

## **Abstract**

This thesis traces the phenomenon of American Southern Gothic literature in relation to its most integral part: the exaggerated monstrosity. Even though the prevalent distorted images are usually associated with aesthetic decadence, their moral symbolism should not be neglected. Furthermore, since the Gothic tradition is congruent with the unconscious and irrational, the absence of any psychological interest poses a major limitation in the Southern studies. Drawing on this approach, the following thesis investigates the role of deformities in connection to the individual's mind. Thus, aside from the literary historical concerns that arise within the context of the American South, the main aim of this thesis is to determine whether there is a link between the distortion and psychological trauma of the Southern past. The selected topic is approached from an interdisciplinary point of view; apart from literary history (E.A. Poe, W. Faulkner), Freudian definition of unconsciousness will be likewise employed. I hereby hope my findings may significantly broaden and contribute to the conceptualization of deformities in regards to the context of the American South, more specifically within the historical, literary and psychological field of Southern studies.

Key words: American, South, Gothic, Deformity, Freud, Capote, O'Connor, Williams