

The literature anthologized under the label "American Southern Gothic" should be described and a thorough definition of the term should be given before an examination of one aspect of Gothicism in selected works by Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy. To do so, it is necessary to separate the two components of the term and define each of them individually, i.e. we must deal first with the concepts of "Southern literature" and "Gothic art," and only then present a comprehensive definition of the joint category. According to Veronica Makowsky, in its most basic sense Southern literature is writing about the South, but this definition, as Makowsky herself admits, has many complications and thus she presents a more satisfying, theme-based definition: "Topically, Southern writing can concern the South or a Southerner's experience elsewhere, but it can also include a Southerner's writing on a non-Southern topic from a non-Southern point of view.,,1 As the quotation makes clear, it is not at all easy to define the literature of the South concisely and completely. It is best to say that all Southern writers share a common nature; the fact that they were born and raised in a region so much stigmatized by its past, burdened by military and economic defeat, caused that the artists show a distinct affinity both in the choice of subject matter and a way of handling it.