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The Troubled Structures in William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez

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Abstract. This paper analyzes the filiations and affiliations of biography, architecture, writing, power, and history between William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez. The author argues that the structures of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Márquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch* are highly symbolic and charged with a rich palimpsest of personal, historical, and national meanings. The structures are seen as troubled as they evoke both a critique of patriarchal power and violence in history even while they simultaneously reflect both author's anxieties about newfound fame and the power that comes with it.

Key words: William Faulkner, Gabriel García Márquez, architecture, power, history

Structures in William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Gabriel García Márquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch* are highly symbolic and charged with a rich palimpsest of personal, historical, and national meanings[1]. I argue that these structures are troubled in

[1] There exists a large body of criticism has been written about the affiliations between Faulkner and Marquez, often centered around the topic of "influence" as well as the impact Faulkner's work had on Latin American literature. Curiously, a number of studies juxtapose *Absalom, Absalom!* not with *Autumn of the Patriarch*, but instead *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. One example is "The End of Innocence: Myth and Narrative Structure in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* And Garcia Marquez' *Cien Años de Soledad"* by Lois Parkinson-Zamora. In that article, Parkinson-Zamora (1982) focuses on how both novels are affiliated with apocalyptic visions and nationalist myths. Dane Johnson's 2004 chapter on the same two novels wrestles with the notion of the cosmopolitan and noncosmopolitan, but like Parkinson-Zamora, largely overlooks the theme of architecture and dwellings. Surveying criticism of our two authors it becomes apparent Marquez's *Autumn of the Patriarch* exists largely in the shadow of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Jeffrey Lawrence's 2017 work continues the trend, placing *Absalom, Abssalom!* in juxtaposition with *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. It's my contention that some fascinating overlap/dialogue occurs between *Absalom, Absalom!* and the lesser known *Autumn of the Patriarch*

the sense that they evoke both a critique of patriarchal power and violence in history even while they simultaneously reflect both author's anxieties about newfound fame and the power that comes with it. Further, we can begin to think of Faulkner's and Marquez's troubled structures in two distinct senses. First off, the structural dwellings of Faulkner's Sutpen's Hundred and Marquez's dictator's palace symbolize the historical legacy of slavery in the American South (for Faulkner) and the caudillo in South America (for Marquez), and at the same time echo the experiences of the authors with their own dwellings[2]. Secondly, through the structure of their writing, which both authors think of as a kind of architecture, there is an exploration of new ways to depict reality and consciousness, as well as the fraught histories of the American South and South America. Faulkner and Marquez's troubled structures warn us about patriarchal power and its historical outlines, especially how the lure of power beckons toward self-destruction.

In *Faulkner: A Biography* Joseph Blotner writes,

> In 1844, "Colonel" Robert R. Shegog purchased a tract of land that had been sold eight years earlier by a Chicksaw named E-Ah-Nah-Yea, who had received the land as a grant from the U.S. government. Shegog hired William Turner, an English architect, to build a two-story Colonial-style home. They picked an elevated site, the land sloping off around it to bluffs and ravines. The house would face south. There, seven-tenths of a mile from the courthouse, the land was cleared and the kiln built in which slaves would bake brick for the foundation.
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> The L-shaped house rose slowly. It was sturdy and roomy, symmetrical in front, with parlors on both sides of the wide entrance hall and a dining room and kitchen extending back from the one on the right. Upstairs were three bedrooms. The Grecian roof of the portico was supported by four tall wooden columns. Above the Georgian front doors was a balcony, and on either side, above the wide, open gallery, were two large shuttered windows upstairs and downstairs…
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> [By 1923 the house had fallen] into disrepair and for a time it was vacant… Mice and squirrels scurried in the attic under the leaky roof. Beams were rotting and sagging. Stained and faded paper peeled from the cracking plaster and the once-bright walls… [When the current owners]… learned that William Faulkner was interested in buying and restoring the house, [the wife, Mrs. Sally Baily Bryant] urged her husband to work something out… On April 12, 1930, Faulkner signed the papers and the house was his on a deed of trust. (258-259).

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along the lines of author biography, the theme of architecture and history, and the theme of writing itself as a structural/architectural metaphor.

[2] Addressing the importance of dwellings, Gaston Bachelard (1964) writes in *The Poetics of Space*: "In the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing. Without it, man would be a dispersed being. It maintains him through the storms of the heavens and though those of life. It is body and soul. It is the human being's first world" (7). Gabriel García Márquez seems to echo this sentiment, clarifying how that "first world" Blanchard describes was a major influence on his literary output. He states: "Often, our house in Aracataca, our huge house, seemed as if it were haunted. All those early experiences have somehow found themselves in my literature" (Rios 2002). The structures in which we dwell are an intimate part of human experience, tied inextricably to the human condition, and thus they are an extension of ourselves.

Blotner goes on to state that William Faulkner was to pay six thousand dollars at 6% interest for Rowan Oak and four acres of land. His monthly payment was seventy five dollars (259). He did much of the repair work himself, even "jacking up the house to replace some of the beams" (261). After the publication and relative success of *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner began both establishing his legacy and forging his "grand design" and as he undertook the laborious work on his new home, a home deeply rooted in the history of the American South[3]. Four years later, Faulkner would begin work on a new novel. In a 1934 letter he wrote to Harrison Smith: "I believe that I have a head start on the novel…The one I am writing now will be called DARK HOUSE or something of that nature" (1977: 78). This novel was to become *Absalom, Absalom!* It is not absurd to surmise that Faulkner's own engagement with architecture and private experience bringing his own home back from the abyss of uncertainty had a profound effect on his consciousness. The working title of the original manuscript – "Dark House" – suggests that architecture would play a central role in the novel. Indeed, *Absalom, Absalom!* is the most architecturally centered book Faulkner would ever write. Faulkner had used architectural features in his stories before, for example in "Barn Burning" and *Light in August*, but nothing Faulkner had ever written took on such a central significance to the design of a novel like Sutpen's mansion in *Absalom, Absalom!* The structure of the new novel he was conjuring took shape in his head invisibly as the hands that shaped and fashioned sentences went about shaping and fashioning the boards which constituted his dwelling. The greatest structure Faulkner would live in during his life became a reflection, an echo, of the greatest novel he would write. "I seem to have got out of the habit of writing trash," he would tell a friend after completing *Absalom, Absalom!* (371).

Roughly a year before Faulkner's death in 1962, another novelist was traveling through the southern U.S. by bus for the first time, taking in the geography and architecture of the land. His reason for the trip? To see the country William Faulkner grew up in. His name was Gabriel García Márquez. Later he recalled:

> I had recently read Faulkner and greatly admired him, so I made this trip by—what do you call it?—Greyhound, from New York down to the Mexican border. I traveled by bus because I wanted to see the country from the small, dusty roads that Faulkner described—and also because I had almost no money… In Faulkner's country, I remember seeing the small stores along the roadway with people seated out front with their feet up on railings. There was the same kind of poverty contrasting with great wealth. In some ways, it seemed to me that Faulkner was also a writer of the Caribbean, because of the great influence the area has had on the Gulf of Mexico and on Mississippi. (Rios 2002)

This moment is symbolic because it suggests that, right around the time that Faulkner was physically fading away, a new writer was taking in the American South. Marquez

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[3] It is striking how some parallels of Rowan Oak's construction, discussed in the first paragraph of Blotner's quotation above, find their way into *Absalom, Absalom!* First and foremost, in the novel Quentin tells us that Sutpen "took [the land] from a tribe of ignorant Indians" (10). Secondly, a French architect figures prominently into the construction of Sutpen's house. Finally, the fact that the very foundation of Faulkner's home was built by slaves symbolically reflects the concern with racial issues that underlies much of his fiction, and in this case, especially the racial conflict over miscegenation that emerges between Sutpen, Bon, and Henry.

lovingly sees Faulkner as part of the same Caribbean tradition as himself, and this observation warrants serious consideration on the part of scholars. Like Faulkner, Marquez was fascinated by space and spatial dimensions, and his description of the South ("small stores," "dusty roads") evidences how his own work was highly influenced by architecture and visual imagery[4]. In an interview entitled "The Visual Arts, the Poetization of Space and Writing" Marquez explains: "When I was writing *The Autumn of the Patriarch* there was a point at which I was struggling a lot. I had a certain idea about the palace, which eventually would appear at the beginning, but I just couldn't get it right. Then I came across this picture [see below – Ch. W.] in a book, and the photo solved my writing of the novel. It was the image I needed" (134). The story that unfolds over six chapters is that of a dictator (or a nameless patriarch) and his fall from power. Sutpen's mansion and Marquez's presidential palace are imaginary symbolic spaces that encapsulate patriarchy, power, and the limitations of men's ambitions. They are the central metaphors of each novel, and this is one of many important connections that one can draw between *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Autumn of the Patriarch* [5].

Marquez started working on *The Autumn of the Patriarch* roughly six years after his trip to the American south in 1961. Marquez was inspired both by the troubled structures of the South as well as the troubled structural prose of William Faulkner. His writing, especially his early work, has been so often compared to Faulkner that the Colombian novelist was on the defensive when the topic was broached. In a conversation with Rita

[4] The critic Gerald Walker (2014) asks the rhetorical question: "Where, for example, can we find better images of buildings and the way people deal with them than in Faulkner or Garcia Marquez…" (86).
[5] The following quote can be linked directly to the photograph: "…he had stayed behind living alone in the deserted palace of his absolute power, we would find him walking about in dreams, waving his arms in the midst of the cows' destruction with no one to command…" (158).

Guibert, Márquez accepted Faulkner as a mentor, especially in his early works, but he rejected the notion that he consciously or unconsciously sought to imitate Faulkner (Oberhelman 1989, 72). Marquez's defensiveness is curious as it seems to reflect a global culture that is obsessed with ownership and originality of ideas more than anything else[6]. What is obvious is that Marquez counts Faulkner as his most important influence, if his 2003 autobiography *Living To Tell The Tale* is to be trusted. There, Marquez peppers his own life story with allusions to Faulkner's greatness. His feeling of closeness to a man he never met is also apparent in this latest work: "when I began to read Faulkner, the small towns in his novels seemed like ours, too" (19).

A connection can also be forged between the way that both authors conceive of and interpret their writing processes. "Faulkner frequently speaks of his writing as carpentry, of the business of crafting sentences as one no less exacting than the hewing and honing and joining that enable a structure to stand free and bear weight" (Chandler 1991, 2). Coincidentally, Marquez uses the very same metaphor when he states, in an interview with Peter Stone in the winter of 1981, that "ultimately, literature is nothing but carpentry" (325). As can be inferred from the two statements, both novelists were indebted to architecture, and structure(s) played an important role in their works. Like the physical demands that accompany the process of building a structure, the fashioning of these novels also took its toll. While working on *Absalom, Absalom!,* Faulkner descended from his work space and said: "It's a tortured story, and a torture to write it" (370). This is probably due to the fact that the great success of *The Sound and the Fury* was looming over Faulkner, and he felt great pressure to produce something better. This element – working on another novel with the shadow of great success looming over them – is yet another contingency that unites *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. Marquez felt the same tension. He told Rita Guibert that *The Autumn of the Patriarch* was written under great strain as he felt the weight of the success of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*" (qtd. in Plummer 1989, 47). Still, while the pressure made writing strenuous, it may have driven both writers to complete the best novels of their careers.

Having finished his novel, Faulkner handed the manuscript to a writer connected with his publishers and stated: "I think it's the best novel yet written by an American" (qtd. in Blotner 1974, 364). Marquez also didn't back down about his feeling of accomplishment in light of a commercially successful novel. When asked if he felt the immense success of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was unfair to the rest of his work, Marquez responded: "Yes, it's unfair. *The Autumn of the Patriarch* is a much more important literary achievement" (qtd. in Simpkins 1995, 155). In this way, Marquez again shares an affinity with William Faulkner whose *The Sound and the Fury*, while a great text, tends to overshadow some of his other outstanding work, including novels like *Absalom, Absalom!* One sense in which the structures of both authors are "troubled" is they shared experiences with fame that caused both men to focus on the rise of a male figure (and his

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[6] Marquez's reliance on Faulkner has been widely discussed, but the best evidence comes from the Colombian writer's autobiographical *Living to Tell The Tale*. For example, about the creation of *Leaf Storm*, Marquez writes: "I planned to diversify the monologue with voices of the entire town, like a narrative Greek chorus, in the style of *As I Lay Dying*, with the reflections of an entire family interposed around a dying man. I did not feel able to repeat his simple device of indicating the names of the characters at each speech, as in theatrical texts, but it gave me the idea of using no more than the three voices of the grandfather, the mother, and the boy, whose tones and destinies were so different they could be identified on their own" (403).

home) to power in their narratives, only to have the figure fall after becoming corrupted by power. Does the preponderance of this theme reflect each author's concerns with their own status as writers? Both novels can certainly be read as allegories of authors confronting their own demons of power, status, and failure. What is also notable is that the main characters in both novels (General Sutpen and the nameless dictator) play the roles of protagonist and antagonist, much like the novelists who had to negotiate the positive and negative elements of their popularity. In *Absalom, Absalom!* Sutpen is seen as an existential hero by Shreve and Quentin and as a devil by Miss Rosa. In Marquez's *Autumn of the Patriarch*, the main character is both a ruthless dictator and a sensitive man who takes comfort in the unending attention of this mother. In other words, we may be able to read the struggle of the protagonist/antagonist figure as indicative of the writing process of the authors themselves – and because this process is more internally fierce than anything external, this is how we can come to understand their characters' dueling roles as symbolic of their own struggle.

The complexity of the characters also suggests the existence of a larger, interweaving narrative that is not linear or easy to immediately comprehend. In a sense, this nonlinearity may be perceived as symbolizing the architectural dimensions of Marquez and Faulkner's fiction. There are three statements made by Faulkner which summarize the basic plot of *Absalom, Absalom!* In the letter to Harrison Smith quoted above, Faulkner writes: "Roughly, the theme [of *Absalom, Absalom!*] is a man who outraged the land, and the land then turned and destroyed the man's family" (79). An astute reader might ask: is the outrage about the building of the mansion without permission? Is this what Faulkner means when Quentin recalls that Sutpen "Tore violently a plantation, Miss Rosa Coldfield says…" (5)? Blotner quotes Faulkner as saying that "the story is of a man who wanted a son through pride, and got too many of them and they destroyed him…" (334). According to Faulkner, "Sutpen said, 'I'm going to bed the one that lives in the big house, I'm going to establish a dynasty, I don't care how, and he violated all the rules of decency and honor and pity and compassion…" (348). To summarize the three quotes, there is the desire for land (without regards to the rules of equity that govern it), the quest for sons (and thus the desire to extend one's lineage, without cognizance of the potential conflicts among individuals of multiple bloodlines), and the desire to establish a dynasty (without regard for the equity of others to do the same). All of these urges, while they seek to establish and maintain power, ultimately fail because Sutpen's method of acquiring power is, for Faulkner, ultimately outside of the limits of social decency. In other words, all three statements, though different, are similar in that they articulate the quest for power and a concern with its consequences for those who seek it. Similarly, Marquez described *The Autumn of the Patriarch* as a 'poem on the solitude of power'…" (Williams 1989, 110). In *Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner focuses on how power impacts the individual who seeks to transcend or ignore its limitations – in this way, the house in the novel becomes a metaphor for the South which also sought to build its dynasty on the backs of subjugated human beings (both natives and slaves alike), and experienced the consequences of an economy predicated on these actions after the Civil War.

Certainly Faulkner himself was no stranger to the desire for power. Blotner writes:

> Years later Faulkner's daughter Jill, would discern still another motive [for his purchase of the big, rotting house which was transformed into Rowan Oak]: it was 'the symbol in Pappy's life of being somebody…everybody in Oxford had

> remembered that Pappy's father ran a livery stable, and he had lived in this house up not too far from the livery stable, and this was just a way of thumbing his nose at Oxford…a nice old house [that] had a certain substance and feeling to it.'" (261)[7]

Equally unforgettable is the now infamous quote that Faulkner's daughter recalled him coldly telling her: "Nobody remembers Shakespeare's children" (473). The above quotes are united in their coolness toward the social positioning of others. The desire for or maintenance of power causes one to break away, to see himself as separate from others. This is perhaps the most tragic aspect of an individual who misuses his power.

Power operates in Faulkner's novel in other ways. Certainly, writing at Rowan Oak, Faulkner became aware of the contradiction of history between the slave-owning old South, on which the very foundations of his own home were laid, and the twentieth-century "new South" in which he lived, and which was slowly growing in prominence as part of America, a major world power. It is perhaps this interesting juxtaposition between the old and new that explains the first sentence of *Absalom, Absalom!* which describes a room in which the blinds have been shut for "forty-three summers" (3). The significant elements (time, history, architecture) of this opening image come to dominate the novel, and the intersections between these themes creates a metaphor for the crisis of identity between the old and new South and thus an investigation into how humanity deals with the troublesome non-linearity of history. As Faulkner famously states in *Requiem for a Nun*: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." In other words, since the fall of the old South created a kind of power vaccum, its curse is also present in a modernized South that is part of a seemingly ever more strengthened American empire.

Faulkner's novel is a precursor to García Márquez' *The Autumn of the Patriarch,* whose opening sentences bear a striking resemblance to those of *Absalom, Absalom!*.

> Over the weekend the vultures got into the presidential palace by pecking through the screens on the balcony windows and the flapping of their wings stirred up the stagnant time inside, and at dawn on Monday the city awoke out of its lethargy of centuries with the warm, soft breeze of a great man dead and rotting grandeur. Only then did we dare go in without attacking the crumbling walls of reinforced stone, as the more resolute had wished, and without using oxbows to knock the main door off its hinges, as others had proposed, because all that was needed was for someone to give a push and the great armored doors that had resisted the lombards of William Dampier during the building's heroic days gave way. It was like entering the atmosphere of another age, because the air was thinner in the rubble pits of the vast lair of power, and the silence was more ancient, and things were hard to see in the decrepit light. (1)

Both authors must make sense of the "stagnant time" that troubles their novels because the question of their own relationship to history is at stake, both on an individual level and as part of the complex history of a larger community and nation. For Marquez,

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[7] This quote provides another link between Faulkner and his characters, as one cannot deny that Sutpen's desire to build a plantation mirrors Faulkner's daughters' own vision of her father's motivations. I will discuss this aspect of the novel in more depth later.

it was the history of colonial rule as well as the long line of dictators that have dotted the South American landscape over time. For Faulkner, it was slavery and the troubled history of racial relations between white colonialists, Native Americans, and African slaves.

The illusion of status and power wrapped up in architectural structures is a motif that returns time and time again in both novels. One important but often ignored aspect of *Absalom, Absalom!* is Thomas Sutpen's existential crisis[8]. It is through this crisis that he comes to envision his own "grand design." As a boy, Sutpen's father sends him to the "big house" with a message. Sutpen subsequently experiences the big house's racial hierarchy (which places him at the bottom) as out-of-place with his understanding of reality, and this causes him to run away. "All of the sudden he found himself running and already some distance from the house, and not toward home…He just had to think, and he knew where that place was…He said he crawled back into the cave and sat with his back against the uptorn roots, and thought…" (188). Sutpen needs to make sense of the world by literally going back into the earth because he has lost his grounding of what is possible in the world and what is not at this point. Quentin speculates: "…and then [having crossed the old rotting snake fence and ran away from the old house] the earth, the land, the sky and trees and woods, looked different again, all right again" (174). The home situates and enters into a symbiotic relationship with its surroundings in a way that is unlike anything the boy has experienced before, and it terrifies him. However, Sutpen later comes to confront his existential crisis by building Sutpen's Hundred, in an attempt to symbolically dwell in the large house of his boyhood fears, and by doing so, conquer them.

Secondly, Sutpen is forever altered by the fact that "it was the nigger told him, even before he had had time to say what he came for, never to come to that front door again but to go around to the back" (188). It is at this moment that Sutpen realizes that he exists and is part of a class system of which he is on the lower rung. If a "nigger" has to tell Sutpen to go around to the back of the house, what does that say about Sutpen's social status? After all, Sutpen comes from a "people whose houses didn't have back doors" (188). "[T]he man who owned all the land and all the niggers and apparently the white men who superintended the work, lived in the biggest house he had ever seen" (184). Sutpen sees the house as a status symbol: "[The man was] in a barrel stave hammock between two trees, with his shoes off and a nigger who wore every day better clothes than he or his father and sisters had ever owned and ever expected to, who did nothing else but fan him and bring him drinks" (184). Sutpen's fear of his own class, and his desire to rise above it, are instigated by this sight of a man suspended between two trees. This is the moment that Sutpen decides that he will forge his own destiny. Sutpen is determined to do something about his existential realization of his poor West Virginian status and, after

[8] This moment of crisis is best captured in the following quote: "[H]e told Grandfather how, before the monkey nigger who came to the door had finished saying what he did, he seemed to kind of dissolve and a part of him turn and rush through the two years they had lived there like when you pass through a room fast and look at all the objects in it and you turn and go back through the room again and look at all the objects from the other side and you find out you had never seen them before…" (186). In this quotation Sutpen has a moment of fleeing self-reflection ("rush through the two years they had lived there") that is predicated on thinking about himself in relationship to a structure, the interior contents of which symbolically represent Sutpen's own existential status in the world. He repeats to himself "Home. Home" as though he cannot recall from where he once came (190).

returning to the rotting cabin that is his home, the next day he sets off for the West Indies (190, 192).9 Quentin surmises that "to combat them you have got to have what they have that made them do what he did. You got to have land and niggers and a fine house to combat them with. You see?" (192). However, Sutpen's main conflict is with himself, specifically his conception of free will which is torn between the status the man was seemingly granted aside of any hard work (determinism) and the fact that Sutpen thinks he can, through hard work, accomplish even greater goals (will). Sutpen tells Quentin's grandfather: "You see, I had a design in my mind…To accomplish it I should require money, a house, a plantation, slaves, a family – incidentally a wife. I set out to acquire these, asking no favor of any man" (212).

Like Sutpen, the dictator in Marquez's novel comes from poverty. The dictator brings a number of gifts to his mother, such as a "live mermaid in a fishbowl, [and] a lifesize wind-up angel," and then says to her: "now you can see how nice it is not to be poor" (49). This passage, while short, is extremely significant because it suggests that, like Sutpen, Marquez's archetypical dictator also came from a background of poverty where he is inevitably destined to return. Recalling the dictator's early days, when he was just establishing his power, Marquez writes,

> …they couldn't even find a piece of grass to cook or to use to warm up that immense unfurnished house in which nothing of value was left except the moth-eaten oil paintings of viceroys and archbishops from the dead grandeur of Spain, everything else had been carried off little by little by previous presidents for their private domains, they didn't even leave a trace of the wallpaper with heroic episodes on the walls, the bedrooms were full of barracks trash, everywhere there were forgotten traces of historic massacres and slogans written with a bloody finger by illusory presidents who lasted one night, but there wasn't even a mat to lie down on to sweat out a fever, so his mother Bendicion Alvarado pulled down a curtain to wrap me in and left him lying in a corner of the main stairway while with the broom of green branches she swept out the presidential quarters that the English were finished sacking, she swept the whole floor defending herself with broom blows from this pack of filibusters who were trying to rape her from behind doors…in a house like this [she said] there must be a lot of unannounced visitors at all hours, she said, we'll buy a church table to eat on, we'll buy iron utensils…[but he was just] a pitiful old man who was shaking with fever sitting on the stairs thinking without love mother of mine Bendicion Alvarado so that was the whole mess, damn it, so power was that house of castaways, that human smell of burned horses… (240)

This extended passage, while long, is merely an excerpt from one sentence in his novel. Here one can see Marquez's stylistic continuity with Faulkner's prose in which words continue unimpeded in a stream-of-consciousness-like flow. Other critics have

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[9] Sutpen's childhood cabin is comprised of "the rough partly rotten log walls, the sagging roof whose missing shingles they did not replace but just set pans and buckets under the leaks, the leanto room which they used for kitchens and which was all right because in good weather it didn't even matter that it had no chimney since they did not attempt to use it at all when it rained…" (190). After calling this "home," Sutpen is determined never to do so again. No doubt Faulkner shared his sentiments.

noted similarities between the structural arrangement between Faulkner and Marquez's texts. William Plummer writes: "The first thing one notices about [Marquez's] *Leafstorm* is the way the spontaneous spill is channeled. The narrative mode is lifted, quite without embarrassment, from *The Sound and the Fury* (and *As I Lay Dying*)" (133). This flowing narrative, with little recourse to traditional modes of linear, organized storytelling, is as indicative of the "troubled structure" of Marquez and Faulkner as the architectural structures in their fiction. What is so important about the above passage is how it embodies both of the meanings of "troubled structure" simultaneously. The unfurnished, incomplete interior of the palace serves as a symbol for the relative newness of the dictator's power in the novel, even though the quotation above features the dictator ("a pitiful old man") recalling an earlier point of his life. Like Sutpen, the dictator's dwelling at first is unfurnished. This leads the critic William T. Ruzicka (1987) to state in *Faulkner's Fictive Architecture*:

> Though a strictly practical man would say that Sutpen lives without that which he has no need of, it is closer to the truth to say Sutpen lives without that he exhibits what the philosopher Frederick Wilhelmsen calls ontological poverty. He has no sense for the meaningful and cares nothing for that which he needs to live fully; he possesses things not to enjoy them but only to have acquired them. The things of existence in the Sutpen mansion are eventually acquired, of course,but only because Sutpen knows he needs them to gain a wife; or, as Compson has it, 'not the least of which furniture was that wedding license.' (50)

In both Marquez and Faulkner the dwelling comes to reflect and represent the man who not only dwells but has something to do with the very conception of that dwelling as a dwelling. It stands in for him, and is connected to him, as though he were part of it. Marquez writes: "…he locked himself up until death in the run-down palace…" (119). This passage suggests that a dwelling is a reflection of its inhabitant, so that as the dictator ages (and loses power), so does his palace lose its luster. Sutpen's dwelling takes on an even more lively quality:

> …as though his [Sutpen's] presence alone compelled that house to accept and retain human life; as though houses actually possess a sentience, a personality and character acquired not from the people who breathe or have breathed in them so much as rather inherent in the wood and brick or begotten up the wood and brick by the man or men who conceived and built them – in this one an incontrovertible affirmation for emptiness, desertion; an insurmountable resistance to occupancy save when sanctioned and protected by the ruthless and the strong. (67)

It is at this point that one observes a noticeable difference between the novels. The dictator in Marquez's novel inherited the presidential palace whereas Faulkner's Sutpen "begot" his dwelling. Faulkner's prose here suggests much more than one might initially suspect. Faulkner's theory of architecture – predicated on the idea that one might bring a dwelling into the world like one brings a child into being – can be analyzed by closely analyzing the dwellings of the two novels in tandem.

In Faulkner's text, most narrative elements have an explanation that one can deduce from the knowable "laws of the universe." The one element that might arguably fill this

opening would be the sentience of Sutpen's dwelling itself, and indeed, Sutpen's dwelling nods toward magical realism – an effect that is extended in developed in Marquez's presidential palace.

> The first time they had found him had been at the beginning of his autumn, the nation was still lively enough for him to feel menaced by death even in the solitude of his bedroom, and still he governed as if he knew he was predestined never to die, but at that time it did not look like a presidential palace but rather a marketplace where a person had to make his way through barefoot orderlies unloading vegetables and chicken cages from donkeys in the corridors, stepping over beggar women with famished godchildren who were sleeping in a huddle on the stairs awaiting the miracle of official charity, it was necessary to elude the flow of dirty water from the foul-mouthed concubines who were putting fresh flowers in the vases of the place of nocturnal flowers and swabbing the floor and singing songs of illusory loves to the rhythm of the dry branches that beat rugs on the balconies and all of it in the midst of the uproar of tenured civil servants who found hens laying eggs in desk drawers, and the traffic of whores and soldiers in the toilets, and a tumult of birds, and the fighting of street dogs in the midst of audiences because no one knew who was who or by whom in that palace with open doors in the grand disorder of which it was impossible to locate the government. (6)

The evolution of the presidential palace demonstrates the constructed-ness of things. In other words, dwellings are metamorphic: they are subject to change and alter, often as a reflection of the very "outside world" which they supposedly shield one against, and in relation to the figures of power that inhabit them. For example, Sutpen's "big house" of fear as a child later becomes Sutpen's Hundred, and thus his ruin. The transitory nature of things is also captured by Marquez in the above passage. Notice how the presidential palace becomes the beating heart of life in the city. It is frequented by concubines, soldiers, and beggar women, and includes the seemingly contradictory activities of cleanliness (flowers, beating rugs) and dirtiness (marketplace, disorder, dirty water). The liveliness of the presidential palace as it is described above (when the dictator was alive) offers a stark contrast to the palace as it lies dormant and decaying in the opening paragraph of the novel (when the dictator is dead). Secondly, and most important to my analysis here, is the fact that Marquez's novel does not take on a life of its own: it is not inscribed with what Ruzicka(1987) calls a "sentient quality, its knowing perception and memory" (51).

Rosa Coldfield tells us of the house: "Something ate with us; we talked to it and it answered questions" (129). Quentin, facing the dark of the house, experiences it thus: "…the dark room which he faced repeated his name with hollow profundity, as an unfurnished room will" (294). Initially, the scene where Quentin breaks into Sutpen's old house is not unlike the opening scene of Marquez's novel where the nameless "we" are breaking into the broken-down palace. The difference here, of course, is that Marquez's palace does not speak while Faulkner's edifice verges on it. Sutpen's Hundred, when lit on fire at the end of the novel, "bellowed, something human since the bellowing was human speech, even though the reason for it would not have seemed to be" (300).

> And not only an architect, as General Compson said, but an artist since only an artist could have borne those two years in order to build a house which he doubtless not only expected but firmly intended never to see again…that only an artist could have borne Sutpen's ruthlessness and hurry and still manage to curb the dream of grim and castlelike magnificence at which Sutpen obviously aimed, since the place as Sutpen planned it would have been almost as large as Jefferson itself at the time…" (29)

Sutpen hired an architect because he knew that he didn't have the understanding to build a structure, let alone one that would be "almost as large as Jefferson." There exists a tension here between artistic license (found in the architect who must negotiate the question of how to build a structure in a relationship with its surroundings) and Sutpen's "ruthlessness," and desire to build the home as large as possible. "The mansion is not built to be a dwelling but to be a possession, not a place but an appropriated object. Existence within it is not permitted to become meaning, nor is the house permitted to give itself to man. Hence it resists dwelling" (Ruzicka 1987, 53).

In *Absalom, Absalom!* this tension is built into the frame of the house, and the irreconcilable nature of this tension is what ultimately tears the family – and the home – apart. This tension is also reflected in Sutpen's children who do ultimately destroy his notion of a "grand design." On one hand is the "artistry" of creation, whether it be the creation of another human being (and thus maintaining a bloodline) or building a structure. Behind that, in Sutpen's case, is the ruthless desire to forge a legacy at any cost, and this includes the ignoring the consequences that "begetting" too many children might have, which is, as Frederick Wilhelmsen states, exactly the "ontological poverty" of Sutpen's imagination. Sutpen tells Quentin's grandfather "how he had to put his first wife aside like eleventh and twelvth century kings did: 'I found that she was not and could never be, though no fault of her own, adjunctive or incremental to the design which I had in my mind, so I provided for her and put her aside'" (194). Sutpen sees people as tools, and their usefulness is predicated on how well they fit into his idea of how things should be. This, Sutpen's desire to be God-like, is for Faulkner a crime that cannot escape karmic consequences. Sutpen's carelessness ultimately causes him his life at the hands of Wash Jones who will not allow him to treat his 15-years-old daughter as just another tool just because she has a daughter instead of a son. In the same way, the house becomes yet another one of Sutpen's children, merely a tool for accomplishing certain ends. In this way, it too is troubled, and its destruction at the end of the novel swallows the remainder of Sutpen's bloodline, forever ending any possibility of his genes propagating on earth.

While Marquez certainly demonstrates an indebtedness to Faulkner in his novels, one cannot help but to wonder if the passage below from Autumn of the Patriarch is a direct nod to *Absalom, Absalom!* The dictator has a dream of being stabbed by men with butcher knives. After he wakes up,

> …all of a sudden and with no wind blowing all the windows in the presidential palace opened up and they were in fact the same number as the wounds in the dream, twenty-three, a terrifying coincidence which had its culmination that week with an attack on the senate and the supreme court by corsairs along with the cooperative indifference of the armed forces, the august home of our original patriotic forebears was burned to the ground and the flames could be seen until very late in the night from the presidential balcony, but he did not change his expression with the news general sir

> that they had not even spared the foundation stones, he promised us an exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of the attack who never appeared, he promised us that he would rebuild an exact replica of the house of our forebears but its blackened ruins remained down to our times… (86).

The mention of an "august home" being "burned to the ground" is highly evocative of *Absalom, Absalom!* As a sort of nod to Faulkner, foundation stones are mentioned as being destroyed, very similar to the foundation which was evoked in Faulkner's characterization of Sutpen's mansion and Rowan Oak – both of which were built by slaves. Here again the dictator's mansion symbolizes a troubled patriarchal history, like Sutpen's mansion stands as a symbol of the old South. The promise of an exact replica of the palace – never acted on formally by the dictator in Márquez's novel – evokes nostalgia for the past, and the effort of the patriarch to cement his "legacy." The theme of *reconstruction* is a critical motif here, both in the sense of the history that Shreve and Quentin retell and the sense that "the people" (a collective narration) evoke in Marquez's stream-of-consciousness narrative about the patriarch's rise and fall. It is also apparent in the restoration work Faulkner undertook at Rowan Oak as it is evident in Marquez's rearticulation of Faulkner's style, a sort of Latin American palimpsest that traces roughly the lines of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha county. At the same time, Marquez's writing offers its own originality and unique insights that reflect a particular time and place – a particular national history that is unique to him and therefore limits any claim of influence. Both Marquez and Faulkner argue that within an attempt to grapple with history, an uncritical nostalgia is inevitable within every generation, and that this is something that ultimately must be resisted. The foundation of history on which a sense of identity rests – built on a will to power over the marginalized – must be laid bare by literature. The troubled structures of Marquez and Faulkner seek to unveil the trauma of history via the symbolism of architecture, while they simultaneously reflect the autobiographical accomplishments, struggles, and unique national as well as cultural inheritances of their authors.

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