating this point, Devendra P. Verma in *The Gothic Flames* rightly admits:

By their extravagant language, thrilling incidents and poetic justice, the oriental tales furnish as interesting parallel to Gothic romance.

Although their supernatural is of the fairy kind and never makes one afraid, their exotic use of the marvelous and magic left definite traces on a quite number of Gothic novels. (37)

It is Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) that is generally acclaimed as the original work of Gothic literature by helping the genre to flourish, is a gruesome tale of passion, bloodshed, and villainary one of the Gothic trappings found in Walpole's work were present in work such as Tobias Smollett's *The Adventure of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) – because in his narrative Walpole brings together elements of the supernatural and horrific, and models his ruined castle setting after his real-life residence, Strawberry Hill, a modern version of a medieval castle. The characters in the novel try to succeed in the modern world and to adhere to the optimism and forward looking agenda they have been asked to advance, but a dark, ancient evil from the distant past dooms them to failure. The importance of his work is that it set a tradition of historical Gothic school where in an atmosphere of supernatural, terror, distinct panorama of history or chivalry is being portrayed. Historical Gothic novels depicts events and personages of a particular historical period emphasizing the local color of the middle ages as well as the air of mystery and superstitions dread. This school was developed by such disciples of Walpole as Clara Reeve in the *Old English Baron* (1777), the Lee sisters, Sophia Lee and Harriet Lee, Charlotte Smith and others. *The Recess* (1784) by Sophia Lee and *Error of Innocence* (1786) by Harriet Lee; and later on Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House* (1793) are considerable hallmarks in this tradition, besides these writers, there are also a

good number of minor writers who experimented in historical Gothic novel. They are Anne Fuller, James White and Agnes Musgrave.

After historical Gothic, these comes the school of terror – often called pure Gothic – in which superstitious dread is aroused by a series of apparently supernatural manifestations. The school of terror opened a lot of possibilities for its following school – the school of horror. The school of terror, focusing on the crate of terror, also shows an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread as well as a certain shudder at the other world. This school was initiated by Mrs. Ann Radcliff with her highly influential work *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). The School of Horror, in combination with the school of terror, was blazed in the glory of Schauer Romantic or Horror Romanticism. So, there was often the overlap between these schools as they intermingled the streams of terror and horror. To differentiate “terror” and “horror” novels, it is necessary to judge the subtle gradations and effects of terror and horror. The traditional concept of terror and horror which was at first given by Edmund Burke in his philosophical book *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1754). He had given terror an aesthetic respectability by explaining it as a source of sublime. He holds a view: “To make anything very terrible, obscurity in general to be necessary” (34). Moreover, to Burke beautiful objects that would break tenderness and affection were characterized by their smallness, delicacy and smoothness. Burke didn’t distinguish between the subtle gradations of terror and horror, he only related terror to beauty and did not concern of the beauty of horror, the grotesque power of something ghastly.

The difference between terror and horror is the difference between awful apprehension and sickening realization between the smell of death and stumbling against a corpse. Terror creates an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread.

But horror resorts to a cruder presentation of the macabre by an exact portrayal of the physically horrific. The expression of Devendra in *The Goethic Flames* makes it cleaner.

Violence, pain and terror are ideas heterogeneously yoked “together thus making a combined attack upon the mind ‘horror’ approaches violence in its intensity; ‘terror’ when sufficiently violent embodied horror [. . .]. And the effect of horror is what Arjuna felt in the Vagavadgita. My limb quail, my mouth goes dry, my body shakes and my hair stands one end. (130-31)

The school of horror’s writer contributed a grotesque and gruesome theme of horror. Chalets Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), William Beckford’s *Vathek* (1786), Mathew Gregory Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796), Dr. John Polidori’s *Vampyre: A Tale* (1819) are the morbid and fantastic creations of this school. The above mentioned works, with new themes and new techniques as well as the methods to shock the nerves, have furnished their chamber of horror and established their writers in the rank of important Gothic novelist. The horror gothic opened a lot of possibilities to the coming-age of Gothic. It has an agglutinative relation with The Gothic of 1980s which is labeled as the “decadent Gothic.”

Features of Modern Gothic Novel

Gothic novel can be described as literature that is used to terrify people by portraying situations that border between reality and unreality. The creative authors with their most potent works appeared – R. L. Stevenson with his *Dr. Jekyll, and Mr. Hyde* (1886), H.G. Wells and his *Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), Oscar Wilde and his *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1897) and Bram Stoker with his *Dracula* (1897). Including

all the original gothic trappings, these gothic novels slightly shift towards the modernity of theme when they are all concerned in one way or another with the problem of degeneration as the essence of mankind. When we turn toward the recent definitions of Gothic that are concerned to bring out the Gothic essence rather than to list the surface trappings, Gothic is more in use now as a description of the writing than it has been since the 1790s and used in a far broader range of contexts. Revealing the fragmentation of personality as well as commenting the mental disintegration and cultural delay, in gothic, we find an emphasis on the dark side of the human psyche. The gothic is now considered as an attempt to expose and explore the unconscious world of desires and fears that individual and society suppress to maintain stability. It is noteworthy, in this context, to quote David Punter's *The Literature of Terror*: "What is perhaps, most distinctive about contemporary Gothic is the way in which it has followed the tradition of not merely describing but inhabiting the distorted forms of life, social and psychic, which follow from the attempted recollection of primal damage" (178).

The definition of horror and terror is often misunderstood because many people think they have the same meaning. However, Burke did not distinguish between the subtle gradations of terror and horror, the grotesque power of something ghostly. The term that is frequently used in the Gothic fiction is sublimity, that is found in Burke's essay "Of the Sublime":

Whatever is filled in any sort excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible or is conversant about terrible objects or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is productive of the strongest emotion, which the mind is capable of feeling . . . When danger or pain press to merely, they are in

capable of giving any delight and are simply terrible; but at certain distance, and with certain modification, they may be, and they are delightful as we everyday experience. (33)

Again Burke intensified his ideas of terror as the higher state that robs the mind of all, its power of acting and reaction as fear. He writes:

For fear being as apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too, whatever is cause of terror, be ended with greatness of dimensions or not: for it is impossible to look on anything as terrifying or contemptible that may be dangerous. (34)

While talking about sublime Burke's idea is something that is mysterious happening, vast exotic objects, dreadful death, poisonous animals, and Gothic architectures are capable of raising the ideas of sublime because they are considered as objects of terror. Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the rolling principle of the sublime. According to him, the experience of the sublime is characterized by astonishment in which the state of the soul and its motions are suspended with some degree of horror. The mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it.

Redcliffe herself drew a distinction between the representation of terror and that of horror. Terror, she claimed, "expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life," horror by contrast: "contracts freezes and nearly annihilated them" (qtd. Sandere 343). It was terror, and not horror, that was the source of her own fictional sublime. Her fiction, which may seem to some readers relatively tame, is

more closely related to Burke's notion of a "tranquility tinged with terror" (15).

Thompson writes in his *Gothic Imagination* differentiating terror and horror:

The chief element of the Gothic fiction is to provide much terror as, more broadly, dread-whether physical, psychological or metaphysical, whether of body, mind or spirit. The Gothic fiction seeks to create an atmosphere of dread by combining terror with horror and mystery. Terror suggests the frenzy of physical and mental fear of pain, dismemberment and death. Horror suggests the perception of something incredibly evil or morally repellent . . . incomprehensible and thereby productive of a nameless apprehension that may be called religious dread in the face of the wholly other. (3)

Gothic fiction is now slightly moving towards the theme of modernity.

Modern gothic introduces the notions of the uncanny, doppelganger and fantasy. The "uncanny" is English equivalent to the German "unheimlich," which means frightening and unfamiliar (Freud 76). It undoubtedly belongs to all that is terrible and which arouses dread and creeping horror. The uncanny is not only frightening that is not known as familiar, but also everything that ought to have remained hidden and secret and yet comes to light. Moreover, it derives terror not from something externally alien or unknown but, on the contrary, from something strangely familiar which defeats our efforts to separate ourselves from it. The effect of the uncanny is further illustrated by Sigmund Freud in his *The Uncanny*:

Uncanny effect is often and easily produced by effacing the distinction between imagination and reality, such as when something that we have hitherto regard as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions and significance of the theme it

symbolizes, and so on. It is this element which contributes not a little to uncanny effects attaching to a magical practices. (80)

Supernatural is the state of the “uncanny” explained in a genre of the Gothic in which the laws of everyday reality remain intact and permit an explanation or even dismissal of allegedly supernatural phenomena. The word “doppelganger” also comes from German, literally translated; it means the “doublegoer.” A doppelganger is often the ghostly counterpart of a living person, which can also mean the double, alter ego, or even another person who has the same name. The doppelganger is also a psychic projection which possesses the traits of both complementary and antithetical to the characters involved. So, the most important point regarding the double is necessity to confront and recognize the dark aspects of one’s personality. Freud further writes in *The Uncanny*, elucidating the concept of the double:

The ‘double’ has with reflections in mirrors with shadows guidance spirits, with the belief in the soul and fear of death . . . For the double was originally an insurance against destruction to the ego . . . and probably the ‘immortal’ soul was the first ‘double’ of the body. This invention of doubling as a prosecution against extinction has its counterpart is in the language of dreams. (82)

The Gothic novel built on many existing Gothic structures. But it seems fair to say that Gothic writing was not organized until it emerged in novel form a transition from ‘mode’ to genre that can be traced to an episode in Smollett’s *Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1752). Here, an extended interplay of rational and irrational force could take place; and the loose tendencies of a Gothic aesthetic could be given shape, through their connection with the prose romance and its expectation of fanciful. Furthermore, some Gothic novels possess typical narrative structure which

helps to bring out the theme of double. This narrative construction is called *mises en abyme*, the enclosure of one story within another story, or embedding which is also an inclusion of one story inside another. The series of embeddings or *mises en abyme* constitute “the structural double and series of reflections” (Kestner 71).

The eighteenth century notion of monstrosity, emerged as contradictory rule of neoclassical aesthetic, and which had an impression upon us of imperfection, irregularity, and disorder has considerably shift in significance in this age of wider perspective. Describing about the shifted notion of monstrosity, Fred Botting in his *Frankenstein* writes:

Monsters [. . .] in their transgression of aesthetics limits, disclose process of attraction and repulsion that is duplicitous. They reflect back, in the manner of the mirror or doubles that they are, one the position that excludes them. Their flaws offer strange projections and magnifications. (13)

And again he views that the monster “signifies the excess of cultural signification, culture replaces and disturbingly replicates nature, shaping and reshaping it with language” (17). The meaning of monstrosity, thus in the twentieth century, shifted from aesthetic and disgraced limit to a wider varieties of contexts.

The idea of fantasy is relevant to Gothic because it also helps to reveal the dark side of psyche while reading such a kind of novel; it arouses the painfulness of our mind. By entertaining us, it helps us to reveal the dark side of our life. It is generally accepted that a happy person never fantasized, but only unsatisfied one. The motive forces of fantasies are unsatisfied one. Therefore every single fantasy is the fulfillment of a wish. So, the value of fiction is to provide the denied hopes and aspirations of a culture. If this is true, there is a more specific value to Gothic because

it actually demonstrates within itself the mechanism which enforce non fulfillment.

Elucidating these points, David Punter in "*The Literature of Terror: The Modern Gothic*" notes:

Rather than jumping straight from an existence situations to a projection of its opposite, Gothic takes us on a tour through the labyrinthine corridors of repression, gives us glimpses of the skeletons of dead desires and makes them move again and the phantoms, vampires and monsters of Gothic are for the most part recognizable embedment of psychological features. (188)

The Gothic novel from the first established specialized excitements of its own. And it was these that made it the first fully popular literature for a newly enlarged reading public. Modern Gothic writers, furthermore, are interested in the breakdown of boundaries in the exploration of what is forbidden in desires that should neither be spoken for nor acted upon. Gothic novelists give their full attention to the world of dream and nightmare, that's why the real world for characters in a Gothic novel is one of nightmare. Because of this reason, the Gothic images like mountains, forest, desert, lake, corpse, ghosts, invisible voices, cavern, the bleeding lovers are not the illusions which results from momentary weakness but they constitute objects and facts in the real other world. While English writers are credited with founding the Gothic novel, Scottish writers contributed: heavily focusing on the theme of suspense, horror, terror, psychological trauma, concerning with excess and transgression. Gothic fiction is related to the theme of outsider and wandering figure who seeks for some kind of salvation, or else the individual moves entirely outside the norm. Gothic fiction seems to have been particularly fascinated by the schizophrenic group of illness, marked by

a disintegration of thought processes, hallucination, and unrealistic and wholly subjective relationship with the outside world and based on fantasy.

In any event, he is beyond the moderating impulses in society, and he must be punished for his transgression. This is dealt to bring out the theme of gloomy, melancholic and doomed earth where one can only find ill treatment, horror, terror, situations of chronic isolation and social fears. By depicting of the power of strength over weakness and with the terrible might of God sometimes posing a work without God, 'modern gothic' focuses that man here is the intruder into a world, which works by quite other laws. It also reflects the chaotic minds with the failure of human aspirations as well as toy like and laughable scientific progression which may be reduced to a minimum at any movement. So, David Punter rightly admits in his "*The Literature of Terror: The Modern Gothic*":

Gothic interlocks with the heritage of Kafka to produce a mode of fiction about bureaucratization, institutionalization, the alienation of the individual from power and control over his or her own life. The principal subject at issue is the conflict between the individual and dehumanized environment; the fears of scientism . . . (20)

Traditional stock characters like decadent monks, heedless nuns, terrifying brigands change into the drug addicts, sadists and hopeless victims, which are the representatives of the modern men who have fallen in the chasm of technolization. Dreaming is characterized as a form of mental activity that takes place during the act of sleep. Dreams evoke strong emotions within the dreamer, such as joy, terror and ecstasy. It is most likely due to this heightened emotional state that dreams are used so often within Gothic literature. Dreams reveal to the reader what the character is often too afraid to realize about himself or herself. But modern Gothic reflects discussion of

preoccupation of our eclipsed life, capitalist inhumanity, information overload, child abuse, pollution, serial number, corruption of society and schizophrenic conditions. Similarly, mystery is the term derived from the Latin words *myserium*. Mystery is also closely related to the Latin word *mysteriumtremendum*, which is the term used to express the overwhelming awe and sense of unknowable mystery felt by those to whom some aspects of God is revealed.

In some Gothic tales, dark animals are used to arouse fear, horror and murder. These can either relate to dark characters or their evil attitudes such as werewolf or vampire just show a general fear of the night and the creature that inhabit it. The black cats are taken as unlock in superstitious belief for many people. Vampires are associated with bats, especially vampire bats, which suck the blood of livestock. Gothic after all reveals that man is inherently evil, corrupted, however outwardly civilized he may look to be: inwardly he is rooted with violence, cruelty, and evil motive ready to perform as soon as they find chances against others. The modern Gothic refuses the placements of events within a distant time in an unfamiliar and mysterious setting, but insists on the modernity of setting and the concerns. On the other hand, it draws on science, not superstition, on what is frighteningly possible and even familiar rather than entirely absurd and alien issue. Modern Gothic also makes an inescapable link between the word of text and the world of reader, often emphasizing that real horror and terror are not a reaction to such physical entities as monsters, vampires or ghost. But real terrors, humanity's deepest, darkest fears and otherwise unspeakable evils– both real and imagined are at the inner depths of civilized being at the very movement.

Thus, the concept of the Gothic used in modern context, though seemingly differs from its origins, is used for boarder range of meanings, context and the term has become more prevalent.

Chapter III: Textual Analysis

Gothic Traits in *Absalom, Absalom!*

Suspense and Mystery

Absalom, Absalom! has many more suspense and mysteries. From the beginning till the end, this novel contains a lot of suspense and mystery. Every major character of the novel is found in the suspicious and mysterious environment. They all are found to keep far from the reality so they have engaged in destruction. They would not like to accept what is real. The little boy Thomas Sutpen got indelible impression on his child psychology that creates and keeps him in suspense when he once observes:

Niggers' working in the field while white man sat fine horses and men in fine clothes, with a different look in the face from mountain men about the taverns where the old man was not allowed to come in by the front door and from which his mountain drinking manners got him ejected before he would have time to get drunk good (so that now they began to make really pretty good time) and no laughter and jeers to the ejecting now, even if the laughter and geers had been harsh and without much gentleness in them. (187)

He finds the vast gap not only between the black and the white, but also between the poor white and the rich white in course of living in the plantation colonies. So he begins to see the dream of moving up the social ladder that is to establish a noble family dynasty as he calls a "design" bears no fruit when he rejects the relationship with the blacks. He refuses to recognize his own child born of a partly black woman. His 'design' crumbles when he defies the claims of love, kinship,

fatherhood, and brotherhood, when they run athwart the taboos of race. This arrogance of Sutpen brings about his own tragic end.

Another mystery is created when Sutpen rides into Jefferson with nothing but two pistols and a horse and takes a room in Holston House. Practically the whole town is staring at him. He keeps the room, but every morning locks his door and rides away before daylight; and so he remains a mystery. There is a little chance for men of the town to learn more about him. Sutpen and his slaves communicate in a dialect of French, the town comes to believe they speak a dark tongue from some mysterious country. Sutpen comes there with a lot of Negroes in pompous manner because he wants to show the people that he has high position in society. His arrival is described as mysterious:

A man who rode into town out of nowhere with a horse and two pistols and a herd of wild beasts that he had haunted down single-handed because he was stronger in fear than even they were in whatever heat her place he heathen place he had fled from, and that French architect who looked like he had been haunted down and caught in turn by two Negroes. (63)

Similarly, the mysterious events can be observed in the arrival of Charles Bon; Sutpen's first son from a deserted part – Negro wife. Sutpen cannot recognize a Negro as a son. He keeps mum until he finds out that Bon becomes engaged to his daughter, Judith. Two problems are found in front of Sutpen which he has to face at the present. One is that the marriage between Bon and Judith would be incestuous and another is that Bon has Negro blood, his own son. So he is in dilemma. Sutpen forbids the marriage without any reason, hoping that time itself will veer the curve of events within the orbit of his ambition. But he fails to reckon with love. Judith and Henry

both love Bon and their self-sacrificing loyalty is as fixed as Sutpen's will. Alienated from his father because of the seeming unreasonableness of his opposition, Henry renounces his patrimony in favor of Bon, and in so doing deprives Sutpen of the sole object of his matrimonial endeavor – a suitable heir because Henry does not know about the reality. The question of Negro blood bothers Sutpen more than that of incestuous relation between Judith and Charles Bon. So, Sutpen rebukes Henry: “Have you forgot that this woman, this child, are niggers? You, Henry Sutpen of “Sutpen's Hundred in Mississippi? You, talking of marriage, a wedding, here? (98) In this way, Sutpen tries to pass along his racial intolerance and prejudice to his son Henry. However Henry is not affected by only this event till he finds out this reality of Bon having Negro blood. So, Henry repudiates his birthright: “He repudiates blood, birthright and material security for his sake, for the sake of this man who is at least an intending bigamist” (74).

Thomas Sutpen keeps his son Henry Sutpen in suspense not revealing the reality of Bon. By keeping in dilemma, he would like to stop the marriage of Bon and Judith. But Henry Sutpen refuses at the beginning. But because of the gothic element, Henry himself cannot accept the reality so his opposition to the marriage takes root in his father's conviction that an acknowledged part-Negro cannot be compatible with a respectable marriage. As Henry Sutpen learns from his father that Charles Bon possesses Negro-blood. Henry refuses Bon's marriage– though he is ready to condone the incestuous relationship between Bon and Judith. Henry learns that:

Charles was his brother, but despite this was willing to condone Charles's marriage with Judith believing that he was his honest friend and he would be suitor for Judith . . . it was only when he learned that

Charles has Negro-blood that he refused to allow them to marry.

Charles persisted and Henry killed him. (7)

The activities of Sutpen relate some mysteries and suspense in readers when Quatin's father says about Sutpen and his family, Sutpen disappears again. When he returns there, he brings Wagon loads of furniture and crystal for his mansion: and he returns to the vague enmity of the town, which has at last begun to realize that he is becoming inextricably involved with them. Moreover, the town suspects that he has acquired his wealth through criminal and possibly violent means. Similarly, why Miss Rosa will want to tell the story of her betrayal at the hands of Thomas Sutpen. Mr. Compson answers by describing Rosa's life: her mother dies while giving birth to her, after Ellen has already been married for seven years; Rosa is raised by the spinster aunt who has insisted on Ellen having a large wedding, and grows up hating her father for her mother's death. When Mr. Coldfied dies by suicide, and after Ellen's death, Rosa moves to Sutpen's Hundred to try to save Judith from the Sutpen's fate by marrying Thomas Sutpen herself. Mr. Compson describes Rosa's childhood and her infrequent, traumatic visits to Sutpen's plantation.

Similarly, G.W. Allport sees Sutpen's descent from the mountains as a kind of symbolic descent from an Edenic paradise to a lower kind of life, thus suggesting the theme of innocence and the fall from it. Cleanth Brooks, however, is the chief proponent of the innocence theory. Brooks bases his thesis on Mr. Compson's statement that "Sutpen's trouble was innocence" (220). In Sutpen's concept of the nature of reality is the reality of the southern society which he later attempts to join. Sutpen is suspected by the southerners because he does not understand their background, in which "the past was important, blood was important (Brooks 297). Brooks contends, "the tradition is not a way of life 'handed down' or transmitted from

the community, past and present, to the individual nurtured by it" (299). An objection to Brooks's theory may be that by the time Sutpen arrives at Jefferson he has had enough experience in the ways of plantation systems to gain some knowledge of its values and Shibboleths. When Sutpen has gone to Haiti, where he has become an overseer on a sugar plantation belonging to a Frenchman. After a slaves rebellion, in which Sutpen is responsible for repulsing the slaves and saving the life, he is offered to marry. Imagine that his design will fulfill, he marries but after knowing the reality, they are Negro-blood. He runs away from them to hide the reality and keeps himself far from them for not to show he is the husband of Negro blooded woman.

Same way, Miss Rosa was also found in suspense because she is roaming here and there to have her own identity, while knowing the death of her mother, she blames her father for that and goes to Sutpen Hundred' by saying that she goes there to save Judith life being a wife of Sutpen. To bring in association with Rosa, Quentin's recollection of her story in frequently couches. The biblical flavored language of Miss Rosa slips in unobtrusively:

Overrun suddenly the hundred square miles of tranquil and astonished earth and drag house and formal gardens violently out of the soundless – nothing and clap them down like Cards upon a table beneath the palm immobile And pontific, creating Sutpen's Hundred, the Be Sutpen's Hundred like the olden-time Be light. (8-9)

It is entirely appropriate that he should present much of the speech and the mortality of Miss Rosa in the language and actions that reflect the Old Testament. W. J. Cash again serves as verification for the authenticity of such a presentation. The average southerner, says cash, was likely to be a puritan, deriving most of his religious ideas from the Protestant theology of the sixteenth century and from the

moral code of the seventeenth-century dissenters. The southerner required, Cash continues:

A faith to draw men together in horses, to terrify them with Apocalyptic rhetoric, to cast them into the pit, rescue them, and at last bring them shouting into the fold of Grace. A faith, not of liturgy and prayer book, but of primitive frenzy and the blood sacrifice . . . The God demanded was an anthropomorphic God – the Jehovah of the old testament a God who might be seen, a God who had been seen. A passionate, whimsical tyrant, to be trembled before, but whose favor was the sweeter for that. (Cash 56-58)

Knowing every thing, he feels that he can never achieve his "design" with a wife who has black blood, he divorces her in 1831, leaving her to raise young Charles alone, Sutpen flees away to fulfill his dream. Sutpen, like most of the southern aristocrats, is obsessed with idea of creating the ultimate southern existence according to the 'design'. So, Sutpen arrives in Jefferson, Mississippi in 1833. Since he apparently lacks both possessions and past, the residents considered him an outrage from the very beginning. Nevertheless, he set out to create his design. First, he buys a hundred square miles of fertile bottom land in the northern half of Yoknapatawpha country. After two years, the house is completed, and he lives there for another three years in the unfurnished windowless house, borrowing seed from General Compson to plant his first crop. Every one is in suspense there because he develops his life gradually without connecting to the local people. Five years after his mysterious arrival, he furnishes the house and reaches an agreement with a local merchant, Mr. Coldfield to marry his daughter, Ellen. So, he gets the protection and settles the plantation, now known as 'Sutpen's Hundred.' The narrator narrates:

He sought the guarantee reputable men to barricade him from the other and later strangers who might come seeking him in turn, and Jefferson gave him that. Then he needed respectability, the shield of a virtuous woman, to make his position impregnable even against the men who had given him protection on that inevitable day an hour when even they must rise against him in scorn and horror and out range, and it was mine and Ellen's father who gave him that. (11)

All he needs to complete his plans is a wife to bear him a male heir, so he ingratiates himself with a local merchant and marries his daughter, Ellen Coldfield because he has a psychological tension that he will be unable to fulfill his desire without getting married with local and successful person's daughter. Having a dream to be a successful plantation owner, he wanders here and there in mysterious way. Sutpen is so occupied with achieving a noble status that marrying a wife becomes just like buying animals and servants to improve his poor condition. By keeping them in suspense, he regards his wives not as human beings, "and that he had now come to town to find a wife exactly as he would have gone to the Memphis market to buy livestock" (33).

Sutpen has created mysterious and suspicious environment by engaging to his dead wife's sister, Rosa, who has come to live at the plantation, but when he suggests that they have a child first and if it were a boy, they would marry. He keeps her in mysterious world by purposing that if she gave birth son, she would get chance to marry otherwise there is no chance to get married that creates the mental illness as well as physical torture on her so she breaks off their engagement in outrage. In a last ditch effort to produce an heir, Sutpen beds with Milly, the grand daughter of Wash Jones, a poor-white-trash squatter who claims to have looked after "Kernal Sutpen's

Place” while he is away fighting the war. But when Milly gives birth to a daughter, Sutpen makes a fatal mistake when he tells her “Well, Milly, too bad you’re not a mare like Penelope. Then I can give you a decent stall in the stable.” Overhearing this remarks, Wash Jones kills Sutpen with a scythe and later takes the lives of Milly and the newborn child. After her father’s death in 1869, Judith continues to live in the house with her Mulatto half-sister, Clytie. In 1871 Judith sends Clytie to New Orleans to bring back Charles Etienne de Saint Velery Bon, Charles Bon’s son from his relationship with an Octoroon Mistress. They raise the child. He appears white in appearance, but they take him in mysterious and teach him to think of himself as black.

Terror and Horror

While placing *Absalom, Absalom!* in gothic framework and try to search the conventional Gothic traits in the novel, it brings terror and horror. However, Faulkner handles them in different way. The opening chapter contains lots of terror and horror itself. Quentin Compson is sent a handwritten note from an old woman Miss Rosa Coldfield to tell the story of her youth and of the destruction of her family. Rosa takes Thomas Sutpen as the demon responsible both for her family’s ruination and her own. At the arrival time of Sutpen in Jefferson as little better than a savage himself, holding fights between his slave fights in which he often participates and horse races, luring men to his plantation for events underscribable to young girls.

While knowing the southern ideal and perspective that whites are supposed to be higher than blacks, especially in the position of power, an idea comes in Sutpen’s mind to be a powerful person. The black accepts and imagines the slave’s ball face poised above the men, “Levitative and slick with paper thin distension.” When someone tries to strike the balloon face, it seems to escape and “overwhelm’ them

with “roaring waves of mellow laughter meaningless and terrifying and loud” (232), Sutpen’s hatred and jealousy come to a focus, he sees himself “looking out from within the balloon face” (234) as if he were the aristocrat. He imagines its members as cattle, “creatures heavy and without grace, brutally evacuated into world without hope or purpose for them” (90). Seeing humiliation, Sutpen realizes, “you got to have land and niggers and a fine house to combat them with” (259). Such humiliation creates horror in his mind thinking the future of black so he translates it into a morally glamorous “boy-symbol”:

Now he would take that boy in where he would never again need to stance on the outside of a white door and knock at it; and not at all for mere shelter but so that boy, that whatever nameless stranger, could shut that door known, and look ahead along the still undivulged light rays in which his descendants who might not even having to know that they had once been riven forever from brut hood just as Sutpen’s children were . . . (216)

Having such kind of environment, horror and terror occupies in his mind so he realizes that he would be unable to establish a noble family dynasty. To achieve his 'design' with fear situation, he runs away and goes to the West Indies. He is totally unknown about it but he has learned in school that in the West Indies, a man could make his fortune if he “was clever and courageous” (257). Having little hope, he starts working on a plantation there. While working there, a terrifying revolt breaks out; Sutpen is barricaded in the house with the French plantation owner’s family. As a clever and diplomatic person, he stops the slave revolt single-handedly. In reward, the plantation owner offers Sutpen the privilege of marrying his daughter Eulalia. Finding good opportunity as a step towards achieving his goal, he readily accepts the offer and

marries the plantation owner's daughter. The narrator remarks, "he had got at last that wife who would be adjunctive to the forwarding of that 'design' he had in his mind" (209).

During that time, he is found in imaginary world or only the world of appearance so he is so glad for achieving his goal. Until Eulalia bears him a part black son, he is in illusion or fantasy world but after discovering that his wife also possesses Negro blood, his dreams are fattered as like the mirror and horrific situation stands in front of him so he says:

They deliberately withheld the fact from me which I have reason to know they were aware would have caused me to decline the entire mate, otherwise they would not have withheld if from me a fact which I did not learn until after my son was born . . . this new fact rendered it impossible that his woman and child be incorporated in my design.

(187)

Apparently, "he repudiates that first wife and that child when he discovers that they would not be adjunctive to the forwarding of the design" (189). Thus Gothic leads Sutpen to take the path of anti-social. Sutpen would like to accept the reality so he tries to flee from it that brings Sutpen to the point of abandoning his own family members because he has learned the social lesson of the southern aristocratic ideology of race and gender so well "any own with any African heritage will be considered black and this identity will limit access to power and social position. (Railey 3)

Another horror and terror is found in his desire to establish a noble dynasty because he has learned a man could make his fortune if he "was clever and courageous." But Sutpen is guilty of hubris is undeniable, even if one is inclined to call that quantity, in modern times, mere hardheadedness. He can never admit the

possibility of a flow in his own character, nor in the design he has planned. In speaking to Mr. Compson of the failure of his Haitian attempt at founding a dynasty, Sutpen says merely that he has a design in mind:

Whether it was a good or a bad design, in beside the point; the questions, where did I make the mistake in it and why did I get suffered, what did I do or misdo in it, whom or what injure is done by it, how did I face these problems . . . to the extent which this would indicate. (263)

There lies in this speech the arrogance of too little consideration of the morality of his design and its possible effect on others. Though he may wonder if he has made a wrong turning here or there, Sutpen never considers the possibility that the design, which becomes the essence of the man himself, might contain the moral flaw that would bring doom to it. Miss Rosa sees the hubris in Sutpen. She speaks in one instance of "the accelerating circle's fatal curving course of his ruthless pride" (162). Certainly, most of Sutpen's design includes those things which the southern plantation owner takes for granted: money, land, a great and imposing house, slaves, a respectable wife, and sons to carry on the aristocratic tradition, the dynasty. Olga Vickery is of the opinion that: "Sutpen himself is presented as a mirror image of the South for the aristocratic's dream of design, for his career he comes in Jefferson merely repeats in a foreshortened form the rise of many families whose larger tenure of the land has given them respectability" (*The Novels of William Faulkner* 93).

The horror and terror is also found in the side of major narrator because all of major narrators are born and bred in the south. Their relationship to the Sutpen tragedy is immediate: their own ancestors appear in the background. Mr. Compson and Quentin are descended from the general Compson of the tale, whose

independence and humanity set him apart from his fellow citizens of aristocratic status. In Sutpen story, he transcends the narrowness of his class, accepting Sutpen into the community, attending his wedding, and befriending him in his crisis. He comprehends the limitations of Sutpen's nature, yet he is not alienated from him in human affection. To Charles Etienne Bon, Sutpen's Negro grandson, he accords equal sympathy. He knows the hopelessness of his plight yet intercedes for him with the law and attempts personal assistance. Quentin and Mr. Compson are general Compson's heir's, the inheritors not only of his broad intelligence and conscience, but also of altered social status which the civil war brings about. Retaining the refinements of culture and sensibility perpetuated in family tradition, but deprived through historical circumstance of a proper field in which they may be exercised, Mr. Compson and Quentin are both rendered incapable of action. Their feelings towards Negroes are, like their ancestor's personal and humane, no trace of prejudice or condescension is to be found in their narration, ". . . that if each man in the south . . . would see to the restoration of his own land, the general land and South would save itself" (317).

Similarly, Miss Rosa is implicated in the legend in a different way, through the direct impingement of Sutpen drives upon her life, and through the place of her father in implementing Sutpen's design by providing him with an acceptable marital alliance. Miss Rosa derives not only her distorted view of life but the social pretentiousness of a would-be aristocrat. Her repeated assertions that Sutpen "was not even a gentleman" and her claim that "the Coldfields are qualified to reciprocate whatever particularly signal honor marriage with anyone might confer on them" (280), betray her actual social position. Her prejudices against Negroes are intensified by her repressions and by her need to sustain a false sense of social superiority.

Sutpen's sin, his failure of humanity, is the equivalent in personal terms of the sin of plantation culture, its failure to accept the brotherhood of all humankind.

One extreme fear in the mind of Sutpen is that without keeping Negroes slaves at the doors, there is no chance to develop the social status and achieve his design. So he has brought Negro slaves into his "Sutpen's Hundred." "Sutpen had brought in half a dozen of his wild niggers to wait at the doors burning in knots" (41). Sutpen regards the Negroes as only servants to serve the whites so he is not ready to treat them as human beings with equal right and respect as whites inwardly but outwardly, he shows the equality for achieving high social status so he responds to the Negroes' greeting with a nod as superior owner of the "Sutpen's Hundred":

While the Negroes were working, Sutpen never raised his voice at them, that instead he led them, caught them at psychological instant by example, by some ascendancy of forbearance rather than by brute fear. Without dismounting his horse usually Sutpen did not even greet . . . as if they had been idle shades. (30)

Something was going wrong with the south: and things begin to interfere with Sutpen's very nearly completed design, his almost-established dynasty. The son brings home with him from the university a young man, Charles Bon, with whom the daughter falls in love. Sutpen recognizes Bon as his own son the one born in Haiti of a woman who is part Negro. Sutpen could have already averted this incestuous marriage between his son and daughter by telling them frankly about the reality, but he has a kind of horror to lose his position, status in the society and also his pride makes him not to accept a Negro-blooded person as his son complicate the situation. Gothic leads the characters towards dark side of society so Sutpen's rejection of

Charles Bon to recognize as his son symbolizes the rejection of the plantation Negro.

In this regard, Peter Swiggart writes:

But unfortunately for the planter's peace of mind, the boy-symbol who seeks admittance at Sutpen's "White door" is Charles Bon. In refusing to acknowledge a part-negro son, Sutpen reveals that resentment at being insulted by a Negro is far stronger than his social idealism. In denying recognition to Bon, Sutpen rejects the best part of himself and reveals the selfish of his moral design. (6)

Similarly, the concept of Sutpen towards black, is found in Henry behavior to keep his father 'design' in higher position, he has also horror that if he behaves equally, his social status and whiteness goes under the feet. So, his attitude towards the blacks can thus be traced the blacks to that of southern aristocrat's attitude toward the blacks to keep themselves as superior. In this regard William Van O'conner notes:

Sutpen's flaw – he is forever asking what went wrong in his "design" – was not merely his flaw, it was Henry's flaw, and the south flaw: the inability to accept the Negro as human equal. It was over this that the war was fought and because of this that the Sutpen family was going on destruction. (27)

To subvert the social reality, Henry cannot tolerate racial equality so he kills his older half-brother Charles Bon and then flees to avoid punishment.

Sutpen is left without a proper male heir to carry on his dynasty. Since his wife Ellen has died during the war, he proposes to her sister Rosa that she tries breeding with him, and if their child is a son, they will be married. Miss Rosa of course refuses in horrific situation, since that proposal is the final and undeniable evidence to her of the absence of all humanistic and moral concern in Sutpen pursuit

of his ambitions. Sutpen, now growing old and realizing that he has not many more chances of begetting a son, finally seduces the granddaughter of Wash Jones, a poor white who lives in a fishing-shack on the land; but the child she bears is a daughter and Sutpen rejects both mother and child. Sutpen keeps her in horror and terror because he would not like to lose his status that creates anger in Jones so Jones kills Sutpen with a scythe which lies handy near the cabin. Thus, Sutpen's dynasty comes to an end with two female heirs and a part-Negro grand child of Charles Bon living in the decaying house. Years later, the house is to be set afire deliberately by the half-Negro daughter Clytie, in an effort to protect Henry, returns home to die, from arrest for Bon's murder.

Mental Agony and Moral Alienation

What more we can mark in any Gothic novel is the intensified mental agony corresponding with some explicit or implicit sense of oral isolation as well. This pathos-arousing element has been noted as the essential characteristic to be manifested in the novel. The suffering of Thomas Sutpen and others major characters are primary caused by their mental isolation as well as alienation from each other because of discrimination. The pressure of authority and power of white is imposed upon the blacks has created the personal decay. Thomas Sutpen is always found in mental torture because of his ambition to establish his noble dynasty. At the beginning up to the end, he is found in roaming here and there but he is unable and comes to his own tragic end.

Sutpen has got mental torture when he sees the use of the poor blacks as slaves in their houses to climb the ladder of success by white aristocrats, knowing that when he gets offer for marriage, he is ready for hoping to achieve his design. But when he knows the reality about his wife and son are the part-black, he thinks that his design

can't be achieved because he is not without morality or a certain code of honor. He is, according to his own lights, a just man. So, he tells Quentin's grandfather with reference to his rejection of his first wife:

Suffice that I . . . accepted in good faith, with no reservations about myself, and I expected as much from her parents . . . I accepted them at their own valuation while indicating on my part upon explaining fully about myself and my progenitors: yet they deliberately withheld from me one fact which I have reason to know they were aware would have caused me to decline the entire matter. (210)

Henry, with mental illness, kills Charles Bon without informing about it that creates the isolation and frustration in Judith because she has fallen in love with him. Everyone, to stay far from reality, is found in isolated condition. With mental torture, Judith determines to bring back Charles Etienne Bon, Charles Bon's son from his relationship with an Octoroon mistress to raise but they teach him that he is a Negro-part. When Charles Etienne Bon begets an idiot son, Judith and Clyties raise him secretly. In 1884 Etienne is caught yellow fever. While nursing him, Judith is also caught by it and both die. Accompanied by Quentin, she drives out to Sutpen's Hundred and finds Henry Sutpen living there, now old and sick and being cared for by Clytie. Three months later, Rosa brings an ambulance to Sutpen's Hundred to take Henry to a hospital, but Clytie with mental agony, believing Henry is being sought for the murder of Charles Bon more than forty years before, sets fire to the house, killing both herself and Henry. Thomas Sutpen's sole living heir, Jim Bond, is left howling over the ashes of the house. In later December 1909, Rosa slips into a coma and dies two weeks later. Thomas Sutpen who has been denying black relationship in order to achieve his goal of establishing noble family dynasty ends up handing over "Sutpen's

Hundred” to his Negro grandson for the continuity of his family dynasty. To give harmony and keep them free from mental agony and alienation, the following narration can give some consolation to every character:

At this time, while our country is struggling to rise from beneath the iron heel of a tyrant oppressor, when the very future of the south as a place bearable for our women and children to live in depends on the labour of tools which we have to use, to depend on are the pride and integrity and forbearance white; that you, I say, a white man, a white – and your grandfather trying to reach him, stop him, trying to push through the crowd, saying, Jim, Jim, Jim. (168)

Thus, *Absalom, Absalom!* reflects how the major characters themselves are facing chronic isolation, moral decay as well as the destruction of their own life.

Doppelganger

The motif of the 'doppelganger' or double, which is a frequent motif in many Gothic fiction, appears dominantly in *Absalom, Absalom!*. However, William Faulkner handles it in a quite different way.

The 'doubleness' is found in many major characters. First of all, the unbelievable similarity can be found between Thomas Sutpen and Henry Sutpen. Henry who has the against of his father for the marriage of Charles Bon and Judith, comes to the same thinking of the domination to black so he kills his friend Charles Bon. While quarrelling with his father, he runs away from there and joins with Charles for war but after returning from there, he murders Charles Bon. Thomas Sutpen's aspiration is to establish a noble family dynasty he has found in doubleness because he is ready to marry when he is offered by plantation owner but after getting the reality, he runs away by rejecting his wife and son and tries to hide it, "I did not

demand credentials as one of my obscure origin might have been expected to do . . ."

(210). As he often tries to run away from the troubles, and attempts to forget his previous events. He sleeps but awakens by showing all the mental fears. When he has come to know enough about a dynastic tradition that the wife could never be "adjunctive or incremental to the design" (240). For taking revenge, Clytie has also shown doubleness. Being a woman she has stood as courageous person by firing the house, to kill Henry as is the murder of Charles Bon.

In this way, characteristics of the double are the most essential and vital facets and assets to make any fictitious work Gothic as observed and marked in *Absalom, Absalom!*

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Absalom, Absalom! unquestionably one of the great American novels with immense suggestive power, demonstrates high sense of reality of discrimination, in that it reveals profound truths about how the effect of the sins of the head of the family are felt by other members that creates the suffering to everyone. Faulkner has given his concentration on the Gothic. Faulkner's works seem closer to the American movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The Gothic genre pre-occupied itself primarily with dark brooding themes of passion, secretion, panic and human fallibility in order to subvert the reality of society. Because of over ambition to establish his noble dynasty, he falls from the ladder which he wanted to climb that is the human nature and the human flaw. Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!*, who represents southern aristocracy, suffers disintegration, and ultimately meets his tragic death because of his racial prejudice and intolerance.

It exposes many of the evils that were rampant in the society of that period. It reflects the discrimination, sins, lust for money and position, which has destroyed all in the novel. Growing up as a child in a white trash family from West Virginia, he is unaware of the differences in social class and race in the beginning. When Sutpen once goes to deliver a message from his father to the plantation owner, he finds himself in mysterious because he is not allowed to enter from the front door because of his low social standard. Seeing that he determines with the idea of creating the ultimate southern existence according to the design of the American dream. He rises from a life of poverty, working hard to acquire enough money to allow him to recreate himself, resettle, and start a new life. He becomes able to fulfill the Southern requirement of owning land, building an immense estate and marrying a Christian woman. Because of Gothic elements, he forgets his previous status and brings a lot of

Negro servants to his "Sutpen's Hundred "and treats them inhumanly, putting them for entertainment.

Absalom, Absalom! holds many dark, deadly, secrets despite their social prominence. The portraits of dark characters that become representatives of moral decay, corruption, greed and evil in the modern world. *Absalom, Absalom!* also seems like a detective story with a series of mystery and suspense. This is also a story of conflict of sins and virtues. Similarly, *Absalom, Absalom!* handles the motive of evil of property giving it a gothic tone. The illusion of Sutpen is to achieve high social status of aristocrat through the possession of the Negro servants to wait at the door of his 'grand house' reflects his biased and prejudiced nature towards the blacks. He thinks of blacks as lower human beings born to serve the whites.

Gothic creates horror and terror in the novel. Sutpen is unable to accept his own son, who is born to a particularly black mother, because the mixed blood of son does not fit into his plan for the ideal design of a southerner. So, he runs away from there. Similarly, the horror and terror can also find while Henry murder's Charles Bon and then flees to avoid punishment. Henry is unable to accept black as equal in post-war Southern society and in no way he can tolerate having a black man as a brother-in-law, even if he is a relative already. When Millie, his mistress gives birth to a female child, his intolerance for deviance from his design cause him to reject both Millie and her child that leads to his ruin, as Millie's grandfather kills Sutpen for his rejection of Millie.

Thus, in conclusion, we can say the novel has covered all the elements of a Gothic that has brought the end of Sutpen's great design with his own tragic death due to his denial of racial equality.

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