

STOPPED CLOCKS: TIME AND SPACE IN WILLIAM FAULKNER AND AUTRAN DOURADO

Helen OAKLEY ¹

- RESUMO: A relação de William Faulkner com a ficção latino-americana tem sido objeto de muita discussão nas últimas décadas. Esta tendência crítica, tanto por parte de críticos norte-americanos como de críticos latino-americanos, representa em crescente reconhecimento da importância do estudo dos vínculos entre a cultura e a ficção norte-americanas e a América Latina. Um escritor cuja obra claramente ecoa a de Faulkner é o brasileiro Autran Dourado, embora permaneça ainda permanece inexplorada. Minha comparação de *Ópera dos mortos*, de Dourado, com os contos "Elly" e "O broche", de Faulkner, investigará como o trabalho dos dois escritores emerge de uma era de crise social. Examinando a função dos símbolos visuais-chave presentes nos textos, pretendo demonstrar como o fardo do tempo histórico sobre as personagens resulta em seu aprisionamento psicológico e numa subsequente necessidade de escape por meio da violência física e da transgressão sexual.
- PALAVRA-CHAVE: Autran Dourado; Ficção latino-americana; tempo; William Faulkner.

In 1954, William Faulkner participated on a trip to São Paulo, which was organized by the U.S. government in order

¹ Associedte lecturer at the Open University in the East Midlands – UK – E-mail: hcoakleyuk@yahoo.co.uk

to further good relations between Brazil and the United States.² Given the fact that Faulkner actually visited Brazil, and that his rural Southern background in some ways resembles the plantation economies and racially conflicted nature of various Latin American countries, it is not surprising that his work has been linked to Latin American fiction. Faulkner has been most frequently compared to Spanish American authors, but in recent decades a smaller, yet significant, body of criticism has focused upon his connections with Brazilian fiction.³ One Brazilian writer who clearly parallels Faulkner is Autran Dourado, whose fiction is set mainly in Minas Gerais, an area of Brazil which could be said to echo Faulkner's U.S. South. Dourado charts the decay of an old order of land-holding aristocracy in the early twentieth century, in a similar fashion to Faulkner. Some critics of Dourado have made allusions to Faulkner, but as yet the comparison has received little attention.⁴ Dourado's novel, *Ópera dos mortos* (*The Voices of the Dead*), published in 1967, tells the story of Rosalina, who lives incarcerated in her ancestors' house, in which she and her maid servant attempt to shut out the local community and the encroachment of time. Two short stories by Faulkner, entitled "Elly" and "The Brooch", also describe their heroines' confinement by means of familial pressures; and in all cases attempts to rebel on the part of the respective heroines lead inexorably to madness

² See George Monteiro, "Faulkner in Brazil" (1983). Monteiro gives an account of the trip, which despite Faulkner's continual drunkenness, was largely successful. In particular, Faulkner seemed keen to express his views on race.

³ Recent criticism which links Faulkner to Brazilian fiction includes the following: Daniel C. Richardson, "Towards Faulkner's Presence in Brazil: Race, History, and Place in Faulkner and Amado", (2000); Luiz-Fernando Valente, "Marriages of Speaking and Hearing: Meditation and Response in *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Grande sertão: veredas*". (1995 - 1996).

⁴ Daphne Patai (1983) discusses Dourado's *A barca dos homens* (*Ship of Fools*) in relation to Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. She views Faulkner's mentally retarded character, Benjy, as a kind of Christ-figure, who parallels Dourado's Fortunato, who performs the role of the fool.

and death.⁵ My analysis of Faulkner and Dourado will explore the ways in which visual symbols within the texts signify forces of entrapment, but also how the complex depiction of time illustrates the disruption of class and racial power relationships at a transitional point of history.

In order to appreciate the way in which Dourado and Faulkner manipulate space and time in their fiction, it is first necessary to briefly outline the historical context which informed their work. Autran Dourado's novel can be read in terms of a double historical perspective. He wrote *The Voices of the Dead* in the 1960s, at a very turbulent time in Brazilian history. In 1964, the military obtained power, an event which caused physical violence and severe suppression of radical cultural activity.⁶ It is possible to view the metaphors of imprisonment which pervade Dourado's *The Voices of the Dead* as to some extent resonating with the forces of oppression which were being exercised contemporary with the writing of the novel.

However, the main focus of *The Voices of the Dead* is more ostensibly concentrated upon an earlier period of Brazilian history, following on from the founding of the republic and abolition of slavery in the 1880s, into the early twentieth century. As Edwin Williamson (1992, p. 411) notes, despite the institution of the republic, unequal and autocratic methods of local government prevailed in many areas: "Within states, politics remained a contest between clans, with each province having its own pyramid of power which reached down to the localities through a hierarchy of political bosses known as colonels or *coronéis*." Furthermore, unrest in rural areas was caused by resentment of the onset of capitalism, the decline

⁵ See also Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily", *William Faulkner: Collected Stories* (1995). This most famous of Faulkner's short stories contains thematic parallels with the two lesser known stories under discussion in this article. Emily shuts herself up in her house after the death of her father and refuses to pay her taxes. She is finally discovered after her own death to have been living with the rotting corpse of her lover, Homer Barron, whom she has poisoned.

⁶ For a discussion of the cultural effects of this regime see Roberto Schwartz, "Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964 - 1969" (1992).

in the sugar plantations, and the rife of banditry (WILLIAMSON, p. 412). Brazil at the turn of the century was therefore at a transitional stage in its history, and it is this resistance to social change and the subsequent breakdown on the part of the patriarchal land-holding class which dominates *The Voices of the Dead*.

Faulkner began writing fiction in the 1920s, and he continued on until the 1960s, but much of his work has to do with the history of the U.S. South in the early years of the twentieth century. Faulkner famously had a love-hate relationship with Mississippi, the region in which he grew up. As Richard Gray (1996, p. 16) points out, in the early twentieth century the U.S. South underwent "a disorienting transition from one inequitable system of production to another." This was precipitated by the gradual shift from an agricultural economy, dominated by cotton, to a society in which capitalism and industrialization became more important forces. The U.S. South, like Brazil, was burdened with economic poverty and the legacy of slavery, added to which was its defeat in the Civil War. Faulkner's fiction, like Dourado's, is largely rural, and it also documents the way in which the survival of established dynasties is placed under threat by their own violent behaviour and inability to adapt to social change. It is significant to note at this point that the social and cultural affinities between the U.S. South and Brazil are also relevant to a comparison between Faulkner and another Brazilian writer, José Lins do Rêgo.⁷

The key spatial structure which unites Dourado's *The Voices of the Dead* with Faulkner's two short stories is that of the house, which functions as a symbol of the patriarchal and aristocratic heritage of the families from which the respective heroines are descended. In all cases the central heroine is to an extent trapped in the house, on physical, psychological, and historical levels.

In *The Voices of the Dead* Rosalina remains in the house

⁷ See Arline R. Standley, "Here and There: Now and Then" (1986). Standley points out how both writers can be seen in the context of decaying plantation societies, which are in the process of shifting from a paternalistic form of governance towards a new social infrastructure.

after the deaths of her father and grandfather, with only her old deaf maid servant, Quiquina, for company. Her grandfather, Lucas Procópio, had been a colonel who had exercised control over large tracts of land, and his family became the major ruling clan of the region. A great deal of attention is focused upon providing a visual picture of the house, which has two floors. As Jeremy E. Pollock-Chagas (1975, p. 265) notes, the first floor appears to be "baroque", and it has been built by Rosalina's grandfather, who can be described as "a rough-hewn, uncouth tyrant and libertine, in many ways closely resembling Faulkner's Thomas Sutpen."⁸ The second floor, on the other hand, has been constructed by Rosalina's father, João Capistrano, whose "airy, light, European" style of architecture represents his more "dignified, serious" personality (POLLOCK-CHAGAS, p. 265). The portraits of these two men are placed in prominent positions within the house, and they exert a powerful influence over Rosalina, long after their death. The description of the house itself invokes a sense of an old aristocratic tradition which is resistant to change, yet which is inevitably decaying. It is described as follows:

It still preserves its stately, aristocratic bearing, the manorial air that time hasn't altogether worn away. The paint of the windows and the door is faded with age, the plaster has fallen away in places like great sores to reveal the stones, bricks and laths of its flesh and bones, made to last a lifetime.⁹

Thus, the house is deeply emblematic of the state of historical transition alluded to earlier. The fact that the house is likened to a physical body heightens the close ties between the inanimate building and its occupants. Rosalina herself can also be viewed as a rather "transitional" figure. The ambiguity of her

⁸ Thomas Sutpen is the central protagonist in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* He is also a tyrannical landowner who sleeps with his slaves and causes the family to eventually break apart.

⁹ Autran Dourado, *The Voices of the Dead* (1980), p. 13. Hereafter, all quotations from *The Voices of the Dead* will be merely indicated in the text, with the page numbers in parenthesis.

physical appearance heightens the fluidity of her relationship with history: "And then she never looked her proper age, he could never tell how old Dona Rosalina was. Every time he looked at her, she seemed to be a different age" (p. 122). It is her own choice to stay in the house after the death of her father, as she could have had the opportunity of escape in the form of marriage to her childhood sweetheart, Emmanuel. Her decision to remain in the house derives from a sense of family pride and honour instilled into her by her male ancestors. The matriarchal presence of Quiquina forms another potent link to the past generation, and despite her subordinate rank she is instrumental in aiding Rosalina in severing ties with the local community. Notwithstanding her allegiance to duty, Rosalina is deeply frustrated and anxious to break free: "She was turning into a thing, burying herself in a dark hole" (p. 91). The narcissistic nature of her existence is also highlighted by descriptions of her soul searching in front of the mirror: "And her eyes began to acquire a new brilliance, her reflection in the mirror blurred [...] But her eyes slowly filled with tears" (p. 91).

In Faulkner's "Elly" the heroine also appears to come from a well-off background, but she similarly feels herself to be a prisoner in the "bigish house" in which she lives with her mother and father and grandmother.¹⁰ Elly is described as restlessly roaming through the house, whose interior symbolizes the monotony of her existence: "yet Elly seemed to herself to move quietly and aimlessly, in a hiatus without thought or sense, from empty room to empty room giving upon an identical prospect too familiar and too peaceful to be even saddening any longer" (p. 214). Like Rosalina, Elly is also pictured as gazing agonizingly into the mirror: "Sometimes at night she cried a little, though not often; now and then she examined her mouth in the glass and cried quietly, with quiet despair and resignation" (p. 213). Elly's deaf grandmother rules the house, in a similar manner to Quiquina in *The Voices of the Dead*. As Edmond L. Volpe (1989, p. 277) notes, the grandmother "serves as the embodiment of the traditions and

¹⁰ William Faulkner, "Elly", *William Faulkner: Collected Stories* (1995), p. 208. Hereafter, all quotations from Faulkner's "Elly" will be merely indicated in the text, with the page numbers in parenthesis.

codes that Elly hates." Elly herself has an even more heightened sense of her own frustration than Rosalina: "What else can I do, in this little dead, hopeless town?" (p. 212). Elly is engaged to "a grave, sober young man of impeccable character", who is reminiscent of Emmanuel in *The Voices of the Dead*, but in a similar manner to Rosalina, Elly does not take the opportunity to marry him and free herself from her grandmother's presence (p. 213). Throughout the course of the story Elly becomes more violently rebellious than Rosalina, but she is equally obsessed and ultimately constrained by the demands placed on her by the older generation.

"The Brooch" centres on a married couple, Amy and Howard, who live with the latter's disabled mother, "the daughter of a well-to-do merchant", who has been abandoned by her husband.¹¹ They live together in a house which is described as "decaying", in a similar manner to the house in *The Voices of the Dead* (p. 649). Their child has died, an event which parallels the eventual fate of Rosalina. Amy is anxious to escape from the house and start a life elsewhere, but Howard refuses to move as he feels a sense of filial obligation. Amy's sense of entrapment within the house parallels that of Elly and Rosalina, and it also signifies the stifling environment of the small town in which she lives. She is described as "a vivid, daring girl whose later reputation was due more to folly and the caste handicap of the little Southern town than to badness and which at the last was doubtless more smoke than fire" (p. 648). The house also has two floors, and every time the couple enter or exit the house they are forced to cross the path of the watchful mother, Mrs Boyd, who occupies the first floor. Mrs Boyd's patriarchal control of the house can be compared to Quiquina's in *The Voices of the Dead* and to the grandmother in "Elly." In addition to her lack of freedom of movement, Amy is also forced to wear a brooch given to her by Mrs Boyd, which is a family heirloom that comes to signify for Amy the pressure of conforming to the expectations of

¹¹ William Faulkner, "The Brooch", *William Faulkner: Collected Stories* (London: Vintage, 1995) 647-665 (647). Hereafter, all quotations from "The Brooch" will be merely indicated in the text, with the page numbers in parenthesis.

the previous generation. Amy, like Rosalina and Elly, is a conflicted heroine who struggles to reconcile family duty with individual desires.

In addition to the spatial structure of the house, the symbol of the clock in all the texts under consideration illustrates the protagonists' inability to break away from the forces of history. Paul Ricoeur (1985, p. 106) has made the distinction between what he terms "chronological time" and "monumental time."¹² He states that "chronological time" is merely the "audible expression" of "monumental time", and that "the official time with which the characters are confronted is not only this time of clocks but all that is in complicity with it" (RICOEUR, p. 106). Monumental time therefore is closely allied to the potentially imprisoning power of history: "Clock time, the time of monumental history, the time of authority-figures - the same time!" (RICOEUR, p. 106). In all the stories under discussion the characters are acutely conscious of chronological time, and in a number of cases they attempt to manipulate it by literally stopping the clocks. However, it is monumental time, or the time of history, from which they cannot so easily escape.

In *The Voices of the Dead* recurrent references are made to the symbol of the clock. Although we are allowed inside the consciousness of the characters at key points in the narrative, most of the novel is narrated by an unnamed voice who represents the collective consciousness of the town. At the opening of the book the narrator self-consciously invites the reader to enter a different time dimension: "Go back in time, turn the clock back, come with me in your imagination" (p. 13 - 14). There is a sense created that the events within the story took place a long time ago in the past, and this retrospective dimension makes the reader even more acutely aware of the subsequent references to time and their historical implications.

When Rosalina's grandfather dies, her father reacts to the situation by stopping a clock: "He made straight for the huge grandfather clock, the one I told you about, and stopped the pendulum" (p. 40). Similarly, when Rosalina's father dies,

¹² Ricoeur invokes this terminology in his discussion of the significance of Big Ben in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*.

and when she herself finally goes mad at the end, clocks are also stopped. Maria Lúcia Lepecki (1976, p. 115 - 116) views the image of the stopped clock in *The Voices of the Dead* as symbolic of the key protagonists' negation of historicity. She argues that the characters in the novel all negate themselves in one way or another. I agree with the broad terms of her argument, but I would qualify this statement by invoking the distinction that Ricoeur has set up between chronological and monumental or historical time. The stopping of the clocks illustrates the characters' attempts to ignore the linear progression of chronological time, to pretend that nothing has changed, and by doing so to protect their family heritage. However, the time of history, which is associated with powerful authority figures, is an irresistible force which haunts and imprisons Rosalina.

In "The Brooch" the symbol of the clock is also a powerful force. Mrs Boyd is said to have stopped one of the clocks "at ten minutes to four" several years ago (p. 655). Like Rosalina, she appears to be trying to shut out chronological time, but instead she is imposing her own sense of monumental or historical time, and the value system encapsulated by it, onto Howard and Amy. Amy is the only character within the house who is engaged with chronological time, and it is significant that on the crucial evening when she arrives back very late to the house after her dancing, much emphasis is placed on the insistent ticking of the clock, which begins to oppress Howard, who is waiting for her: "Then he began to hear the clock on the mantel, reiterant, cold, not loud" (p. 657). The extent to which Howard has been imprisoned by his mother's imposition of her own perspective of historical time onto him, is revealed by his action of literally arresting and shifting the physical location of the clock: "He stopped the clock and turned its face to the wall and brought his book to the fire and found that he could now keep his mind on the words, the sense, reading on now untroubled by time" (p. 657).

In "Elly" again the symbolism of clocks is of paramount importance. The heroine is asked to drive to her uncle's house, in which her grandmother is staying temporarily, and bring her back home. The grandmother, rather like Mrs Boyd, tries to force her vision of historical time onto Elly. It is significant that in

the scene which takes place at night after Elly has arrived at her uncle's house, repeated stress is placed upon the clock in the house. At this point Elly is seriously contemplating the possibility of actually killing her grandmother, and thereby annihilating all the values which she embodies. Elly is acutely aware of chronological time, and it is the striking of the clock which has the effect of spurring her into a verbal confrontation with her grandmother: "Then a clock in the hall struck eleven, and she moved" (p. 217). The argument between them continues, punctuated with references to the clock striking twelve, half past twelve, and then two. Neither character actually tries to stop the clock, as in *The Voices of the Dead* and "The Brooch", but the intrusive sound of the clock in the background reveals Elly's need to embrace chronological time and break free of the burden of monumental time which her grandmother embodies.

Having established the function of the visual symbols of the house and clock as signifiers of oppression, the next aspect of the stories to be considered is to what extent the heroines are able to challenge their imprisonment both in a physical and historical sense. In the case of Autran Dourado's novel and Faulkner's short stories, the only form of escape that the heroines seem to be able to undertake is through the form of a sexual transgression, by means of breaking race and class taboos.

Rosalina, in *The Voices of the Dead*, engages in an illicit affair with José Feliciano, a labourer from out of town, whose entry into the house disturbs the equilibrium of its structure and also serves to challenge the view of historical or monumental time which Rosalina and Quiquina both perpetuate. Rosalina paradoxically both asserts control over him yet allows her to be taken advantage of and seduced. The initial seduction scene is witnessed and strongly disapproved of by Quiquina, and the recurrent reference to the image of her watching them both haunts the characters: "Quiquina in the doorway. The empty door. Nobody" (p. 148). Rosalina is unable to bring herself to end the affair, but by pursuing it she is plagued with guilt that in some sense she has betrayed Quiquina, or rather the historical weight of expectations that she represents. The relationship between Rosalina and José Feliciano is often evoked in terms of hunting metaphors, and his nickname is Joey Bird: "She had to clip his wings, he needed to know his

place: she was the mistress, he was just a servant" (p. 88). The sex between them is described in a very animalistically: "At night, in bed with that one-eyed pig, she was Mr Lucas, rutting like a stallion" (p. 230). When referring to José Feliciano Quiquina keeps drawing attention to his blind eye, as if his physical deformity transparently reflected his inferior rank. José Feliciano is closely linked to the land, and by copulating with him Rosalina is in a sense symbolically asserting control over the land and reaffirming the class hierarchy of the social structure perpetuated by her ancestors. However, José Feliciano's instigation of the affair, and the repeated references to his role as a hunter, also have the effect of challenging Rosalina's control, and persistently undermining the class hierarchy which she wants to maintain.

The arrival and death of their baby, and José Feliciano's flight from the house, do not result in a return to the status quo. José Feliciano can be seen as the agent of disruption, who forces an awareness of chronological time back into the house. Their relationship has the effect of seriously destabilizing class power relationships, and Rosalina's mental breakdown at the end of the novel causes her control over the land (symbolized by the physical space of the house) to evaporate as she is committed to an asylum. Attempts on the part of Rosalina to escape the imprisonment of her existence are therefore ultimately unsuccessful. Although the ending of the novel certainly precipitates a sense of historical change, in the form of the demise of the landed gentry, it would be erroneous to presume that a clear-cut linear progression was taking place. As Malcolm Silverman (1976, p. 619) notes, Dourado prefers to strike a note of uncertainty: "Dourado's is an endless, repetitive and cyclical drama, and for this reason he deliberately leaves protagonists and settings open-ended." Rather, the union between the two central characters culminates in a painful sense of a historical transition whose outcome is unresolved.

In "Elly", as in *The Voices of the Dead*, the heroine tries to break out of her stifling environment by means of a sexual transgression, but in her case the emphasis is more upon crossing racial rather than class boundaries. In order to shock her grandmother, shortly before her planned wedding she starts a liaison with Paul, a man who is said to have negro blood. His

physical appearance is described in such a way as to make his supposed racial difference almost seem a deformity, rather in the way that José Feliciano's blind eye is viewed as a physical manifestation of his inferiority in class: "You didn't notice his hair then. Like a knitted cap. And his lips. Blubber, almost" (p. 209). Elly takes him on the car journey to fetch the grandmother, who witnesses their union, therefore forming a parallel to Quiquina's discovery of Rosalina's seduction experience: "The grandmother stood just behind and above them. When she had arrived, how long she had been there, they did not know" (p. 211). Their sexual relationship is depicted as violent and animalistic, in a manner which echoes *The Voices of the Dead*. Elly's insistent pleas to Paul to marry her and cooperate in her plan to kill the grandmother result in a high degree of sexually charged tension, as for example revealed here: "In the instant of striking her his hand, as though refusing of its own volition the office, opened and touched her face in a long, shuddering motion almost a caress" (p. 221).

Elly's culminating act of forcing the car off the road, which results in the death of both Paul and her grandmother, for a brief moment seems to offer her the freedom which she craves: "When the car struck the railing it flung her free, so that for an instant she lay lightly as an alighting bird upon Paul's chest, her mouth open, her eyes round with shocked surprise" (p. 223). However, the final vision of her sitting on the roadside stained with blood and waiting for cars which won't stop, does not give the impression that she has emancipated herself in a positive way from her former existence. She has instead undergone a mental breakdown which parallels Rosalina's in *The Voices of the Dead*. Furthermore, as Noel Polk (1984, p.83-84) notes, Elly's murderous intentions towards her grandmother could be said to result from her own masochistic desire to be punished for her sexual transgression. The death of the grandmother may signal the expiration of the old era to which she belongs, but by this point Elly is unable to connect either with chronological or historical time. The images of the wrecked car and blood stained bodies at the end of this story indicate the dawn of a new mechanized civilization, and the shattered glass is a transformative image which implies the crumbling of the past, yet the equally destructive power of

the future. Significantly, the final vision with which we are presented in *The Voices of the Dead* is that of Rosalina being taken away in a car. As with Autran Dourado, at the end of this story Faulkner leaves us with transitional images which raise more questions than they resolve.

In "The Brooch" Amy endeavours to escape from the dull monotony of her existence by means of her evenings out dancing. Although the concept of a sexual transgression is not made so explicit as in "Elly" or in *The Voices of the Dead*, it is implied that she could have been unfaithful, as she has lied to Howard about her whereabouts, and she has lost the brooch given to her by Mrs Boyd in the process. Although the nature of her alleged betrayal is never very clearly defined, it is enough for Mrs Boyd to exile her from the house and the familial structure, which parallels the fate of Elly and Rosalina. Also, Amy's relationship with her husband becomes increasingly frictive, as her frustration mounts and her mental stability begins to crack. Similarly, there is a reckless animalistic quality to her interaction with Howard: "he heard and then felt her cross the intervening gap and fling herself against him again with that wild terrified abandon" (p. 653).

Amy's challenge to Mrs Boyd's authority, like Elly's to her grandmother's, symbolizes the need for the heroine to integrate herself into chronological time and shake off the static weight of monumental history which the older woman represents. To an extent Amy is successful, as she is now free to leave the house and start an albeit uncertain life elsewhere. However, as in "Elly" and *The Voices of the Dead*, the heroine's actions form a catalyst for death and destruction, as the story culminates with Howard's implied suicide in the bathroom with the gun. In the act of emancipating herself Amy has ironically caused his further withdrawal into the claustrophobic power of his mother's influence. Like Rosalina, he has taken to secret drinking in order to alleviate his unhappiness, and the final scene in the bathroom almost suggests a desire on the part of Howard to retreat back into the womb: "But he did not hang the coverlet this time. He drew it over himself, squatting, huddling into it [...] wadding the thick soft coverlet about his head, hurrying, moving swiftly now because he was already beginning to suffocate" (p. 665).

This ending, as with the other two texts under discussion,

creates the sense of a period of history which is undergoing a metamorphosis. The eventual abandonment of Mrs Boyd by Amy and Howard will accelerate her demise, and that of the values associated with her. However, the image of the gun symbolizes the potential danger of a new more mechanized era, rather like the car in *Elly*, and it also indicates a crisis in masculinity. Howard is unable to cope with the challenge to traditional women's roles in society which Amy's actions represent, and his only method of escape is to retreat further into the prison house of the past, which finally annihilates him. It is significant that "Elly" finishes with the death of Paul and that *The Voices of the Dead* closes with the exile of José Feliciano. The transgression by these men of racial or class boundaries results in either their own physical destruction or mental anguish, while Howard's inability to exit the house represents an even more extreme failure to engage in any meaningful way with the outside world.

The fiction of Autran Dourado and William Faulkner is linked both in terms of the transitional nature of their respective historical contexts and also in the sense of the problematic familial and sexual relationships which the texts explore. The women and to some extent the men of the younger generation depicted in these stories are all entrapped by the burden of historical time forced upon them by their ancestors. The violation by the characters of racial and class barriers has the effect of undermining the established hierarchies of the societies in which they live, yet the desired personal freedom is to a large degree thwarted by their breakdown in mental stability and the subsequent physical violence which ensues as a result of any radical challenge to the status quo. Dourado and Faulkner offer a bleak view of the historical development of their regions, but they are not reactionary; rather, they offer an insight into unresolved psychological traumas induced by an era of social crisis.

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- **ABSTRACT:** *William Faulkner's relationship with Latin American fiction has been the subject of much debate in recent decades.*

*This critical trend on the part of both U.S. and Latin American critics represents a growing recognition of the importance of examining the links which bind U.S. fiction and culture with Latin America. One writer whose work clearly echoes that of Faulkner is the Brazilian, Autran Dourado, but as yet this relationship has been left largely unexplored. My comparison of Dourado's *The Voices of the Dead* with Faulkner's short stories "Elly" and "The Brooch" will investigate how the work of both writers emerges from an era of social crisis. By examining the function of key visual symbols within the texts I will demonstrate how the burden of historical time forced upon the characters results in their psychological entrapment and subsequent urge to escape by means of physical violence and sexual transgression.*

- KEYWORDS: *Autran Dourado; latin american fiction; literary inter-relations; time; William Faulkner.*

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