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# Time In American High Modernism: Reading Fitzgerald, Hemingway, And Faulkner

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**TIME IN AMERICAN HIGH MODERNISM:  
READING FITZGERALD, HEMINGWAY, AND FAULKNER**

by

**MASAHIKO SEKI**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

2016

MAJOR: ENGLISH

Approved By:

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Advisor

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Date

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Tadashi and Youko Seki.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My thanks are due to all the professors at Wayne State University and the University of Tokyo whose classes I have taken. Especially, I would like to express my special appreciation toward my current and former committee members. Prof. Wasserman has kindly supported me since I first attended her class ten years ago. Without Prof. Maun's guidance and encouragement, I would have given up my project. I am grateful for the cooperation I have received from Prof. Hiraishi, who has been my mentor since when I was an undergraduate.

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## INTRODUCTION

Probably there have not been more drastic changes in the understanding of time than those that took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Especially in big cities of developed countries, the concept of time rapidly altered, reflecting various transformations in society, which I will relate in detail later. High modernism, the predominant artistic movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was also greatly influenced by these radical transformations of the understanding of time. Many high modernists keenly responded to this change, but their reactions were complex, almost self-contradicting, particularly in the case of American high modernists.

The concept of time proposed by the Enlightenment (linear and irreversible) gradually lost its hold in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in both the everyday and the academic worlds, with social changes contingent to the second Industrial Revolution and the publication of some philosophers' and scholars' new perspectives on time.<sup>1</sup> This transformation of the understanding of time accelerated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with further technological developments such as cars and movies and more attention to time by philosophers and scholars. Generally, after Newton's definition in 1687, time was considered to flow linearly and irreversibly and show a clear boundary between the past and the present, or the present and the future. People thought each time period was different and separate from the others, but time was still homogeneous for them, and they perceived time as progressing from the past, through the present, and to the future.

But technological developments and economic situations rapidly changed people's perception of time. Stephen Kern, in his book *The Culture of Time & Space 1880-1918*, points out the importance of the developments of "electric light and cinema" (29). The former blurs the border between day and night, and the latter "portrayed a variety of temporal

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<sup>1</sup> In *The Nick of Time*, Elisabeth Groetz names Darwin and Nietzsche as philosophers that cast doubt on the traditional understanding of time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She says that Darwin proposes open-endedness of time, and Nietzsche denies simple linearity of time with his idea of the eternal return.

phenomena that played with the uniformity and the irreversibility of time” (29). In addition, advances in various technologies, such as cars and the expansion of rail networks, seemed to increase the speed of everyday life.<sup>2</sup> Taylorism, which aims to increase working and manufacturing speed, was influential in this period as well.<sup>3</sup>

We cannot ignore the unprecedented economic abundance in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America, which was brought about by the second Industrial Revolution in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first major industrialization in America. In *Modernism and Time*, Ronald Schleifer traces the early 20<sup>th</sup> century transformation of the sense of time to the second Industrial Revolution, saying, “the overwhelming multiplication of commodities in the second Industrial Revolution transformed the experience of time for people living through it” (4). The proliferation of commodities changed individuals’ perception of time because “abundance is always momentary” and thus “the present moment had become paramount, rather than a conduit to the unending future of ongoing Newtonian time” (5). People’s consciousness was concentrated on the abundance in the roaring present, which changed the meaning of the present. As a result, time was no longer homogeneous. In the United States in the 1920s, when material abundance peaked, this transformation in the sense of time reached its first climax. Schleifer points out that people moved away from a strictly Newtonian view of time due to this new experience. By “Newtonian time” he means “an autonomous, homogeneous flow [of time] in a single direction” (38), which had been a typical understanding of time since the Enlightenment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In a developed capitalist society, in which “place” becomes mere “space” deprived of its uniqueness, how to move matters more than where to go. In *The Speed Handbook*, Enda Duffy shows how speed became an object of mass enjoyment in American society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He also points out that high modernist writers were not in favor of this exploration of speed (except for the futurists), and speed often has an ominous implication in their works.

<sup>3</sup> We can discern the influence of the former in Thomas Wolfe’s works and that of the latter in Hemingway’s. Wolfe was attracted to the speed of the train, and Hemingway often created a protagonist who puts up with the speed of change and tries to hold his sense of value against it.

<sup>4</sup> Schleifer’s argument that each time period becomes heterogeneous as a consequence of the

In academic contexts, several philosophers and scientists tried to describe a new understanding of time. In *The Principles of Psychology* William James mentions the difficulty of recognizing the fleeting present and suggests the concept of “the specious present.” This “specious present,” which James also calls “the intuited duration,” is the realm of stream of consciousness, his famous idea, which had a great influence on the writing of several high modernist works. It exists between the present and the past, and immediate memories in the specious present have not been organized yet and are therefore more direct than organized memories of the past.

James’s theory provided a new view of the relationship between consciousness and time but still owed a lot to the existing understanding of time. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosophers and scientists began to engage in more radical reconsiderations of the perception of time. As Kern points out, Freud’s theory was prevalent in those days, and it holds that time does not flow in an orderly fashion in dreams and fantasies and clock time does not have a governing influence over the unconscious. Einstein’s relativity theory, which was published in 1905, also undermined the certainty of clock time. It demonstrated that time is relative and that there is no one absolute time to which we can refer from anywhere in the universe.

In *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, Husserl splits up the present into retention and protention. He assumes the present as a realm where some impressions retained in consciousness and anticipatory expectation merge. This rethinking of the present was shared by Heidegger. Heidegger emphasizes the importance of the future, and in his understanding of time, anticipation of the future constructs the present. Their theories diminished the importance of the present, the perception of which had always been taken for granted because presence always seemed to be linked with the present, and Heidegger totally

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transformation of the perception of time brought about by abundance is important for my discussion. For, as Schleifer implies about Walter Benjamin, it explains why high modernists tried to redeem the past by merging the present and the past. They needed to do so because the past and the present were decisively heterogeneous.

denied the linearity of time.

The philosopher who had the strongest impact on high modernist works is probably Henri Bergson. We can find his influence clearly in the works of Marcel Proust, T. S. Eliot, and Faulkner. Bergson strongly denies the importance of what he calls “spatialized time,” time that is schematized for us to understand it easily. He introduces the idea of “duration,” in which there is no border between the present and the past, or the future and the present. According to his theory, we refer to the past so constantly that we can almost say the past is present.

Because of these extensive revisions of the understanding of time in both the everyday and academic worlds, people, especially intellectuals, began to move away from the assumptions prevalent since the Enlightenment, and sought new expressions that fit their whole new experience.<sup>5</sup> In the literary world, high modernist writers no longer depended on a traditional model of the novel.<sup>6</sup> In terms of temporality in a novel, they made various attempts at representing a contemporary sense of time that I will be referring to as “confused.” They mainly paid more attention to the complexity of time, especially that of psychological or lived time, and denied the linearity of time. They also cast doubt on the idea that the past, the present, and the future are separate time periods and there are borders among them that one cannot transgress. As a result, the past, the present, and the future tend to overlap in their works, and time, as represented in them, comes close to Bergsonian duration in which everything merges.

But, at the same time, we should not ignore the fact that high modernist writers were in a transitional period in many ways. The “old” sense of value still remained in their works; it

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Futurism was the movement that began with an attempt to represent a wholly new sense of speed the new era made possible.

<sup>6</sup> By “high modernist writers,” I mean the writers between the First and the Second World War, who believed in the possibility of high culture which mass culture seemed to lack, and published a variety of experimental works that aimed to represent new experiences of their time. In my discussion, I mainly focus on American and British high modernists.

is especially discernible in the works of American high modernist writers, and the tension between the “new” and “old” sense of values generates interesting effects. The high modernists’ representation of time is, in a sense, often supported by romantic yearning, which they are supposed to refuse as belonging to the preceding era, and their works at the same time show uncertainty about time and express this romantic yearning for certain moments.<sup>7</sup>

High modernist writers in general tried to describe time that did not conform to the usual idea of the term. They tried to transcend it, as it were. If romanticism indicates someone’s attempt to transcend the environment in which he or she is trapped, high modernists’ attempt to transcend time from within time is romantic enough. Most of their works focus both on the importance of transcending time and the difficulty of doing so for characters who are trapped in an ordinary perception of time. For example, James Joyce’s “The Dead” offers a clearly romantic idea. After an ordinary day, the protagonist, Gabriel, begins to seek the “moments of ecstasy,” which can quench his or his wife’s soul (153). But what he is seeking comes to him in an unexpected way. Then he feels that “[h]is soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead,” and “[h]is own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling” (160). This revelation of his is compared to “the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead” (160). Here, Gabriel, who is trapped in a monotonous life and dreams of escaping from it, finally gains the romantic revelation, in which the worlds of the dead and the living merge, and he can momentarily transcend an ordinary progress of time. His soul is like the snow, which falls “upon all the living and the dead” from high above.

Frank Kermode indicates that some of the high modernists sought some unity, which

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<sup>7</sup> I bear in mind the works of Marcel Proust, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Willa Cather, Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner.

can be described as a “romantic image” somewhere beyond the normal flow of time. This image, according to Kermode’s explanation about Yeats’s longing for it, transcends space and time, and antithetical movements fuse in it. In Kermode’s example, “antithetical movements” are “the division of soul and body, form and matter, life and death, artist and audience” (72). But I would like to add something to this list. What I want to suggest in this dissertation is that the high modernist writers I will discuss had that longing for a “romantic image,” as Kermode says, and in the image they tried to unify temporalities as well as those opposites Kermode lists. By “temporalities” I mean each of the divisions of time - the past, the present, and the future - and ultimately old and new understandings of time. We can find this longing for the unity of time in Marcel Proust’s *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, T. S. Eliot’s “The Metaphysical Poets” and *Four Quartets*, and the works of the writers I will discuss: Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Ernest Hemingway’s stories, and William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*. American high modernism, as it emerged in these works, is of particular interest because, while it shares longing for a “romantic image” with “European” high modernism, it also strongly shows the opposite longing. This conflict gives a unique position to American high modernism, and representations of temporality by these three American writers show the difference between their perceptions of time and those of their predecessors. At the same time, they indicate how the representation of time developed in American high modernism.

I think this longing for temporal unity in high modernism is related to the isolation of the present as well as a changing understanding of time that allowed flexible ways of thinking about it. As Matei Calinescu says in *Five Faces of Modernity*, the present is the most important period for modernism,<sup>8</sup> and the works of American high modernist writers reflect

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<sup>8</sup> “With the break up of traditional aesthetic authority, time, change, and the self-consciousness of the present have tended increasingly to become sources of value in what Lionel Trilling once called . . . the ‘adversary culture’ of modernism” (4).

that. For example, Faulkner uses the stream of consciousness method in his novels like Joyce does, and Hemingway's signature narrative style seems to be concentrated on the description of the present. In his early novels Fitzgerald tried to describe the contemporary life of the rich and young. Intellectuals also began to assert the importance of the present. In *The Philosophy of the Present* (posthumously published in 1932), George Herbert Mead, an American philosopher, also focuses on the importance of the present.

But, from another perspective, this focus on the present has a rather negative aspect. Ronald Schleifer points out that for people living in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, time was no longer continuous. It was momentary, and every moment was unique. This discontinuity of time generated a sense that the past was lost and this leads to various artists' attempts at "a momentary gathering together of disparate phenomena rather than the continuities and identities" that preoccupied earlier writers (56). In *Modernism*, Tim Armstrong goes a step further and says that modern temporality is propelled by the dynamic relationship of past, present and future, bearing in mind Hegel's argument that history proceeds dialectically through the collapse of the past. But the First World War disrupted this relationship, and then the past became decisively lost. This is a problem because, according to Armstrong, the temporality of modernity consists of two elements: rejecting or subsuming and stabilizing the past, and anxiety about the future. "Frozen" time, generated by the disruption of this dynamic relationship, makes it almost impossible to subsume and stabilize the past. The present becomes isolated and frozen.

I think that is why high modernist writers sought unity of time while they emphasized the isolation of the present. The recognition of the isolation of the present and the longing for a unity of time are two sides of the same coin. The sense of a break between the present and the past, or the realization that the past has been decisively lost, triggered a nostalgic yearning for unified time. But this feeling is not wholly nostalgic; since high modernism attempted to

overcome prior artistic movements, high modernists could not return to an old scheme in an obvious manner. Rather, this rejection of the old understanding of time confirmed the newness of high modernists, as Ricardo Quinones says in *Mapping Literary Modernism*.<sup>9</sup>

So, we can say that a “romantic image” is a wise strategic choice for the writers who were in a transitional period and pressed both by the need to be new and by the yearning for the old scheme. It achieves unity of time in a completely new way. A “romantic image” is partly new and, as the name implies, partly old, and it is where the new and old are unified. The works of the writers I will discuss embrace a romantic impulse for this image that is represented for a brief moment in spite of a sober realization of the frozen present.

It is interesting that there are differences among high modernist writers about when this romantic image is expected to be achieved. There is no clear demarcation, but European writers such as Joyce, T. S. Eliot<sup>10</sup>, and Proust try to achieve it in the present while American writers such as Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner tend to link a romantic moment with the past. As a result, in the works of American high modernists, conflict and coexistence of the new and old are more visible.

As Aleida Assmann says, Eliot stresses the importance of tradition, in which the old and the new are unified.<sup>11</sup> But his focus is on the present because “we cannot know the past as such; we can only access it by reconstructing it in the present” (21). In fact, *The Waste Land* describes things from the past and things in the present by using a collage technique, and it ends with a figure of a man fishing in London in the present. The poem, which begins

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<sup>9</sup> Quinones argues that in the Renaissance history began to replace myth as a prevalent understanding of time. People sought redemption in “a stream of continuity” provided by history. But what modernists refused was this continuity – not only continuity but also other social systems that secured it such as marriage, family, children, and fame.

<sup>10</sup> Eliot was born in and grew up in America until he graduated from university. But he converted to Anglicanism and took British citizenship in 1927. After that, he mostly lived in England.

<sup>11</sup> “Like Foster, Eliot deconstructs the framework of chronology which had been the backbone of historicist thinking. . . . He stresses the internal dynamics of a system which is built on the co-adaptation of the old and the new” (20).

with the image of a desolate landscape of the present day, goes through a collage-like part and again ends with the description of the desolateness in present-day London. It gives us the impression that the poem revolves around the present.

The focus on the present is clearer in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In Chapter 4, Stephen, the protagonist, has a revelation. This is a quintessentially romantic moment, in which Stephen transcends time:

Their banter was not new to him and now it flattered his mild proud sovereignty. Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy. So timeless seemed the grey warm air, so fluid and impersonal his own mood, that all ages were as one to him. A moment before the ghost of the ancient kingdom of the Danes had looked forth through the vesture of the hazewrapped City. Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. . . .

His heart trembled; his breath came faster and a wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he was soaring sunward. His heart trembled in an ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight. His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his windswept limbs. (155-6)

Importantly, this revelation occurs in the present. "All ages" become one with him in the present world. The revelation also keeps its influence over him and urges him to try to become an artist through the rest of the novel. So, we cannot say that the revelation occurred in the past from the perspective of Stephen at the end of the novel because it is always with him. In this way, in the works of Eliot and Joyce, a romantic moment is often associated with the present.

Contrary to that, the works of Willa Cather, one of the early American high modernists, show the clear tendency shared by later American high modernists. For example, her novel *A Lost Lady* begins with an introduction that emphasizes that what will be narrated happened decades ago. The novel focuses on the relationship between Niel and Mrs. Forrester, the wife of Captain Forrester. Niel strongly admires Mrs. Forrester because she seems to possess a certain quality that is now almost extinct. For him, she is a lady from the past, and he loves a

sense of pastness she carries.

When Niel was still a boy, he fell from a tree and was carried into Mrs. Forrester's house. He came close to Mrs. Forrester, a lady from the past, there:

Niel opened his eyes and looked wonderingly about the big, half-darkened room, full of heavy, old-fashioned walnut furniture. . . .

The room was cool and dusky and quiet. At his house everything was horrid when one was sick. . . . What sort of fingers Mrs. Forrester had, and what a lovely lady she was. Inside the lace ruffle of her dress he saw her white throat rising and falling so quickly. Suddenly she got up to take off her glittering rings, - she had not thought of them before, - shed them off her fingers with a quick motion as if she were washing her hands, and dropped them into Mary's broad palm. The little boy was thinking that he would probably never be in so nice a place again. The windows went almost down to the baseboard, like doors, and the closed green shutters let in streaks of sunlight that quivered on the polished floor and the silver things on the dresser. The heavy curtains were looped back with thick cords, like ropes. The marble-topped washstand was as big as a sideboard. The massive walnut furniture was all inlaid with pale-coloured woods. (20-21)

The room where Mrs. Forrester is taking care of him bears a special meaning. It is where Niel comes so close to the past that he experiences an ecstatic moment. Niel, a boy in the present, is wrapped in the past and feels as if he were buoyed up from his everyday world.

With this romantic moment in his mind, Niel keeps admiring Mrs. Forrester, but they never come so close after that. The title, *A Lost Lady*, and the introduction where the narrator takes the trouble to say that the story is from the past show that Niel's romantic moment is just one moment from the past and valuable because it is irretrievable now. From the beginning, we know that the lady is lost, and this novel is filled with almost nostalgic feelings. Even when the past and the present seem to come close, the novel makes us conscious of the separation between them. The romantic moment is beyond our everyday world because it is in the past, which is separated from the present, where we are now.

As I will state later, the works of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner share this nostalgic impulse toward the romantic moment associated with the past to varying extents. (Faulkner seems to be conscious of it, and his attitude toward the romantic moment is quite different from that of the former two.)

There might be multiple reasons for the difference in attitude toward the romantic moment between “European” and “American” writers. One of the reasons would be the change in their living environment. Almost all the American writers I will discuss migrated from rural to urban areas. Cather moved from Nebraska to New York; Fitzgerald from Minnesota to New York and Paris; Hemingway from a suburb of Chicago and Northern Michigan to the center of Chicago and Paris<sup>12</sup>; only Faulkner lived in Mississippi throughout much of his life, but he stayed temporarily in New York. Actually the contrast between the rural and urban experiences is a recurrent theme in their works. In terms of this duality of experience, Frederick Jameson says:

I want to conjecture that the protagonists of these aesthetic and philosophical revolutions were people who still lived in two distinct worlds simultaneously; born in those agricultural villages we still sometimes characterize as medieval or premodern, they developed their vocations in the new urban agglomerations with their radically distinct and "modern" spaces and temporalities. The sensitivity to deep time in the moderns then registers this comparatist perception of the two socioeconomic temporalities, which the first modernists had to negotiate in their own lived experience. (699)

Jameson says high modernists have both modern and premodern, or urban and rural, temporalities, and even “unabashedly urban” modernists like - Proust or Joyce - “feel beyond their urban experience the presence of something radically other that completes it” (*A Singular Modernity* 142). It seems to me that for American high modernists I will discuss, the rural life in the past is more important in their creation than for “European” urban high modernists. As the title of Malcolm Cowley’s critical biography of American high modernists<sup>13</sup> shows, they were “exiles” who “returned.” We have to note that this “return,” the movement toward the past, is one of the recurrent themes in their works.

Tim Armstrong also points out that American high modernist writers had a strong sense of place. He says that in America there were two strands of modernism. One came from English modernism, and the other was an American indigenous movement, “native”

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<sup>12</sup> He also spent every summer at a villa in Northern Michigan with his family in his childhood.

<sup>13</sup> *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey in the 1920s*

modernism, which “represented a distinctly Midwestern cultural inheritance derived from figures like William Dean Howells” (Armstrong 32) and that led to a nativist movement later. It was represented by early modernists such as Edgar Lee Masters and Sherwood Anderson, who belonged to Chicago modernist circles.<sup>14</sup> This emphasis on localism doubtlessly increased the importance of “agricultural villages,” or the past, in American high modernists’ works.

In fact, as Lawrence Levine says, nostalgic feelings were rampant in America in the 1920s. American high modernists’ works are not an exception to this tendency. But nostalgia manifests itself when a character or narrator recognizes the past as a time separated from the present because one usually feels nostalgia for something irretrievable now. In other words, it means drawing a border between the past and the present, which goes against the typical representation of high modernist temporality. If nostalgia is not viewed as negative in a work, it naturally causes tension between two views of time.

Of course, even if high modernist writers are successful in representing new temporalities in their works, that does not mean they completely abandoned an old understanding of time. They were in a transitional period in a historical and geographical way. Moreover, as Frederick Jameson says in *A Singular Modernity*, “we cannot not periodize” (29) and “the terms ‘modern’ and ‘modernity’ always bring some form of periodizing logic with them” (28). When modernists try to recapture the past, consciously or unconsciously, they periodize. Periodization makes the past something separate from the present, which is a necessary condition for nostalgia. Jameson says even “a transitional period” is “the moment” of “a break” expanded “into a period in its own right” (27). If we cannot give up periodizing, it is also almost impossible for us to abandon nostalgia completely.

I think American high modernists, “who still lived in two distinct worlds

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<sup>14</sup> They described people in the Middle-West, the setting often used by naturalist writers, in a way that reflected artistic innovations in Europe.

simultaneously” and tended to express the conflict between the new and the old more clearly even when they sought the romantic moment, took a unique approach to the representation of their nostalgia and perception of the past to deal with the contradiction between these seemingly naive feelings and their advanced ideas about temporality. We might paraphrase this as a conflict between the modern and antimodern. In his book on antimodern impulses in the modernist period, T. J. Jackson Leas argues:

This sense of unreality has become part of the hidden agenda of modernization. Throughout the twentieth century, a recoil from the artificial, overcivilized qualities of modern existence has sparked a wide variety of quests for more intense experience, ranging from the fascist fascination with violence and death, to the cults of emotional spontaneity of avant-garde artists to popular therapies stressing instinctual liberation. Antimodern impulses, too, were rooted in longings to recapture an elusive “real life” in a culture evaporating into unreality. (32)

High modernists, who were conscious of their progressiveness, were not always immune from antimodern impulses. But it is very rare that the high modernist writers, who were very conscious of their modernity, expressed them directly in their works. They are apparently denied or carry complex implications even when the writers seem to wholeheartedly agree with them. We should recall how Fitzgerald treats nativism in *The Great Gatsby*. Tom, who champions Lothrop Stoddard’s theory, is portrayed at once as a very shallow but manly and attractive person.<sup>15</sup> And in contradiction to his ostentatious macho posture, we can find many clues in Hemingway’s works to his complex feelings about gender and sexuality. We can find in both writers’ attitudes at once attraction to antimodern ideas and awareness of their own progressiveness.

If the works of “European” high modernists are oriented toward unity, those of “American” high modernists are still drawn to separation as well as unity. I think the association between the past and the romantic moment was caused by this complex situation. American high modernist writers sought the romantic moment based on the recognition that

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Benn Michaels extensively discusses nativism in American high modernists in *Our America*.

the past is separated from the present and thus beyond our reach. It is desperate behavior by those who try to achieve the romantic moment but cannot truly believe that achieving perfect unity is possible or desirable. As a result, as we will see, characters in the works of American high modernists keep suffering from contradictions between the new and the old understandings of time more thoroughly than European high modernists, and they make desperate attempts to overcome the contradictions in spite of their awareness of impossibility.

Before presenting a summary of each chapter, I would like to give an account of my methodology. A. A. Mendilow classifies time in fiction into three categories: time for reading, time for writing, and time in the text (77). “Narratologist” approaches, as taken by critics such as Wayne Booth and Gerard Genette, mostly analyze narrative structure to figure out what kind of temporalities work in the text. My methodology is similar to theirs. I will analyze temporality associated with each character and narrative to examine how they are interrelated and also related to my point of contention. My focus is also on a relationship between writers and their works, but the greater part of my discussion will be spent on analysis of texts, using narratologists’ ideas. Paul Ricoeur, in his classic *Time and Narrative*, devotes his attention to the relationship between a reader and a text and discusses “the mediating role of emplotment” (53). His interest is in temporality in fiction in general rather than in particular literary works. Almost all analyses of literary works, implicitly or explicitly, presuppose readers’ reactions. But I will not deal with the relationship between the temporality of a reader and that of a text in an explicit way as he and his followers do, though my discussion will always keep reactions of an implicit reader in view. I am not interested in discussing temporality in fiction as a general matter, either. The scope of my discussion will be limited to particular literary works by American writers who participated in high modernism, especially in the period from 1925 (*The Great Gatsby* and *In Our Time*) to 1929 (*The Sound and the Fury*). This period is very important for considering the new

representation of temporality in American high modernism. In this period, the writers who had returned from World War I, a cataclysmic event that had a great influence over the perception of time, began to publish their first representative works. They also learned from new theories of time and practice derived from them by early high modernists such as Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Cather, to create their own representations of time. Fitzgerald and Hemingway sought the ways of representing time that are different from those of previous high modernist works. Faulkner probably learned not only from early high modernists but also from Fitzgerald and Hemingway, and developed his own way of representation based on representations of time by those high modernists.

In Chapter 1, titled “American Innocence: *The Great Gatsby* and Time,” I will discuss Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, analyzing the novel in terms of temporality especially from the perspective of Nick’s sense of time. The foregrounding of a narrator’s consciousness is one of the characteristics of American high modernist novels. I will examine how Nick’s desire influences a whole narrative and creates a crucial moment in the past.

In Chapter 2, titled “Hemingway’s Fifth Dimension: Reading ‘A Canary for One,’ ‘The End of Something,’ ‘The Three-Day Blow,’ and ‘Big Two-Hearted River,’” I will discuss several of Hemingway’s short stories that are generally considered to be focused on the present. “Hills Like White Elephants” is a good example. But why does a narrator choose this particular moment for his narration? Is it because there is anticipation of its recollection? Some of Hemingway’s works such as “Big Two-Hearted River” and “A Canary for One” clearly show these episodes are narrated because they deserve to be recollected. Of course, all literary works have this characteristic, but Hemingway’s concentration on the present makes it very distinct. His short stories are where the present as the past and the present as the present merge, and at the same time, a kind of longing for the past as the past underlies them. My discussion will center on how these senses of time are interrelated and form a structure

for Hemingway's stories.

In Chapter 3, titled "How to Overcome 'Shadowy Paradoxical': Bergsonian Continuum in *The Sound and the Fury*," I will discuss how Faulkner shows that he is conscious of the development of the representation of time in high modernism. Each chapter of the novel represents a sense of time we can find in Fitzgerald's, Hemingway's, or European high modernists' works in a rather exaggerated way. The novel also presents the paradox inherent in time, which juxtaposes meaningless time that flows constantly, and meaningful time that is necessarily generated by our recognition of time. Ultimately the novel suggests a way of overcoming this paradox by using Bergson's schema. I will position the novel as a conclusive work that provides an overview of American high modernism in the 1920s and offer some answers to the problems concerning time suggested by previous American high modernist works.

Through the overall discussion, I would like to show how idiosyncratic — sometimes self-contradicting — a sense of time in some of American high modernists' works is, and how it affects their works and creates a unique romanticization of the past moment in American high modernism. Through this analysis, this dissertation establishes that Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner address the new representation of time in a way that has not been discussed before, and their unique representations of time take a very important role in shaping the form and the content of their works.

**CHAPTER 1 AMERICAN INNOCENCE:  
THE GREAT GATSBY AND TIME**

We can use this kind of language to distinguish between what we feel is happening in a fiction when mere successiveness, which we feel to be the chief characteristic in the ordinary going-on of time, is purged by the establishment of a significant relation between the moment and a remote origin and end, a concord of a past, present, and future - three dreams which, as Augustine said, cross in our minds, as in the present of things past, the present of things present, and the present of things future. (50)

Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*

In *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank Kermode says that fiction creates meaningful space and time, and it resists time as mere meaningless successiveness. While myth has an ordered temporal sequence which provides a beginning, a middle, and an end and does not necessarily dwell on the flow of time in the real world, novels have a more complex structure though they, particularly "traditional novels," have a similar chronological order. They not only construct time and space where readers can find some meaning but also give attention to the flow of time that ordinarily lacks such a meaning. Kermode calls this aspect of novels the coexistence of "reality and justice" (in the case of Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium")<sup>16</sup> or "Chronos and Kairos" (in the case of Joyce's *Ulysses*) and discusses Proust as well as Yeats and Joyce. It is no coincidence that all of them are modernist writers.

Modernist novels, especially high modernist novels, became more and more complex in their structure, and the coexistence and the conflict of the two temporalities, which Kermode finds in Yeats and Joyce, became highly visible. This is probably because perspectives on time underwent a drastic change during that period, as I have already mentioned above in the Introduction. Revolutionary social and theoretical transformations about the cognition of time prompted high modernist writers to try new approaches to the representation of time. These attempts were deeply linked with the explorations of

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<sup>16</sup> Kermode invokes Yeats, a lyric poet and playwright, to illustrate the modernist sense of time as represented in modernist fiction because in his poems Yeats tries to compound "justice," "human plot and human desire for order" (107), with "reality," which is irreducible to any paradigms. This coexistence of longing for order and a sober realization of reality is, Kermode says, a characteristic attitude of modernists.

subjectivity, which are often mentioned as one of the characteristics of high modernism.

Though there were novels that conducted a close examination of temporality before high modernism, most of them studied the way in which time flows in a single story. But high modernists began to pay attention to the relationship between a narrator and a narrated story. This attitude sheds light not only on time in a narrated story but also on a narrator's view of it, a temporal relationship between them, and the narrator's view of such a relationship, all of which comprise complex interrelationships in terms of temporality. In this type of novel, a narrator's and/ or characters' consciousness is foregrounded, and time that takes on its meaning in this way becomes totally different from an ordered time that has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

This makes time in novels closer to lived time, but considering Kermode's scheme, it means an increasing distance from time as a semantic space that can provide a meaning most clearly and powerfully. If fiction is a form of resistance against the almost meaningless succession of time, we can say that representation of time in high modernism, which became increasingly complex, apparently lacked such a resisting power. For high modernist writers, who were in a transition period after novels had been written in conformity with a more traditional and simpler understanding of time, the decrease in the resisting power would be a far more serious problem than for subsequent writers.

This would be one of the reasons why high modernist novels often did not just depict an asynchronous representation of time. The works of some high modernists such as James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, and Thomas Wolfe, show an almost nostalgic longing for the “romantic moment.” This moment is supposed to be a redeemed and meaningful time, and the longing for it partly stems from a nostalgic feeling for an “old” understanding of time that has gradually lost its validity in contemporary complex social situations. But the “old” understanding of time is no

longer represented in the complete form that has a beginning, a middle, and an end, but in many cases in the form of a fragmentary moment.

The way of representing this "moment" varies from one writer to another. In terms of the works of Fitzgerald, which I will discuss in this essay, there is a longing for a romantic and timeless moment, and it is located in the past, which is one of the traits Fitzgerald has in common with other American high modernists.

Moreover, the attitude toward the past is different from that of the writers in an earlier time. For an example, a letter from Edith Wharton to Fitzgerald on June 8, 1925 is very suggestive. After expressing her appreciation for his gift of a copy of *The Great Gatsby*, Wharton makes brief comments as follows:

My present quarrel with you is only this: that to make Gatsby really Great, you ought to have given us his early career (not from the cradle - but from his visit to the yacht, if not before) instead of a short résumé of it. That would have situated him, & made his final tragedy a tragedy instead of a "fait divers" for the morning papers. (266)

Wharton complains that Gatsby's past is not fully revealed, and her attitude is unsurprising if we look at her representative work, *The Age of Innocence*. In *The Age of Innocence*, when Archer sits on a bench and remembers the past at the end of the novel, his memories, which are what have been described in the novel, emerge before Archer and readers as something from the past. The series of events of the past is presented as a story that has a beginning, a middle, and an end in the novel, and that is why we can feel Archer's lamentation in the last scene more keenly.

If we try to locate "The Age of Innocence" in *The Great Gatsby*, the period long before Nick meets Gatsby, when Gatsby and Daisy first met and loved each other innocently, is the most-likely possibility. But a description of this period is fragmentary. Besides, a description of the love between Gatsby and Daisy, which is supposed to be the core of this story, does not even amount to "a short résumé." Of course, we should take into account Nick's limited knowledge of the period, but the fact that Fitzgerald introduced the narrator Nick into the

novel in spite of this inconvenience tells us that this scanty description is not a tactical error but what he intended.

What I would like to emphasize here is that there is a considerable difference between those approaches to "The Age of Innocence," that is, the ways of describing the romantic past in *The Age of Innocence* and *The Great Gatsby*. A description of Gatsby's past is not as complete as that of Archer's, and that is important for Gatsby's romantic character. In Fitzgerald's works, as well as those of some of his contemporary American writers, we can say that fragments or moments, not complete stories, assume a significant role in presenting the romantic past.

Here I would like to pay attention to Fitzgerald's unique attitude toward the past. It is well known that he had the best period of his life during the Roaring Twenties and gradually faded out with the economic downturn. When he was still at his peak, he seemed to anticipate his future and projected that anticipation onto his works, in which the age of thirty represents a border and characters who cross that line quickly begin to decline.

For example, in his second novel, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, Anthony and Gloria, who have a glamorous life in their twenties, begin to be on the decline after turning thirty, and also in *The Great Gatsby* Nick says thirty is "the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning brief-case of enthusiasm, thinning hair" (142).

Though the border that separates one period of life from another is constructed in this way, the characters' attitude toward the past is not merely nostalgic; it is instead rather ambivalent. I will look at "Babylon Revisited" as an example of this. In this story, Charlie leaves his daughter Honoria in the care of his step-sister and her husband due to his life of debauchery in the past. But having changed his mind and become a hard worker, he returns to Paris, where he formerly led a dissipated life and where his step-sister and her husband now live, in order to get back Honoria and start to live a happy family life with her. It is clear that

Charlie does not merely try to get back Honoria, but he also intends to start a life with her all over again and in doing so start his past life again because Charlie thinks it is important to get her back when she is still a child. Honoria will be disconnected from the past and lose her symbolic function if she has acquired a new status as an adult. Of course, Honoria means "honor," and considering this, William Brondell's comment is convincing:

"Babylon Revisited" is indeed a story on two levels: the exterior level which describes Charlie's unsuccessful attempt to reclaim his daughter Honoria; and an interior level which describes Charlie's successful attempt to prove his reformation and thus reclaim his lost honor. (26)

What is interesting in this comment is that reclamation of Honoria does not simply mean the reclaiming of his honor, but the failure of the reclamation of Honoria is important in reclaiming "his lost honor."

Judging from the text, the strongest motivation for Charlie to keep a proper life is his hope to retrieve Honoria and start his family life all over again. But it also means his motivation might be lost once he has got back Honoria. It might seem unnatural that a character in a novel gets corrupted again after having retrieved him or herself to that extent, but because there is almost no explanation about how Charlie changed his mind or why he lived dissolutely in the first place, we can only measure the extent of his repentance by the intensity of his desire for the reclamation of Honoria, which makes his future behavior hardly predictable. Toward the end of the story, a couple of drunken people, who are Charlie's friends from the past, break into a room where Charile, his step-sister, and her husband talk about the future of Honoria and spoil Charlie's plan. These two people seem to embody the destructive impulse Charlie could not control in the past and imply that this impulse can be a problem even now, as well as in the future.

But at the same time those friends put Honoria out of Charlie's reach by spoiling his plan. Due to this, Charlie swears to keep his current life and get Honoria back some day at the end of the story. Until that day, it is strongly suggested that he will remain a respectable

person with a "lost honor" that is quite different from the debauched man in the past.

The past in "Babylon Revisited" is a valuable object with which a person in the present tries to interfere, but it is valuable only as long as that interference is impossible. We can find a similar stance toward the past in *The Great Gatsby*.

### **TIME IN *THE GREAT GATSBY***

In *The Great Gatsby* there are three time periods. The first is the summer of 1922, when the tragedy of Gatsby occurs, and a description of what happens in this summer comprises the largest portion of the novel. This is narrated as a reminiscence of Nick's and can be regarded as the narrative past. The second is the period before 1922. Since this is not experienced by Nick, all the information is conveyed to him by Jordan and Gatsby himself. Most of the descriptions are about the love between Gatsby and Daisy and Gatsby's past history. These suffice for readers to know the reason for Gatsby's behavior in the summer of 1922 but are fragmentary, as Wharton noted. The problem here, however, is not that the descriptions are fragmentary but that they are not only fragmentary. If they were merely fragmentary, we might be able to explain that fragmentariness is an inevitable result because Nick did not experience what he narrates, but as I will state later, oddly enough, sometimes Nick's narration becomes much more emotional in fragmentary descriptions than in other parts. It happens especially when he tells about Gatsby and Daisy, and at such times, Nick seems to play a role not so much of a narrator who just tells what happened, as of an author who writes a scene where Gatsby and Daisy appear. Considering the fragmentation of descriptions, this dramatization looks strange. It is not oriented toward creating one consistent drama at all; on the contrary, it seems to obstruct that. This is very different from what Wharton recommends - making Gatsby's past one complete story; it is rather an occasional eruption of Nick's imagination in the midst of fragmentary descriptions. I would like to point out here that in the description of the time period before 1922, the information is very limited,

and Nick cannot control his imagination in an appropriate way for a narrator.

The third time period is the narrative present when Nick is writing down the story of Gatsby. Every novel that has a narrator who directly witnesses or participates in the action has this time period in principle, but this novel shows it very clearly. For example, at the end of Chapter 3, Nick says:

Reading over what I have written so far, I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary, they were merely casual events in a crowded summer, and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs. (62)

This passage powerfully evokes the image of Nick, who is now writing about the summer of 1922, and it is likely to generate questions in the mind of readers about the relationship between Nick and the story he is telling: why does he try to tell this particular story now, or to what extent does his perspective transform the story? Having these questions in mind, we cannot help but be conscious of a purpose or desire of Nick's, who is telling the story in which he himself is a character. The presence of the narrator, who is able to make an arbitrary modification to the story, casts a huge shadow over this novel. It is most clearly discernible in the representation of time as associated with Gatsby.

### **GATSBY'S TIME, NICK'S DESIRE**

Among critics, it has not been unusual to take the view that Gatsby tries to erase anything that contradicts his dream of his past, mostly in the relationship with Daisy, and behave as if it had not happened at all. Gatsby tries to repeat what suits his purpose from his past, namely an innocent love between Daisy and him, in the current relationship between them. This attempt, which we can possibly call an attempt at revival of the past in the present, is unrealizable at least in the novel, and Gatsby, who tragically tries to retrieve the irretrievable past, evokes the image of an idealist who recklessly challenges time and fails. Seeing a mythic aspect in Gatsby, R. W. Stallman says, "Like Icarus, Gatsby soars against the tyranny of space-and-time by which we are imprisoned, only to be tragically destroyed by his

own invention" (62). This opinion has been shared among many critics.<sup>17</sup> In fact, there are many descriptions that strengthen the image of Gatsby as an idealist who unsuccessfully challenges "clock time."

For example, when Gatsby talks to Daisy in Nick's house for the first time since their breakup, he becomes so nervous that his head accidentally tilts an old defunct clock, but at the last instant he prevents it from tipping over and says to Nick, "I'm sorry about the clock" (93). We can read two meanings in this remark: "I apologize for almost tipping over the clock" and "I feel unhappy with time embodied in a clock"; from the latter the image of Gatsby resisting the flow of time is conjured up. Moreover, Gatsby, who prevents the defunct clock from tipping over, can be associated with dysfunctions of clock time.

The important scene after the fight between Gatsby and Tom over Daisy, which is very often quoted in the discussion of time in *The Great Gatsby*, is also a good example. There Gatsby says, "Can't repeat the past?... Why of course you can!" (117) and immediately before that, there is the following passage: "One of them was that, after she was free, [Gatsby and Daisy] were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house - just as if it were five years ago" (117). Here the image of Gatsby trying to repeat the past in the present seems to be established.

Furthermore, the description of the body of Gatsby on the mattress in the pool, after having been shot by Wilson, is very symbolic:

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<sup>17</sup> For example, Ernest Lockridge says, "Gatsby has bootlegged a fortune in order to buy back the past, to recover the time five years before. . ." (7), and Susan Resneck Parr says the following about the significance of Gatsby's challenge:

Ultimately, Nick takes away from his experience in West Egg what he seems to believe is also the lesson of the American experience: that moments of hope and promise and wonder can be found only in the past, that - except in the imagination - the past is irrevocable, that the present brings with it only the betrayal of dreams, and that the conscious individual must nevertheless continue to hope and to struggle. (76-7)

Thomas Hanzo goes so far as to point out Gatsby's desire to change the past itself, saying, "A last contrast may now be made clear between Gatsby and Nick, Gatsby who thought he could remake the past and Nick who knows that it was irretrievably lost. . ." (67).

With little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool. A small gust of wind that scarcely corrugated the surface was enough to disturb its accidental course with its accidental burden. The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, tracing, like the leg of transit, a thin red circle in the water. (168-9)

Gatsby's body turns around on the water and, moving like a clock hand, forms a red circle. This movement is likened to that of a transit, which is used for surveying or astronomical observation. It seems to imply that Gatsby, who has fought "clock time," is now powerless to the movement of a clock hand.

But if we carefully observe Gatsby's behavior, it turns out that his principle of behavior is based on a linear sense of time, contrary to the apparent image. In other words, we can say that he embodies a traditional rather than a Bergsonian view of time, which blurs the boundary between the present and the past.

It seems to be suggested in the text that Gatsby tries to repeat the past in the present, which many critics have taken at face value, but that cannot explain all his behaviors. When Gatsby first falls in love with Daisy, he is still a poor and nameless soldier, which he believes is the reason for their breakup. Therefore, he plans to become rich by whatever means necessary and marry her.<sup>18</sup> This is not so much a repetition of the past in the present as a successful attempt at achieving something that was unrealizable in the past, which strongly connotes a linear sense of time. Of course, we can consider this as his attempt at repeating only the past things that fit his purpose. But a linear sense of time is more suitable for Gatsby, who wrote down things to do like Benjamin Franklin did and has made an effort, since his childhood, to achieve certain goals in the future.

The following scene, in which Gatsby watches the light in Daisy's house across the bay, clearly shows that Gatsby is not a challenger to but an advocate of a traditional view of time:

[H]e stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was

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<sup>18</sup> Gatsby says to Tom, "[Daisy] only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me" (137).

from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward — and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. (28)

Here Daisy is an object he should reach at a certain point in the future, and the distance between it and his current position is represented spatially. The target of a Bergsonian, Freudian, or a phenomenological view of time in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the traditional view that represents time with spatial metaphors. They denied a linear sense of time that set boundaries between the past and the present, or between the present and the future, and looked for a more complex representation. Given this background, we could say that this description of Gatsby is based on a traditional view of time.<sup>19</sup>

Ronald Berman says that the character of Gatsby seems to be "shaped in those first innocent decades of the new century" (165). He also says, "Gatsby is a romantic whose ideas about women and the world come from books written before 1922, books whose vague ideas about love and honor have trickled down into movies and magazines" (165). Moreover, Gatsby is often associated with the American dream, about to become the nightmare of the Great Depression of the 30s, which strengthens the image of Gatsby pointed out by Berman as an embodiment of an idea that was almost out of date.<sup>20</sup>

Then, why does Gatsby appear to be a rebel against a linear sense of time in spite of his proximity to it? This is because there are many descriptions that induce such an interpretation,

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<sup>19</sup> Nick's lamentation at the end of the novel touches upon the image of Gatsby again, who watches the light in Daisy's house:

I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night. (188)

This passage also implies a close relationship between time and space. Using a geographical metaphor, Nick shows the dream sought by Gatsby does not exist in the future but in the past.

<sup>20</sup> Gatsby is likely to believe the validity of the American dream. But Nick is not. He puts the episode of Gatsby's self-made schedule, which reminds us of Benjamin Franklin's plan of action, after a description of Gatsby's miserable failure. This arrangement conveys an ironic tone to readers.

and that point to the problem of Nick, who is at once an important character and a narrator. It seems that Nick's remark that "I was within and without" (42) is not only about the relationship between the high society in the East and himself but also about his position that is both within and without the story he tells.

We need to look closely at what Nick does as a narrator and as a character in order to examine Nick's influence over his story. I will begin with Nick as a narrator.

### **NICK AS A NARRATOR/ AS A CHARACTER**

In terms of Nick's narration, many critics have pointed out a frequent departure from what is usually expected of a narrator of a novel.<sup>21</sup> For example, Nick, especially about Gatsby's past, sometimes does not just write down what he has heard but uses his poetical imagination to make the scene look more beautiful. James Miller Jr. appreciates this when he describes it as "Nick's imaginative conception of Gatsby's past" (23), and George Garret calls it "narrative virtuosity" (112). But this sudden change of tone is a little too strange to be considered as just Fitzgerald's successful experiment in a technique for narration.<sup>22</sup> We should not only admire this "experiment" but also make a further study of its influence in the novel.

The peculiarity of the departure of Nick's narration stands out, compared with Jordan's narration, which is similarly about Gatsby's past. Jordan tries to tell what actually happened without any dramatization:

One October day in nineteen-seventeen — . . .

— I was walking along from one place to another, half on the sidewalks and half on the lawns. I was happier on the lawns because I had on shoes from England with rubber nobs on the shoes that bit into the soft ground. . . . (80-81)

Her narration is always like this. She does not tell what she does not know and states

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<sup>21</sup> Because Fitzgerald's frequent modifications make representation of a time sequence in this novel inaccurate, there are many parts in which Nick's narrative is incoherent. Thomas Pendleton's *I'm Sorry about the Clock* details these inconsistencies, most of which are Fitzgerald's simple mistakes.

<sup>22</sup> Ron Neuhaus calls it "Omniscient 'I'" and makes a negative comment.

only the important events chronologically, which constitutes one narrative line.

But Nick does not tell a story of Gatsby at one time; he scatters the episodes throughout the novel and acts like an author in them.<sup>23</sup> Nick's creativity and imagination are exercised as follows:

But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the washstand and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing. (106)

In the excerpt above Nick suddenly seems to stop being a narrator of Gatsby's past and begins to act like an author who is writing a story in which Gatsby is a character. The tone of Nick's narration immediately prior or subsequent to this excerpt is more detached, like that of Jordan's. Of course, it is practically unthinkable for narrators to exclude their emotion from their stories, and there have been many narrators who willingly put their thoughts and opinions into their narratives. Immediately after the excerpt, Nick also expresses his opinion, emphasizing his position as a narrator: "To young Gatz, resting on his oars and looking up at the railed deck, that yacht represented all the beauty and glamour in the world. I suppose he smiled at Cody - he had probably discovered that people liked him when he smiled (106)."

The first excerpt from page 106 lacks both "I suppose" and "probably," which the second excerpt has. Since both Nick and Gatsby are characters of the same story, it is natural that there be a description that shows Nick makes a guess when he describes what he does not know about Gatsby. But in the first excerpt he does not seem as careful in that regard as in the second.

Several critics have pointed out that Nick dramatizes Gatsby, which can understandably

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<sup>23</sup> By "acts like an author," I mean Nick sometimes seems to become omniscient and modify episodes as he likes. Because this novel has no omniscient narrator, only the author has a right to be omniscient, and embroidering episodes with imagined details is usually the role of an author.

happen between a narrator and characters in the story. For example, David Minter is of the opinion that Nick plays an active role in creating the story of Gatsby and giving it a meaning in his own way, a view that has been shared by many critics:

The whole of Gatsby's story, including both his dream and his absurd plan for realizing it - his plan for procuring a fortune, a mansion, and a bride - is redeemed from corruption and waste, from failure and absurdity only through Nick Carraway's effort imaginatively to interpret and render it. . . .

If, in Gatsby, Fitzgerald dramatizes the peculiar beauty and vulnerability of one dedicated to actualizing dreams, in Carraway he dramatizes the peculiar beauty and vulnerability of one dedicated to finding meaning in the "undefined consequence" of an action. (83)

Though there are differences of opinion among critics as to the degree of dramatization of Gatsby by Nick, there are some who think it almost reaches mystification.<sup>24</sup>

This tendency of Nick's seems to become clearer when he narrates what he has not directly experienced. At such a time, he goes beyond the role of a narrator and begins dramatization as an author. Moreover, this tendency lasts only momentarily. The description focuses on a brief moment, or the description itself lasts one paragraph at most. The following passage describes Gatsby and Daisy in the past and is another example of the exercise of Nick's imagination and creativity:

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed his girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning-fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete. (118)

Nick narrates what he should not know here too as if he were an omniscient author, and the description, which is about Gatsby and Daisy in a brief moment, is too rich to tell readers just the information about the past. This suggests not only Nick's attempt at "interpreting and rendering" Gatsby as Minter points out but also his desire to write the story of Gatsby and Daisy as the author, and the story has a mythical resonance. The vocabulary used in the

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<sup>24</sup> As I will state later, especially early critics like R. W. Stallman gives great attention to mythic quality of Gatsby.

excerpt from page 106 ("a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing") and that from the above ("At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete") makes love between Gatsby and Daisy described by Nick more than a secular and common one. As I will touch on later, this corresponds to the mythical character Gatsby apparently has. But I would just like to confirm here that this series of descriptions can take on a mythical character.

Nick's seemingly uncontrollable desire for the creation of the story is not strictly limited to the description of the past that he has not directly experienced. It can also happen in the description of the events in 1922. Though Nick describes the day of Gatsby's death objectively, there is a moment when he deviates from the role of a neutral narrator:

He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about ... Like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous tree. (168)

Nick treats Gatsby as a character in his story here too. But we should pay attention to the expression, "must have looked." This expression shows a less authorial attitude, which we cannot find when Nick writes about Gatsby before 1922 and gives us a sense that both Nick and Gatsby exist in the same story world. Thus we can probably say that in the description of the summer of 1922, the present for Nick as a narrated character, Nick's seemingly uncontrollable imagination and creativity come to the surface but are rather faithful to the role of the narrator. It is in the past he has not directly experienced that Nick thoroughly exercises his imagination and creativity.<sup>25</sup>

Next I would like to take a look at Nick as a character. The roles of Nick as a narrator and Nick as a character, which mean narrating Nick and narrated Nick, are different, but their characteristics are not. The two Nicks seem to share the same desire. The impulse to

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<sup>25</sup> As Ron Neuhaus points out, Nick acts like an author in the past episodes of Gatsby and Daisy but does not in the description of their communication in front of him.

dramatize Gatsby and realize some ideal through Gatsby is also clearly discernible in the behavior of Nick as a character.

The most remarkable instance is the scene where Gatsby says, "Can't repeat the past?" . . . "Why of course you can!," which I have already cited. Though many critics have not given it much attention, this remark is actually an answer to Nick's remark to Gatsby, "You can't repeat the past." Before this there is no scene where Gatsby voices an opinion that the past is repeatable. It is clear that Nick brings up the idea.

The following excerpt is a good example of how Nick as a narrator and Nick as a character act hand-in-hand to manipulate the orientation of the story:

'I feel far away from her,' he said. 'It's hard to make her understand.'

'You mean about the dance?'

'The dance?' He dismissed all the dances he had given with a snap of his fingers.

'Old sport, the dance is unimportant.'

He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: 'I never loved you.' After she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house - just as if it were five years ago.

'And she doesn't understand,' he said. 'She used to be able to understand. We'd sit for hours —'

He broke off and began to walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favours and crushed flowers.

'I wouldn't ask too much of her,' I ventured. 'You can't repeat the past.'

'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!' (116-7)

Considering the context, it turns out that Nick suddenly tells Gatsby, who is irritated because of Tom's interference with his romance with Daisy, that he can't repeat the past. So it is natural to assume that Gatsby's subsequent line comes from a reaction against what Nick has said in a tit-for-tat fashion. That is why it is the quite simple reaction, in which Gatsby just denies Nick's remark, repeating the words Nick has used. Here Gatsby's attitude gives the impression that he becomes victim to Nick's allurements in a fit of passion rather than that he finally expresses his long-cherished opinion.

Nick's "You can't repeat the past" might not look like a sudden and rude remark, but it

is because there is a trick by Nick as a narrator. At first glance, it seems that the paragraph beginning with Gatsby's remark, "Old sport, the dance is unimportant," is based on that technique of Nick's in the narration of Gatsby's past history that allows him to sum up Gatsby's statements and retell them like an author rather than a narrator, but it is natural to see continuity in Gatsby's remarks like "Old sport, the dance is unimportant. And she doesn't understand." Because Gatsby's topic has been whether Daisy understands him or not, it is unreasonable to consider that Gatsby suddenly changes the topic to a future plan with Daisy in the middle of his talk and Nick sums up and inserts it in his authorial way.

Thus we can presume that in this paragraph Nick speaks for Gatsby's thought without any notice. It is unusual because Nick usually gives notice when he tells what he has not directly experienced like Gatsby's past.<sup>26</sup> This paragraph, in which Nick narrates almost like an author, ends with a sentence, "just as if it were five years ago." This sentence plays a large role.

Gatsby has never said that he wants to repeat the past before this scene. But this sentence that is written as if Gatsby himself has said it gives readers a false sense that Gatsby has wanted to retrieve what was lost five years before and repeat the past from the beginning and underpins Nick's remark "You can't repeat the past." Though this scene seems to depict Gatsby's anger with Nick's denial of his desire, actually what looks like Gatsby's desire is skillfully made up by Nick and is nothing less than Nick's own desire.

Here both Nick as a narrator and as a character apparently try to make it appear as if Gatsby had the desire to repeat the past. Nick as a character says things that rub Gatsby the wrong way; Gatsby, however, has just had an emotional confrontation with Tom and become irritated by the fact that things did not work out as he intended, and that provokes his

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<sup>26</sup> For example, when Nick tells Gatsby's past for the first time, he takes the trouble to say: "He told me all this very much later, but I've put it down here with the idea of exploding those first wild rumours about his antecedents, which weren't even faintly true" (108).

knee-jerk reaction, while Nick as a narrator inserts psychological descriptions of Gatsby between Gatsby's lines to prevent Nick the character's behavior from looking inappropriate.

I do not intend to call Nick an unreliable narrator at all. Rather I think that part of the charm of this novel is that Nick tries to be a reliable narrator and is successful to some extent in spite of a slight confusion regarding chronological order, but he cannot be completely objective, and consequently this struggle offers a glimpse into his hidden desire. I believe that is why Fitzgerald introduced the narrator into the novel. I just want to examine how this desire or intention of Nick's drives the story in the following part of this essay.

Considering how Nick gets to know Gatsby, Nick's intention becomes clearer. Nick has been wondering who the mysterious man next door is and as soon as Jordan gives him the information, he begins to cooperate actively toward realizing Gatsby's goal, which, as implied by Jordan, is to restore his relation with Daisy, so that Nick invites both Daisy and Gatsby to his house.

Given what happens later, this behavior of Nick's is very strange. For it is Nick who later tells Gatsby of the impossibility of getting together with Daisy again, saying, "You can't repeat the past." If he has such an idea, his initial eagerness is inexplicable. Moreover, according to Thomas Pendleton, though the original draft has the description of Nick's hesitation to have Gatsby and Daisy get closer, that is removed from the published version (31). This makes it more uncertain why Nick willingly tries to encourage the reunion of Gatsby and Daisy, which he anticipates will be a failure.

If this is not Fitzgerald's careless mistake, then there is only one possibility; Nick wants Gatsby's failure. What Nick wants in Gatsby is tragedy caused by the failure of the attempt at repeating the past in the present against the straight passage of time.

Of course, it is possible to assume that though at first, struck by his romanticism, Nick tries to help Gatsby's attempt, he later becomes aware of its recklessness while watching how

things go — so he says, "You can't repeat the past." But we cannot find any evidence of Nick's change of mind anywhere in the novel; on the contrary, there are descriptions that indicate that Nick's purpose is to narrate the defeat of Gatsby, a man against time.

For instance, in addition to Nick's desire, which I have discussed above, the association between Gatsby and a clock, which repeatedly appears in important scenes, is a good example. In the scene where Gatsby and Daisy meet again after a long interval and talk, the word "clock" is used four times in five paragraphs. The description could have been different, but Nick the narrator keeps his attention focused on a clock. I have also pointed out that the movement of Gatsby's dead body in the pool is similar to the movement of a clock hand, and importantly Nick does not get a firsthand look at it. Because the source Nick depends upon for the description is not clear either, the whole description seems to be nothing but his imagination.

These things help create a mythic tale of Gatsby, who is defeated after he recklessly tries to rebel against time, which is obviously beyond the ability of an ordinary man to bring to a successful end. As I have stated earlier, there are many critics who, like R. W. Stallman, find a mythic quality in Gatsby. It is a popular view especially in early criticism; for example, almost all of the essays in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Great Gatsby* share such a view. So far I have argued that Gatsby does not have mythic valor intrinsically but rather he is just a protagonist of the myth Nick creates through his dramatization. But, then, why does Nick try to attach this mythic quality to the tale of Gatsby?

### **THE MYTH OF GATSBY AND TIME**

The most significant effect of the mythification of Gatsby's story is that it allows Nick to associate Gatsby's story he is writing with a time different from a time in reality. According to Nick, the life after he came to the East is monotonous except for the encounter with Jordan. He works, sometimes dates girls, and suffers from loneliness (62-64). His rambling narration

hints at his mundane daily life and the meaningless passing of time.

In contrast to that, Gatsby's story has an orientation with a clear direction, a climax, and a tragic nature. It is, as it were, the story of time and space that has a clear meaning with a beginning, a middle, and an end, which did not seem to exist outside myth for people who lived in a confused time in the 1920s. Gatsby goes against time, goes through hardship, dies tragically, and the summer of 1922 ends. Gatsby's time has a clear meaning, which Nick's time lacks. I think that is why Nick is attracted to the story of Gatsby.

After Jordan tells Nick about Gatsby's past, he says, "He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendour" (85). This is when Gatsby "comes alive" with his purpose for Nick. In other words, at this time, the life of Gatsby gets highlighted as something that can be meaningful. This is the moment Nick discovers what he has looked for in Gatsby. After Jordan and Nick talk about Gatsby's past and implicitly agree to help Gatsby's plan, they intimately kiss each for the first time as if they were celebrating becoming accomplices in a plan to create a kind of myth through Gatsby. At least, Nick's narration is filled with a sense of fulfillment that seems to be brought about by the discovery of his purpose in Gatsby's "purpose."

The myth of Gatsby that has started in this way, after his confrontation, defeat, and death, leads to the end of the novel that has a mythic ring:

And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailor's eyes - a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. . . .

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.  
(187-88)

In the excerpt above, Gatsby's story transcends the limited space and time of the summer of 1922 and echoes historical events. But, importantly, it is implied that this kind of

story is no longer viable. Disclosing a time with a clear meaning that is isolated from a confused time and only exists in myths now, the story of Gatsby ends beautifully with Nick's lamentation.

But if this novel were just about that, it would be nothing more than the nostalgic story of an anachronistic man. The biggest reason why it is one of high modernism's most iconic novels is that it does not end where the story ends. The introduction of the narrator Nick into the novel is very effective in creating this structure.

We need to recall that toward the end of Chapter 3 Nick bothers to emphasize that he himself is writing down the story now. After a dramatic experience in 1922, Nick leaves the glamorous life in the East and returns to "the bored, sprawling, swollen towns beyond the Ohio" (183). He is in his thirties, which he once called "a decade of loneliness," and we can easily imagine that he would live a life opposite to the romantic story of Gatsby. In short, Nick is in time as meaningless succession.

When the novel ends, we cannot help recalling this statement of Nick's in Chapter 3 and giving thought to his "present." This is when we understand the structure of this novel and why Nick's narration sometimes has an authorial tone. This novel is not written to present the myth of Gatsby and finish it with the end of the novel; making up the complete myth of Gatsby is what Nick wants to achieve.

Considering the relationship between Nick, who is in time as meaningless successiveness, and the myth of Gatsby, in which a meaningful time is embodied, we can see another story: the story of Nick, who tries to write the myth based on what happened in the summer of 1922. For Nick the story of Gatsby has the lost order of time and is an appropriate story in which to place his hope. Though he has finished the story, he cannot fully believe the validity of it. At the opening of Chapter 4 he begins to introduce people who attended Gatsby's party on a particular day:

Once I wrote down on the empty spaces of a time-table the names of those who came to Gatsby's house that summer. It is an old time-table now, disintegrating at its folds, and headed 'This schedule in effect July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1922.' But I can still read the grey names, and they will give you a better impression than my generalities of those who accepted Gatsby's hospitality and paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing whatever about him.

From East Egg, then, came the Chester Beckers and the Leeches, and a man named Bunsen, who I knew at Yale, and Doctor Webster Civet, who was drowned last summer up in Maine. . . . (67)

In this way, he enumerates those who were present at Gatsby's party. This is another good example of Nick's emphasis on his own position as a narrator and display of confusion about how to treat past events. This is the only time in this novel Nick uses this type of approach to narrate the past. So it gives the impression that Nick is still looking for an effective form of narration while writing about the past. In other words, we can possibly say that he keenly senses the distance from the past and is still unsure of how to write about it. This attitude of Nick's relativizes the story of Gatsby, which then is to be viewed in the relationship with present Nick.

So the myth is not concluded. It is related to the sterile passage of time of the present, and what we see there is not the completed myth but Nick's strong desire to form a certain period in the past as meaningful time.

To sum up, this novel does not unconditionally present a mythic and simple time that is completely isolated from a current and confused time. It is strongly suggested that such a time is what Nick looks for and tries to represent in his narration. In the 1920s, when the perspective on time became much more complex, the lost order of time could only be pictured in this way. It is nothing more than blatant and out-of-date fiction. Then this leads to another characteristic of Nick's narrative.

When in *Ulysses* James Joyce compares time as meaningless succession with myth, his focus is on the present. Retrieval of the meaning of time takes place in the present there. But in the present of *The Great Gatsby* there is only Nick's monotonous life.

Here we should recall what kind of story Nick associates with Gatsby. It is, so to speak,

a combination of Nick's advanced and reactionary views on temporality. Gatsby is given a role to resist the linear flow of time and takes on a mythic quality because of the impossibility of the challenge. In spite of being aware that it is impossible, Nick urges Gatsby only to see the latter's failure at retrieving the past. The suspicion about the linearity of time is characteristic of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but, in terms of anticipation of the failure of the resistance, we can say a traditional view of time is endorsed. Nick has conflicting ideas about time, as is typical of high modernists. He tries to redeem the past in his own way while he shows its impossibility.

To redeem the past, Nick repeats what Gatsby tries to do in a more sophisticated way. He tries to create the myth from the events in the summer of 1922 through an act of narration. Narrating about things of the past, we can exert influence over the past from the present. This is even more so if it is not Jordan's type of narration, which describes things in a matter-of-fact way, but Nick's type. Moreover, Nick tries to reflect his intention about the narrative from the position of a character as well as from that of a narrator. In doing so, he seeks to alter the past to something meaningful in the present. This is how Nick tries to retrieve the past.

But at the same time, because Nick's conscious attempt at making a modification to the past is revealed, it becomes evident that the modified past is just fiction and the myth is not completed. Nick clearly hesitates to make readers believe that the story he provides is all that happened in the past. He gives up presenting his "generalities" as the only possible description of things of the past. The events in the summer of 1922 have not been completely retrieved. There is still distance between Nick and them, and Nick is bewildered by that. But through his narration Nick is also half-successful in modifying the past.

Of the three time periods of this novel, only the period before 1922 — Gatsby's past, which is not directly experienced by Nick — is intact. This is the time period whose

unmodifiability is strongly suggested through the whole novel, and Nick seems to expect it. It is true that Nick mentions this time period, but it is not a time over which Nick can fully exert his influence through narration in that Nick has not experienced it. It is not subject to Nick's manipulation in the same way as the description of the summer of 1922.

It is this past, the "past" which is shown to be immune to the incursion from the "present," that becomes the place for Nick's longing for the lost order of time. For, it seems to be independent of the influence of a confused time.

Here we should recall that it is always about the events before 1922 that Nick emotionally tells about Gatsby (and Daisy) in an authorial way. There are several scenes where Nick acts like the author, but as I have already stated, it is only when he tells about what happened before 1922 that he does not conceal his impulse. Then his impulse is represented as the description of a moment or a very short period, which takes on a mythical character.

Through the story of Gatsby Nick shows that the myth has already lost its validity in the present. But the description of a mythic moment echoes his longing for the myth as the lost order of time. Nick, who lives in the modern world, cannot fully believe that the order of time can be recovered by writing the myth with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is just something one can believe for only a moment in the description of the moment that involves the longing for the myth or rises from the flow of an actual time and takes on universality beyond a particular time and space.

This moment, in which a longing for something lost and a sober realization of the monotonous present intersect, also makes up a special moment, which I call the "romantic moment" in the Introduction. In that romantic moment, opposite ideas can fuse; it shows "the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing." It is where Nick can romantically merge two times - a meaningful time, "a fairy's

wing,” that has the beginning, the middle, and end, represented by myth, and a monotonous one, “the rock of the world,” the present that Nick experiences. Nick tries to redeem time in this way, and it is successful in his imagination for only a moment unlike his other attempt for redemption of time by making up the myth of Gatsby.

This moment is supposed to be in the past because it is an ideal place to imagine anachronistic innocence that is necessary for the romantic character of Gatsby. Nick needs this romantic character of Gatsby to throw fuel on his own romantic imagination. This moment is also paradoxical. The merging of two times is brought about by the separation of the past from the present. But this paradox does not hinder Nick’s momentary romantic imagination. Nick’s description of the romantic moment stands on the paradox without collapsing due to it. His imagination romantically overcomes the paradox while the existence of the paradox is connoted, as suggested by the image that “the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing.” To do this stunt Nick needs the intact past, in which he can fully exercise his romantic imagination.

We can call this type of past something innocent or pastoral as David Stouck does. Of course, it is quite imaginary, but this time and space, with which nothing seems to be able to interfere, backs up Nick's longing and is what Nick has created through his narration. It is valuable as long as interference with it is impossible like Charlie's past in "Babylon Revisited." This moment in the past is where a longing for recovery of a meaning of time can be satisfied.

**CHAPTER 2 HEMINGWAY'S FIFTH DIMENSION:  
READING "A CANARY FOR ONE," "THE END OF SOMETHING," "THE  
THREE-DAY BLOW," AND "BIG TWO-HEARTED RIVER"**

The kind of writing that can be done. How far prose can be carried if any one is serious enough and has luck. There is a fourth and fifth dimension that can be gotten.... It is more important than anything he can do. (27)

Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa*

Critics naturally have considered this mention of a "fourth dimension" as related to high modernist sensibility about temporality in Hemingway's works. For F. I. Carpenter, a Bergsonian understanding of time and representation of it is the "fourth dimension" of Hemingway's works,<sup>27</sup> while Ben Stoltzfus emphasizes the importance of Einstein's theory and Proust's method to represent time to understand the "fourth dimension." But what is the "fifth dimension"? This strange expression has perplexed critics.<sup>28</sup>

There is no doubt that Hemingway was conscious of a changing understanding of temporality in his time. As I will discuss later, like other contemporary high modernists, he did many experiments in the representation of time that are reflective of social and

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<sup>27</sup> Carpenter says "Bergson tried to interpret Einstein's scientific theory of the relativity of time for literary purposes" and "[i]f physical 'time' may be distorted by motion in space and by gravitation, the measurement of psychological time may be distorted even more" (86). Bergson represented this "distorted time" as duration that cannot be measured in the traditional way. According to Carpenter, this Bergsonian view of time represents the "fourth dimension" of time, and "these ideas find echoes in Hemingway's prose" (86). In other words, Carpenter regards our traditional concept of time (Newtonian time, which is linear and irreversible) as the third dimension of time because it is the most usual understanding of time for us in the same way as we usually recognize the world as three-dimensional. Then, he associates Bergsonian time, which was a new and unusual concept and hard to understand with our normal cognition, with the "fourth dimension" of time because we know the fourth dimension exists but cannot sense it clearly.

In this chapter, I will take the same position as Carpenter's. I will use his assumption that by "the fourth dimension" of time Hemingway implied Bergsonian time, which had a great influence over the concept of time of high modernists, and probe the possibility that "the fifth dimension" represents a different concept of time from "the fourth dimension" of time.

<sup>28</sup> Carpenter sums up critics' reactions in his essay. He says that Harry Levin's fourth dimension of time is "a series of images" "to convey the impression of time sequence and immediacy" and for Joseph Warren Beach it is related to "an 'esthetic factor' achieved by the hero's recurrent participation in some traditional 'ritual or strategy.'" Malcolm Cowley also related it to "'the almost continual performance of rites and ceremonies' suggesting the recurrent patterns of human experience" (83).

philosophical changes in the perception of time. His works ostentatiously focus on the present moment and in doing so, realize a Bergsonian merger between the present and the past, or the future and the present. This interest in a Bergsonian sense of time makes him a quintessential high modernist. In this regard, Carpenter and Stoltzfus, who link Hemingway's "fourth dimension" with a progressive understanding of time represented by Bergson or Proust, are right.

However, I think temporality as represented in Hemingway's works is not just progressive. Like his perspectives on gender and sexuality<sup>29</sup>, Hemingway's sense of time is ambivalent. In his stories a decisive difference between the past and the present, or the future and the present, which goes against the Bergsonian concept of duration, is also important. In Hemingway's short stories, high-modernist sensibility about time coexists with a view of time high modernists tended to deny, and the tension between the two creates suspense. I think that is why Hemingway mentions not only the "fourth dimension" but also the "fifth dimension." If the "fourth dimension" means the representation of temporality in a high modernist way, as critics say, the term "fifth dimension" implies something beyond that. It is not just a Bergsonian or Proustian representation of time; it points to the space where both progressive and reactionary interpretations of time coexist.

In this chapter, first I will closely examine the uniqueness of Hemingway's style and to what extent it represents a progressive sense of time, which can also be found in the works of

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<sup>29</sup> Hemingway is famous for his demonstration of a macho image both in his art and personal life. But critics such as Kenneth Lynn, Mark Spilka, and Debra Moddelmog have cast doubt on his machismo. As Kenneth Lynn points out, Hemingway's macho posturing is just a sign of his anxiety about his masculinity. Mark Spilka (*Hemingway's Quarrel with Androgyny*) and Nancy Comley and Robert Scholes (*Hemingway's Genders*) show that Hemingway's sense of gender was more advanced than previously thought. Debra Moddelmog indicates Hemingway's interest in homosexuality. Hemingway also wrote works that thematize anxiety about gender and sexuality such as "The Sea Change" and *The Garden of Eden*. Now it is obvious that Hemingway had a far more complex and liberal understanding of gender and sexuality than previously believed. But that does not necessarily deny his long-cherished image. It is hard to deny that Hemingway himself helped spread the "Papa Hemingway" image. So we might be able to say Hemingway was both reactionary and progressive concerning gender and sexuality.

other high modernists. Especially, I would like to cast a spotlight on the way Hemingway realizes Bergsonian or Proustian ideas in his short stories.

Then I will analyze four short stories to show how each text reflects Hemingway's progressive understanding of time and at the same time, how this progressiveness is marred by, or mixed with, reactionary factors. I will focus on the relationship between the future and the present in "A Canary for One" and between the present and the past in "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow." The past, the present, and the future are represented as connected in the form of Bergsonian duration while the texts also show disconnections among them. I will give a further examination of this strange ambivalence in reading "Big Two-Hearted River" and probe what "the fifth dimension" of time means.

### **EFFACEMENT OF A NARRATOR**

Hemingway's style is unique even from the present postmodern or contemporary perspective. Recent critics show less interest in it than previous ones, but early criticism presented a detailed discussion of Hemingway's style. For example, Sheldon Grebstein describes Hemingway's characteristic style:

The majority of sentences are short and declarative, arranged in a straightforward sequence determined by the internal logic of the action or situation . . . .

Like the sentence structure, the diction is also quite elementary and favors plain familiar, and monosyllabic words. Fewer adjectives and adverbs appear than in most literary styles or in real-life discourse. (133)

As Grebstein points out, Hemingway's sentences are brief and plain. They are far from a florid prose style.

Elizabeth Wells also points out that because of its extremely plain style, Hemingway's prose does not offer a cause-and-effect logic:

It is most often considered to be the language of those incapable of cause-and-effect reasoning and unable to perform the more sophisticated mental activity of abstracting generalities out of specifics. But in Hemingway's case it is not a matter of being incapable of cause-and-effect reasoning and abstraction but of being unwilling to present either in this story. (131)

These characteristics suggest a different emphasis for the role of a narrator in Hemingway's works. Plain and brief sentences that seem to give up on providing a cause-and-effect relationship to a story give us the impression that a narrator is more powerless than in the stories of other writers. As a result, we feel less of the presence of a narrator in Hemingway's works. Specifically, a narrator's interpretation of experience, generally woven into a narrative, is excluded from his works.<sup>30</sup> A narrator who adds adjectives and adverbs or generalizes and gives "cause-and-effect reasoning" to a story is missing. All of these behaviors are deeply linked with the way a narrator interprets a narrated story. Hemingway's works give a sense that there is no narrator by eliminating factors that can be considered to be his or her interpretation.<sup>31</sup>

Repetition, which is one of Hemingway's hallmarks, also connotes a narrator's absence because it seems to indicate the absence of a narrator's interference for generalization. It has been thought that Hemingway learned to use repetition under Gertrude Stein's influence. Stein uses repetition to make readers focus primarily on the present. Hemingway's use of repetition is not as bold as Stein's, but, as I will state later, we can find a Stein-esque focus on the present in his works. But, at the same time, repetition in Hemingway's works is important in another way.

Frank O'Connor, in his essay on Hemingway's literary techniques, extensively cites from "Big Two-Hearted River" to discuss repetition in Hemingway's works:

There was no underbrush in the island of *pine trees*. The *trunks* of the *trees* went straight up or slanted toward each other. The *trunks* were straight and *brown* without

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<sup>30</sup> For example, a narrator of "Indian Camp" only describes how young Nick thinks and feels. The narrator never explains or reflects upon the incident Nick encounters.

<sup>31</sup> Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren make the point clearer:

The short simple rhythms, the succession of co-ordinate clauses, and the general lack of subordination – all suggest a dislocated and ununified world. Hemingway is apparently trying to suggest in his style the direct experience – things as seen and felt, one after another, and not as the mind arranges and analyzes them. . . . But Hemingway, apparently, is primarily concerned with giving the immediate impact of experience rather than with analyzing and evaluating it in detail. (195)

*branches*. The *branches* were *high above*. Some interlocked to make a solid *shadow* on the *brown forest floor*. Around the grove of *trees* was a bare space. It was *brown* and soft underfoot as Nick walked on it. This was the over-lapping of the *pine-needle floor*, extending out beyond the width of the *high branches*. The *trees* had grown tall and the *branches* moved *high*, leaving in the sun this bare space they had once covered with *shadow*. Sharp at the edge of this extension of the *forest floor* commenced the sweet fern.

Nick slipped off his pack and lay down in the *shade*. He lay on his *back* and looked up into the *pine trees*. His neck and *back* and the small of his *back* rested as he stretched. The earth felt good against his *back*. He looked up at the sky, through the *branches*, and then shut his eyes. He opened them and looked up again. There was a wind *high* up in the *branches*. He shut his eyes again and went to sleep. (87 Italics by O'Connor)

In this way, O'Connor says, "Big Two-Hearted River" "is constructed with a very limited vocabulary of a few dozen words, like 'water,' 'current,' 'stream,' 'trees,' 'branches,' and 'shadow'" (87). This repetition of the same nouns means less interference from a narrator because using pronouns instead of nouns suggests a narrator's manipulation. For example, the second sentence could be "their trunks went straight up . . ." in which case readers sense the existence of a narrator, who changes "of the trees" to "their" for grammatical adequateness. In this regard, Hemingway's texts give the impression that they are freer from a narrator's interference, and that means a narrator has a reduced presence there. As Robert Lamb says of Hemingway, especially "in third-person narratives, the narrator and author are virtually absent" (16), which creates a sense of immediacy, one of the most distinct characteristics of Hemingway, as I will state later.

One of Hemingway's literary innovations is this denial of the traditional role of a narrator. Traditionally, a narrator was expected to narrate a story based on his or her interpretation of it, and he or she uses every technique to maximize an intended effect, often from an omniscient perspective. Compared with this type of narrator, Hemingway's narrators can apparently exert a far smaller influence over narrated stories. Instead, they are given a new role reflecting a new way in fiction writing in Hemingway's time, namely, high modernists' concern about new representations of time by functioning to merge two tenses in the texts.

It is often said that Hemingway's text is the best example of "showing," one of two narration styles posed by Henry James. "Showing" aims to eliminate a subjective aspect as much as possible in describing what is going on. As a result, a narrative proceeds in a matter-of-fact way as if a narrator was a movie camera and we saw a film recorded by it. Of course, a literary narrative is different from a visual image in various ways (and a camera does not decide on subject and angle), but we can still find many similarities, especially in the case of Hemingway's texts, which put much emphasis on "showing." Besides, if we look at the status of movies in the 1920s, when Hemingway began to publish his stories, it would not seem so strange to find an influence of the cinema on Hemingway's method of writing.

### **A NARRATOR AS A MOVIE CAMERA**

The movies had already become one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the 1920s. Movies gained popularity after World War I, and according to Drowne and Huber, by the mid-1920s, nearly every small town had at least one theater, and big cities such as New York and Chicago had hundreds of them. In 1928, America had "an estimated 28,000 movie theaters, which charged moviegoers 10-50 cents for a ticket" (229).

Jill Jividen sums up critics' discussions on the influence of film on Hemingway's narrative technique when she notes "how he zooms in and pans out of scenes; how he uses multiple points of view; how his dialogue resonates in and from film noir" (78).<sup>32</sup> Carl Ficken, one of the critics most deeply involved with the analysis of a point of view in Hemingway's stories, also compares Hemingway's narrators to a movie camera. He classifies Hemingway's stories into four categories according to their level of objectivity. In the most objective stories such as "The Killers" a camera stays outside characters throughout the stories, but as stories get more subjective, "a camera gradually moves in, closer and closer to Nick Adams" (97). In the completely subjective stories such as "Now I Lay Me" a camera

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<sup>32</sup> Bernard Oldsey also points out that Hemingway uses the crosscutting method, which is another technique for movie making (239).

stays inside the protagonist, Nick, almost all the time and keeps recording what comes to his mind.

What is important for this essay in Ficken's discussion is that Hemingway does not take a different approach to his first person and third person stories; rather what matters is the distance of a camera from characters. Hemingway does not combine an omniscient narration and psychological descriptions. He has only one camera as a narrator, and a narrative becomes subjective when a camera goes into a character's mind and objective when it remains outside. To put it another way, his works have one external focalizer working like a movie camera. Even when it seems to work as an internal focalizer, it mostly remains external.<sup>33</sup>

This is his biggest difference from Dashiell Hammett, whose hard-boiled style is often said to be similar to Hemingway's. In Hammett's works, a camera always stays outside characters, and a narrative is so objective that there are no descriptions that directly show what characters think and feel. But Hemingway developed a way of "showing" even characters' inner thoughts without giving up his new narrating style. We might say that Hemingway takes a more effective approach than Hammett and makes it possible to present a sense of immediacy, which is what Hammett's style aims to show, even in his first person narratives. Without resorting to an omniscient narrator or losing its sense of immediacy, Hemingway's style enables a wider variety of representations than Hammett's.

A sense of immediacy is one of the effects created by a-narrator-as-a-movie-camera method. As Robert Lamb says<sup>34</sup>, it is achieved by the removal of a traditional narrator and by

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<sup>33</sup> Focalizer is a controversial term. When I use this term, I draw upon Genette's original idea that distinguishes "the question *who sees?* And the question *who speaks?*" (186) Genette associates the former with "focalizer" and the latter with "voice."

<sup>34</sup> "Only two of [Hemingway's] fifty-three stories are fully in external focalization. Nevertheless, in his internally focalized stories, in third-person and even in first-person, we find a preponderance of external focalization, the effect of which is to give the stories a new kind of immediacy by removing the narrator from sight and allowing readers to pick up on the

giving readers the impression that what is narrated is what is happening “now.” In Hemingway’s and Hammett’s texts, the present is apparently far more important than the past because it seems that they describe not so much past events narrated by someone later as the present events occurring in front of readers. In this regard, their aims are similar to Gertrude Stein’s in their emphasis on the present, though their approaches do not take as extreme a form as hers. With their original method of narration, both Hemingway and Hammett can be said to share the mania for the present in high modernism.

We can find everywhere in Hemingway’s texts this emphasis on the present. For example, his short stories usually describe an episode during a very short time, and neither the past nor the future are usually described there. Narratives focus only on the present, fleeting moment, and in most cases, we do not know what precedes or follows a described episode. His stories are the tip of the iceberg, as it were, and provide clues from which readers are asked to construct the whole picture.

The status of places and characters in Hemingway’s works shows the same tendency. Frank O’Connor points out the anonymity of characters and locations in Hemingway’s works:

In his stories one is forever coming upon that characteristic setting of the cafe, the station restaurant, the waiting room, or the railway carriage - clean, well-lighted, utterly anonymous places. The characters, equally anonymous, emerge suddenly from the shadows where they have been lurking, perform their little scene, and depart again into shadows. (90)

This anonymity of places and people also points to the predominance of the present in Hemingway’s works. O’Connor’s remark means that places and characters seem to lack their past and future. We can infer what happened or will happen to them, but it will never be clearly specified. The places and characters appear to be present only in the present. The present is, apparently, the most important tense in Hemingway’s works because everything seems to happen in the present time and place.

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impressionist details Hemingway has carefully - as carefully as Nick turns his head - left for them” (89-90).

But, at the same time, this “present” is also the past. The strange coexistence of these two tenses is particularly clear in Hemingway’s narratives. To discuss it, we have to think about how a narrator as a movie camera functions in Hemingway’s texts.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida says, “the technical structure of the *archiving* also determines the structure of the *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future” (17). That is, he says that the nature of the archive can determine what will be cached into it. So if the former changes, the latter necessarily changes. If we regard a literary text as a kind of archive, we can say that Hemingway’s new method of narration made possible a new type of content. Development of a new way of recording naturally brings about a change in the recorded content. As I will state later, Hemingway’s style, which seems to focus on the present, made possible a literary text in which two time phases merge.

What is most important in archiving is the anticipation of the future when what one is recording now will be reviewed. Mark Currie says:

The archive is not a passive record, but an active producer of the present: an ‘archiving archive’ which structures the present in anticipation of its recollection. We know this also from narrative consciousness, which is by no means an exclusive characteristic of the contemporary world, but which is now assisted by a technological army of recording and archiving devices . . . The structure of the archiving archive, or the envisaged future which produces the present as memory, is the heart of narrative. (12)

When we film something with a movie or video camera, nobody would fail to think of the future when we will look back to it as something in the past because that is the primary aim of filming. So we can say that we perceive what we are filming as something at once in the present and in the past (from a perspective in the future). Of course, as Currie says, all narratives share this characteristic. For example, novels are usually written in the past tense while they try to describe events as if they were happening as they were witnessed. A visual image shows this tendency much more clearly. In novels, narrators often imply that they narrate past events by inserting their opinions from the present perspective. But a visual

image mostly focuses on what is going on in the present moment, and it is very rare that its pastness is directly hinted at, as in novels.

A visual image is associated with its present far more clearly than is the case in novels. But, at the same time, we know the given image points to what occurred in the past. There is a paradoxical logic: the more accurately the present moment is depicted, the clearer its pastness becomes. The more a narrative concentrates on description of the present moment, the clearer it becomes that it is just a certain moment in the past. Hemingway's works, which are quite reflective of a cinematic approach to temporality, present this paradox clearly. Hemingway's style does not just aim to describe the present accurately. It helps the present and the past intersect in his texts in an obvious way.

This characteristic of Hemingway's works might be most discernible in his first-person stories such as "Now I Lay Me," his least experimental story. A first-person story strongly makes us sense the existence of the "I," who narrates the past story in the present. But this type of story lacks a sense of immediacy. In first-person stories it would be hard for readers to discern the coexistence of the present and the past as clearly as in third-person stories because the former generally place much emphasis on pastness. In reading first-person narratives, we almost always sense the existence of narrators and are under the impression that what is narrated are past stories told later. In fact, "Now I Lay Me" is like a short memoir, and there is hardly the sense of immediacy other Hemingway's stories have.

Coexistence of the present and the past is most fully realized in his third-person stories such as "The Killers" and "Hills Like White Elephants." Hemingway does not just use a cinematic approach there. He also takes advantage of a characteristic of first-person narratives and establishes a clearer coexistence of two tenses. As Ficken says, some of Hemingway's third-person narratives can be easily converted to first-person narratives.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ficken argues about "Big Two-Hearted River" as follows:

Hemingway's narrative has both third-person and first-person aspects; the former is suitable for foregrounding presentness and the latter emphasizes pastness. His texts are mostly in tension between these two perspectives, and this leads to his unique approach to temporality. Ficken takes "Big Two-Hearted River" as an example. In addition to that, I will also look into this aspect when I discuss "A Canary for One" later, which will shed light on this issue in a rather strange way.

In the way I have discussed, Hemingway's narrative realizes the coexistence of the present and the past by focusing on the present to the most extreme degree. Readers see an event developing in the present moment, while conscious of the future when it is told as something in the past. Two tenses, each of which is represented more clearly than in previous prose works, conflict and coexist in Hemingway's narrative.

In this regard, it can be said that Hemingway followed a path similar to that of other high modernists who tried to merge the past and the present in their works. However, Hemingway's approach is unique in that he mostly uses a brief story, which consists of terse sentences, to achieve that effect while other high modernists such as Proust, Joyce, and Faulkner used lengthy, complicated narratives. However, as I will state later, this uniqueness entails a rather problematic aspect Proust and Joyce's texts do not share.

Hemingway hints at this approach in *Green Hills of Africa*:

All I wanted to do now was get back to Africa. We had not left it, yet, but when I would wake in the night I would lie, listening, homesick for it already.

Now, looking out the tunnel of trees over the ravine at the sky with white clouds moving across in the wind, I loved the country so that I was happy as you are after you have been with a woman that you really love, when, empty, you feel it welling up again and there it is and you can never have it all and yet what there is, now, you can have, and you want more and more, to have, and be, and live in, to possess now again for always, for

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At no point in the story does the focus come from any observer other than Nick; at every point first person would work. At the outset, Nick watches the train move "out of sight" and the reader is immediately placed so that he sees through Nick's eyes. In fact, one of the amazing things about this story is the way the author constantly surrounds the character with sensory images so that the reader feels he has stepped into Nick's skin. Many of the verbs are *look, watch, see* verbs, with the effect that the reader is always seeing what Nick sees. (106)

that long, sudden-ended always; making time stand still, sometimes so very still that afterwards you wait to hear it move, and it is slow in starting. (72)

Here Hemingway suggests two points that are important for my discussion. Towards the end of this excerpt, he states how to make “time stand still” and “hear it move” afterwards. In other words, he explains how to re-experience the past static moment. Of course, he wants to stay forever in the present moment. But this passage also tells us that he knows it is impossible. The past moment stands still like his short stories, but we can feel it moving even in the present. To put it the other way around, the past and the present can intersect in some way, but we cannot help being aware that the past moment is primarily in the past because it stands still and “afterwards” we can “hear it move.” While it is suggested that the boundary between the past and the present can be transgressed and we can experience the past moment as if it were the present, we cannot turn our eyes away from the boundary. It is also important that this static past moment is associated with sexual climax, considering the fact that Hemingway was at once advanced and reactionary in terms of gender distinction, as I have already stated. In sexual climax he can be one with a woman, that is, merges with her, but he also cannot help being conscious of the boundary between him and the woman, which was likely to lead him to the demonstration of his own macho image. In this way, Hemingway’s attitude is at once old and new about various concepts.

Even when we are in the present, we are conscious of the possibility that it will become the past. Hemingway says that he already feels homesick for Africa even before he leaves it. In the present life he thinks of the future when he looks back at it. This means the present he is now experiencing always evokes the possibility of becoming the past, and this is what happens in his texts. Of course, people are likely to feel this way especially when they have a good time. Probably that is why Hemingway’s short stories often describe a happy moment, at least happy compared with afterward, in which characters vaguely anticipate a relatively unhappy future. “A Canary for One,” “The End of Something,” “The Three-Day Blow,” and

“Big Two-Hearted River,” stories I will discuss in this chapter, are of that type. Seeing at once the present and the past in an unfolding event means recognizing it as at once present and lost. This feeling is necessarily contingent to the attempt at “making time stand still” and hearing “it move” afterwards because one knows that the time standing still is fixed in the past moment and all one can do is hear or see it move. It has already been lost as long as we cannot directly experience it and is present as long as we can restructure it to some extent in some way.

Unlike what is the case in Proust and Joyce, and like what it is in Fitzgerald and Faulkner, we can find in Hemingway’s text both the desire to merge the past and the present and despair when doing that. In his text a lament over the lost present or past lies behind the struggle to describe the present as accurately as possible. For, in Hemingway’s narrative, coexistence of the past and the present also means separation between them. While Proust tries to link the past to the present by reviving the former in the latter, Hemingway tries to achieve the same effect by distinguishing the former from the latter. To put it another way, while Proust tries to blur the boundary between the past and the present, Hemingway makes it clear. A Hemingway short story is like a static moment, unlike Proust’s or Joyce’s very long novels that aim to create a semantic space where the past and the present can intimately interrelate. This is Hemingway’s strategy to achieve coexistence or merge the past and the present, but this attempt cannot be separated from recognition of the qualitative difference between the two. In other words, his text is reflective of two conflicting understandings of time: an “old or traditional” understanding of time that draws a clear line between the past and the present, or the present and the future, and a “new” understanding of time that is not tied to and obscures previous classifications of temporality.<sup>36</sup> His text is, as it were, torn

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<sup>36</sup> I do not say that representation of time completely changed from “old” to “new” in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. But it is true that a drastic change in the understanding of time was one of the big social and philosophical transformations in those days. It is no wonder that high modernists,

between nostalgia for the old regime and enthusiasm for the new high modernist movement, and Hemingway's strategy makes it possible to subsume both without compromising the unity of his work.

### THE FUTURE AND THE PRESENT IN "A CANARY FOR ONE"

These two levels of coexistence or conflict - the past and the present, and the old and the new understandings of time - are most discernible in "A Canary for One." "A Canary for One" has attracted comparatively little academic attention probably because it has a strange structure, unlike Hemingway's other well-organized short stories. It begins in the usual Hemingway style.

The train passed very quickly a long, red stone house with a garden and four thick palm-trees with tables under them in the shade. On the other side was the sea. Then there was a cutting through red stone and clay, and the sea was only occasionally and far below against rocks.

"I bought him in Palermo," the American lady said. "We only had an hour ashore and it was Sunday morning. The man wanted to be paid in dollars and I gave him a dollar and a half. He really sings very beautifully."

It was very hot in the train and it was very hot in the lit salon compartment. (258)

It is a third-person narrative that has one external focalizer that works like a movie camera.<sup>37</sup> The narrator's presence is very weak (we do not even know if the narrator appears as a character in the story at this point), and the narrative only tells what is happening. It has a sense of immediacy, a trademark of Hemingway's short stories.

But, in the middle of the story, suddenly "I" appears on the scene, and the narrative changes from third-person to first-person:

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who were strongly conscious of being new leaders of high art, tried to emphasize their newness against old or traditional representations. I think that this break between the old and the new occurred because of the art movement called high modernism, and the transformation in the representation of time was one of the theoretical grounds for its newness.

<sup>37</sup> According to Patrick O'Neill, there are three levels of focalization: simple, compound, and complex. He says that, in principle, most prose works have compound focalization, that is, two focalizers at the same time: a character-focalizer and a narrator-focalizer. Hemingway's stories often have compound focalization, but they are unique in that they seem to have simple focalization, that is, a single focalizer. Since narrators do not assert themselves when they describe what characters say or think, readers tend to forget there exist two focalizers at the same time.

There were tram-cars in the towns and big advertisements for the Belle Jardiniere and Dubonnet and Pernod on the walls toward the train. All that the train passed through looked as though it were before breakfast. For several minutes I had not listened to the American lady, who was talking to my wife.

“Is your husband American too?” asked the lady.

“Yes,” said my wife. “We’re both Americans.”

“I thought you were English.”

“Oh, no.”

“Perhaps that was because I wore braces,” I said. (259)

This conversion to the first person narrative seems to be quite sudden. It is not unusual for prose works to begin with the short third-person narrative and then change to the first-person narrative with the appearance of an “I.” But this technique is mostly used to give a description of scenery or social background as an introduction to the narrator’s emotional state or social status. In “A Canary for One,” “I” appears almost halfway through the story. Until then, the narrative describes scenery and the American lady’s behavior without “I” in a matter-of-fact way. Compared with other works that employ a similar technique, the appearance of “I” is too late, and it seems that this story does not need “I.”

Julian Smith, the first critic who paid serious attention to this short story, gives a positive evaluation to this sudden change of person, saying “thus, we progress from interest in the American lady alone to interest in the American lady and the American couple to interest in the American couple alone” (234). But in his other stories Hemingway never uses this change of person to change focus. Reading them gives us enough reason to believe that he could have focused on the American couple without switching to the first person as he always did. I think that this awkward progression of the narrative unwittingly betrays the unique aspect of Hemingway’s method of writing short stories rather than shows his ingenious technique even if it was his conscious decision, as Smith says.

Importantly, because of this conversion to the first-person narrative, the pastness of the story becomes more noticeable than in the previous section that seems to focus on the present in the third-person narrative, because now the presence of the narrator, who tells this story

afterwards, is more discernible. This implied pastness becomes obvious at the end of the story.

This story mainly describes communication between the American lady and the American couple, who meet on a foreign train. Nothing special happens in the text. So it might look like just a sketch until we read the final line, “We were returning to Paris to set up separate residences” (261). This final line is very surprising because most readers would not detect the crisis the couple are facing until reading it, and it clearly explains why this story is told.

The final line tells us that this story is worth recording because it depicts the happier moment for “I” before their final breakup, which is completely different from the less happy present situation, and the fact that the story describes the past event is clearly shown. Hemingway’s short stories usually lack an external perspective that can give us an explanation as to what meanings they have for narrators. As to stories that have a simple storyline such as “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” our interest is usually on what is told. In that type of story, what is told is more important than why it is told. But sketch-like stories in which nothing special happens such as “Cat in the Rain” and “A Clean, Well-lighted Place” also attract our attention to the “why” question because this type of story naturally raises in our mind the question of why what had happened in a particular moment was recorded. This is all the more so with the sketch-like Nick Adams stories such as “The Three-Day Blow” and “Cross-Country Snow” because the narrator could have chosen other moments of Nick’s life. The final line of “A Canary for One” gives an answer to this question in a rather blatant way. It tells us that the reason a narrator runs a movie camera and films what is happening around him is that this is the important moment for him. Of course, the story is about the past event and narrated afterwards. But Hemingway’s focus on the present makes us feel as if somebody were filming things, anticipating they would become a

cherished memory some day, and this anticipation becomes a reality in the final line.

We can probably say that this story makes visible the techniques Hemingway tacitly uses in writing fiction, especially short stories. He, consciously or unconsciously, exposes what mechanisms are at work in his text. This is why this story has a unique structure as compared to his other stories.

Sudden conversion from the third-person to the first-person narrative shows that Hemingway's third-person narrative can be changed to the first-person at any point, as Ficken says. His third-person narrative almost always has the possibility of converting to first-person, and "A Canary for One" quite overtly shows that the focalizer in his stories is mostly external, and it works like a movie camera because the narrative voice is often the least omniscient and seems to only record what is going on in front of the camera.<sup>38</sup> Hemingway's text is in a tension between the focus on the present and the possibility of seeing it as a memory. Even if Hemingway's text seems to focus on the present, it describes the past, and even if it seems to describe the past, this past can be described as the present. In this way, coexistence of the past and the present is realized in Hemingway's text. "A Canary for One" reveals this attitude of Hemingway's toward temporality in an awkward, but pretty effective, way.

However, as I have already pointed out, this coexistence of the past and the present presupposes the separation between them. The last line of "A Canary for One" tells us that there is a clear border between the future (as the present) and the present (as the past). The description in the story is full of a sense of immediacy, but at the same time, it is true that the story is about the moment that has already been lost. As Julian Smith says, there are many images that evoke something caged or trapped.<sup>39</sup> This story itself is caged or trapped in the

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<sup>38</sup> In "Preparing for the End: Hemingway's Revisions of 'A Canary for One'" Scott Donaldson discusses in detail how easily the third-person narrative in the story can be read as the first-person narrative.

<sup>39</sup> Scott Donaldson succinctly summarizes Smith's discussion:

As Julian Smith has shown, "A Canary for One" is a story full of traps and cages: that of

past like the time standing still Hemingway mentions in *Green Hills of Africa*, and we can never turn our eyes from this fact while reading the passages focusing on the present.

This story presents the border between the future and the present as well as the coexistence of the two tenses. But we should also pay attention to another border: the one between the past and the present. In the same way as most of Hemingway's other stories, this story deals with a critical moment. Like the couple in "Hills Like White Elephants," the American couple has not yet broken up in the story, but obviously their happiest time has already passed. They are anticipating a final breakup. As Donaldson points out, the wife makes an insinuation about their happier time through a conversation with the American lady.<sup>40</sup> Apparently, they think their past is completely different from now. Their intimate relationship in the story is being lost. It still exists, but something has ended. In the next section I will argue about the relationship between the past and the present in Hemingway's short stories, taking "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow" as examples.

#### **THE PAST AND THE PRESENT IN "THE END OF SOMETHING" AND "THE THREE-DAY BLOW"**

"The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow," Hemingway's early stories, share his characteristic narrative style but their narrative contents are more concentrated on the representation of time. In this section I will analyze how an "end of something" can carry various meanings in these stories.

The beginning of "The End of Something" describes the decline of Hortons Bay, which had once prospered, in two paragraphs:

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the canary itself, that of the daughter shut off from her life by her dominating mother, that of the husband and wife in the hot compartment at the mercy of the mindless but painful talk of the American lady (236).

<sup>40</sup> Actually, the wife initiates conversation twice, once to ask pointedly, after hearing of the daughter's broken engagement, "Did she get over it?" and again to bring up the subject of her own honeymoon. This reminiscence about happier times and marital solidarity ("We" spent our honeymoon in Vevey. "We" stayed at the Trois Couronnes. "We" liked our room and enjoyed the good weather.) apparently distresses the husband (233).

In the old days Hortons Bay was a lumbering town. No one who lived in it was out of sound of the big saws in the mill by the lake. Then one year there were no more logs to make lumber. The lumber schooners came into the bay and were loaded with the cut of the mill that stood stacked in the yard. . . . The schooner moved out of the bay. . . . And it moved out into the open lake, carrying with it everything that had made the mill a mill and Hortons Bay a town.

The one-story bunkhouses, the eating house, the company store, the mill offices, and the big mill itself stood deserted in the acres of sawdust that covered the swampy meadow by the shore of the bay. (200)

This opening is followed by Nick and Marjorie's arrival at this place, where Hortons Bay had once existed, and his bringing up breaking up with her.

But while some critics see a consistency between the opening and the following part, not a few critics have been perplexed by it.<sup>41</sup> For the tone of this opening part, which describes a social history that Hortons Bay has fallen prey to, is quite different from that of the following part that details a tense conversation between Nick and Marjorie. There would probably be no problem for this story without this opening part, and it is unclear whether it increases the artistic value of this story. It is strange for Hemingway, who is famous for omitting the unnecessary, to need this part, which is called by Joseph DeFalco an "appended parable" (42).

Why did Hemingway need this part? I would like to start with this question. Then I will argue how Hemingway's sense of time is important in his early works, "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow."

Whether it fits well with the whole structure of the story or not, the function of the opening part seems obvious. Critics have agreed that this story depicts the end of the

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<sup>41</sup> For example, though admitting that there is "an apparent inconsistency between introduction and main story" (214), Horst Kruse asserts the opening part presents the lesson we should draw from the rest of the story, saying: "The introduction, in fact, elucidates the lesson that the story has for the protagonist: all things run their natural course, and submission and acceptance are the only sensible responses" (214).

Lisa Tyler associates the virginity of the forest around Hortons Bay with that of Marjorie from an ecofeministic perspective.

On the other hand, Paul Smith introduces the opinions of the critics who are perplexed by the inconsistency between the two parts (204).

relationship between Nick and Marjorie, and most readers would have the same impression. In this context, the opening part can be considered to symbolically express the theme that something has ended and is irrevocable and to foretell the end of the relationship between Nick and Marjorie.<sup>42</sup> But the bewilderment of critics, who consider the opening part is not necessarily in harmony with what follows, would stem from the suspicion that this symbol does not work well, in addition to the astonishment that Hemingway, who seldom uses a symbol in his stories, should do so in this one.

It is certain that the end of good old Hortons Bay, described at the opening, seems to anticipate that of the relationship between Nick and Marjorie. However, careful reading reveals that unlike the end of Hortons Bay, which tells us that something has ended and we can do nothing about it, the relationship between the couple is more complex. Nick's friend Bill plays an important role here.

He comes to meet Nick after Marjorie has left and rowed away in a boat. The fact that he appears immediately after she leaves is important. Paul Smith points out that Bill and Marjorie are juxtaposed. According to Smith, in the first draft of the story Bill touches Nick while Marjorie does not. But in the final draft the sentence "without touching each other" is added after "[Nick and Marjorie] sat on the blanket" (203), while the statement that Bill touches Nick is removed, and the sentence that "Bill didn't touch [Nick], either" is added. This revision shows that Hemingway tries to make sure that their functions in this story are very similar. In other words, Hemingway wants them to be equally important for Nick. They represent, as it were, two choices that Nick, who stands at an important crossroads in his life, faces, and we can probably say that the fact that Bill appears as soon as Marjorie leaves

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<sup>42</sup> Frederic J. Svoboda argues that "Hortons Bay in Hemingway's time was hardly the ghost town of 'The End of Something.' . . . It was rather a small summer resort particularly noted for restaurants serving fried chicken dinners" (19). Hemingway obviously intends to emphasize the difference between the past and the present by changing "a small summer resort" to a ruined town.

means that Nick abandons the option represented by Marjorie and chooses the one represented by Bill.

This idea is confirmed by Bill's remark in "The Three-Day Blow" that depicts Nick and Bill after the event in "The End of Something." When Nick is with him in his house, this is their conversation:

"You were very wise, Wemedge," Bill said.

"What do you mean?" asked Nick.

"To bust off that Marge business," Bill said.

"I guess so," said Nick.

"It was the only thing to do. If you hadn't, by now you'd be back home working trying to get enough money to get married." (213)

Even after this, Bill continues to talk about the harmfulness of marriage. What he tries to say is, in short, that Nick would not be with him any more if Nick had decided to continue the relationship with Marjorie. In other words, he implies that Nick would have had to give up the relationship with him if he had chosen the option represented by Marjorie.

Re-reading "The End of Something" with this in mind, we can find that Nick actually had faced not only the end of the relationship with Marjorie but also another latent one. He would have had to part with Bill if he had not given up Marjorie. Of course, that does not mean he could never have seen Bill again; it means he would have to part with the kind of time which Bill and Nick spend in "The Three-Day Blow," that is, the time in which they can chat the whole day without working. We can call it boyhood or adolescence. It will naturally end if one gets married, has a child and takes the responsibility to maintain his family. But Nick avoids a marriage and returns to his irresponsible boyhood or adolescence. Of course, one cannot stay there forever. This harsh fact overshadows "The End of Something."

Toward the end of "The Three-Day Blow," Bill's remark, "You might get back into it again" (215), gladdens Nick's heart. Nick "felt happy. Nothing was finished. Nothing was ever lost. He would go into town on Saturday. . . . There was always a way out" (216).

This idea that "nothing has ended and we can always recover it" merely expresses

Nick's childish and overly optimistic hope. For the passage: "[o]utside now the Marge business was no longer so tragic. It was not even very important. The wind blew everything like that away" (216), gives us the impression that this buoyant mood of Nick's stems from his drawing on Bill's remark in order to avert his eyes from his psychological burden rather than the revelation of some important truth.

The reason Nick tries to draw on the idea that he can always recover what he has lost is, of course, that he feels bruised from the breakup with Marjorie. But if we consider that Nick feels an emotional upheaval when facing the two options embodied by Marjorie and Bill, the idea that "one can always recover what has been lost" applies to Bill.

It would be possible to see Nick's anxiety here because even if Nick parts with Marjorie now, it is clear that there will appear another Marjorie, and it is uncertain whether Nick will be able to recover the time with male friends, or adolescence, if he chooses marriage. Moreover, if Nick wants to be a member of society, he will have to choose a Marjorie and put an end to an irresponsible life with male friends. In fact, in "Cross-Country Snow," Nick is married and has to sacrifice his time with male friends.

Thus in "The End of Something" there is more than one end. Though the end of the relationship between Nick and Marjorie is explicit, there is the latent end of the relationship between Nick and Bill behind it. We - especially the readers who have read the stories that depict Nick later, such as "Cross-Country Snow" - can guess that the latter will inevitably happen even if Nick avoids it temporarily. This complexity is inconsistent with the unequivocalness of the opening part. While the opening part makes it clear that the good old days of Hortons Bay have ended, it is very hard to determine what has ended in the following part. In short, the assertion that something has decisively ended and the question of whether something has really ended coexist in "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow." I think that is why the opening part seems to be an "appended parable."

This coexistence is linked to that of two temporalities we saw in “A Canary for One.” While the history of Hortons Bay gives a clear-cut example of an “old” understanding of time, the temporality that involves Nick, Marjorie, and Bill is far more complex and harder to classify into temporal categories - the past, the present, and the future. So we can also find Hemingway’s characteristic handling of time here.

Interestingly, this coexistence of two understandings of time is projected not only onto a narrative framework and content but also into Nick’s feelings. Nick is a character in the third-person narrative, but at the same time, he is like the first-person narrator because, as I have stated earlier, Hemingway’s third-person narrative can easily be turned to first-person, and as many critics have pointed out, Nick strongly reminds us of Hemingway himself. This bilateral character of Nick makes the Nick Adams stories those in which Hemingway’s way of representing time is the most recognizable because they can be read as a first-person narrative by the author himself, while they are described in the third person.

Though he is reminiscent of adolescent Hemingway, Nick in “The End of Something” and “The Three-Day Blow” is not, like Hemingway, a writer. Unlike the narrator of “A Canary for One,” who calmly narrates what happened on a certain past moment, Nick does not even know how to put his sentiments into words.

Critics have pointed out Nick’s immaturity in these works. Carlos Baker indicates Nick is over 20 in “The End of Something” (132-33). In editing *The Nick Adams Stories*, Philip Young put “The End of Something” and “The Three-Day Blow” after “Big Two-Hearted River.” He apparently thought those two stories depict Nick after his return from the war. Yet, as Takaki Hiraishi points out, if Baker and Young are right, Nick’s attitude is too immature for his age.<sup>43</sup> He cannot, or does not want to, explain why he wants to leave Marjorie. The only

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<sup>43</sup> Hiraishi also points out that Nick’s immaturity partly stems from Hemingway’s style. Hemingway’s writing technique, which is famously described as the tip of iceberg technique, refuses to give detailed explanations. Thus sometimes it makes his characters appear immature.

thing he can say is that he does not "know what to say" (204).

But this immaturity is what Nick wants. Except for "Fathers and Sons," in which Nick accepts the role of a father, he often shows a desire to refuse to fulfill an adult role. We can understand this attitude of his, considering the predicament his father is in. In "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," we can see a lack of stereotypical masculinity in Nick's father. Though insulted by an Indian, he cannot retort, and his wife holds a dominating position in his house. The fact that Nick's father, who is the closest adult man to Nick, spends his life unhappy no doubt urges the son to stick to his present status.

For Nick, and probably for Hemingway, the future seems hopeless, and his stories like "The Three-Day Blow," which describes two men who are about to go out into the world, can best be understood in this context. They are at a critical moment, and so they try to stay in the present.

In this way, Hemingway's characteristic narrative style - a focus on the present - and Nick's adhesion to the present have a close relationship. As Hiraishi points out, Hemingway's style highlights Nick's immaturity, but we can also say that Nick's immaturity asks for such a style.

But, unlike Bill, Nick does not give his wholehearted approval to that rather simple perspective on time: the future is bad, and the present is good. It is true that Nick wants to share Bill's idea. Nevertheless, his reaction is not always simple. When asked for a clear answer, he agrees with Bill, but, it seems, not in a wholehearted way. He silently nods or immaturely keeps saying, "I don't know."<sup>44</sup> As opposed to the simple depiction of others of Hemingway's characters, Nick's reaction shows he shares Hemingway's sense of time to a great extent. In "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow" Nick stands paralyzed and speechless, torn between ambivalent perspectives on time: something has ended or not,

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<sup>44</sup> In "Cross-Country Snow" most of Nick's answers to George's questions about his future plans are ambiguous, including, repeatedly, "I don't know."

or something will end or not. He cannot apparently find the right words for this situation. It is in “Big Two-Hearted River” that we can find the process in which Nick finds a way of representing his aporia and all of the characteristics of Hemingway’s narrative I have discussed so far.

### **TIME AND RIVER IN “BIG TWO-HEARTED RIVER”**

I chose “Big Two-Hearted River” as the last story to discuss in this chapter not only because it is one of Hemingway’s masterpieces but also because, as I have just said, it involves all the aspects we have seen in “A Canary for One,” “The End of Something,” and “The Three-Day Blow.” In this story we can find both an attempt to overcome temporal borders and a failure to do so.

Since Philip Young emphasized the importance of war trauma as represented in Hemingway’s works, this story has been interpreted by critics as describing how Nick, returned from the war, tries to heal his mental wounds through fishing in the river. As I will state later, Hemingway himself supports this interpretation. Critics who focus on time in this story have tended to argue how time is related or not to Nick’s mental recovery. First I will look at those discussions and then give a new perspective on temporality in the story.

Sheridan Baker is probably the first critic who saw “Two-Hearted River” as a representation of time. He calls the river “the stream of consciousness, of time, of life” (153) and tries to find a ritualistic meaning in fishing there. Joseph Flora looks further into temporality and gives a detailed discussion. Citing Henry David Thoreau, who likens a river to time in *Walden*, Flora says “Two-Hearted River” is a representation of time, and Nick is out of harmony with time, which is flowing smoothly when he looks down at the river at the beginning of the story (150). He also says that in the Nick Adams stories a mismatch between “calendar time” and “psychological time” often becomes a problem, and the heat Nick feels at the beginning of the story signifies mental closeness to his war experience, which does not

follow “calendar time” (154).

When the story starts, the river symbolizes “calendar time,” and Nick is alienated from the smooth flow of time because the river, which flows linearly in a steady rhythm, is appropriate for symbolizing “calendar time,” which progresses in an orderly way, while Nick’s “psychological time” is confused because of the war and traumas from the past, and no longer flows as smoothly as “calendar time.” This is what the opening scene tells us in terms of the representation of time.

The river as the smooth flow of time is a metaphor that works not only for Nick but also for the narrative itself. The beginning of this short story describes the burned-out site where once the town called Seney existed. Seney no longer exists now; it belongs to the past like Hortons Bay in “The End of Something.”<sup>45</sup> Then the story ends when Nick thinks of fishing in the swamp shortly (“There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp” [180]). In other words, the story ends when Nick envisions the future. This story begins with a description of the past and ends with an anticipation of the future, and the river runs between the past and the future. The narrative progresses along this river from the past to the future.

Nick, who looks at the river from the bridge, goes to the upper stream and starts fishing along the stream. What is noticeable here is rhythmical regularity of Nick’s behavior, which is almost mechanical. For example, Nick’s fishing is shown as follows:

Nick leaned back against the current and took a hopper from the bottle. He threaded the hopper on the hook and spat on him for good luck. Then he pulled several yards of line from the reel and tossed the hopper out ahead onto the fast, dark water. It floated down toward the logs, then the weight of the line pulled the bait under the surface. Nick held the rod in his right hand, letting the line run out through his fingers. (192)

Hemingway’s method of writing, which thoroughly sticks to what is happening, calls attention to the regularity of Nick’s behavior. Nick tries to act regularly in the river, which

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<sup>45</sup> Jack Jobst claims that burned-out Seney also represents Hemingway’s young bachelor days, which were lost and irrevocable when he wrote this story.

flows smoothly and regularly. In doing so, he tries to make his confused “psychological time” align in harmony with the linear, “calendar time,” which is represented by the river.

At the same time, it is important that Nick’s behavior probably repeats his past fishing trip. Nick’s mechanical way of fishing is possible because he did it in the past, and critics have argued that the river fishing Nick visualizes in “Now I Lay Me” has a similarity to that in “Big Two-Hearted River.” This visualized river fishing reflects Nick’s experience in his childhood (“I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind” [144]). It belongs to the past, and through fishing Nick tries to repeat this past. He does this, focusing on his immediate actions, without even recognizing the pastness imaged or imagined in his behavior.<sup>46</sup> Repetition of the same action is also very ritualistic. In fact, critics have paid attention to the ritualistic aspect of Nick’s behavior, as I will mention later. Nick’s mechanical repetition creates a special space where the past and the present merge for him.

We can find a similar tendency in the relationship between the present and the future. Nick is conscious of the swamp, in which he thinks of fishing shortly at the end of the story, all the time.<sup>47</sup> As soon as he reaches the river, he looks over “the meadow, the stretch of river and the swamp” (166). Looking out of the tent at the end of the first part of the story, he also finds “[t]he swamp was perfectly quiet” (169). At the beginning of the second part, he makes sure that “[t]here was the meadow, the river and the swamp,” and “[a]s Nick watched, a mink crossed the river on the logs and went into the swamp” (173). While fishing, Nick cares about the swamp (“The water was smooth and dark; on the left, the lower edge of the meadow; on the right the swamp” [176]). At the end of the second part, he starts to give some serious

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<sup>46</sup> The narrative makes clear that Nick concentrates on the present because he wants to leave behind all the things that bother him: “Nick felt happy. He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him” (163).

<sup>47</sup> As I will touch on later, the swamp carries an ominous implication. Nick’s unwillingness to fish in the swamp tells us that it exerts pressure on him.

thought to fishing in the swamp and decides that “[t]here were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp” (180). This frequent mention of “the swamp” shows that Nick always anticipates the swamp fishing in the future, while concentrating on the fishing in the present. In the story Nick’s present is always closely related to the future. Readers cannot help being conscious of the future while feeling a sense of immediacy from the description of Nick’s present actions.

In addition to this, the narrative itself is a good example of Hemingway’s way of employing a narrator as a movie camera. As I have already mentioned, Carl Ficken points out that this story can be easily converted to a first-person narrative. Besides, as we can see in the passage cited above, the narrative focuses on the present in an extreme way. This focus on the present is the effect brought about by a narrator as a movie camera, which makes us conscious of the future. These techniques realize a merge of the present and the future in Nick.

Nick is, as it were, an agent in the present, in whom the past, the present, and the future connect. He apparently looks to the river, which runs from the past to the future in a straightforward way, as a model for this temporality. It is probably one of the reasons he wants to fish in the river. He tries to organize and control his new sense of time with the help of the river, which represents “calendar time,” namely, a rather traditional perspective on time. This is an attempt to find the point of intersection of two understandings of time, and it leads to sacred time, as Frank Scafella says:

Casting for and hooking trout had been his primary aim in fishing rivers in memory, in Italy. Here at the Big-Two Hearted, however, things are different. Fishing here is not a matter of hooking trout after trout to pass the time of night. Here it is a matter of tightening the heart into wholeness again, of feeling all the old feeling, even of feeling the feeling of disappointment that would come with the inevitable loss of the big trout. Here, therefore, it is a matter not of casting for trout but of conserving time, the time of the heart tightening with all the old feeling. For heart time is sacred time, time that is reversible, primordial, ontological, neither changing nor exhaustible, and endlessly reintegratable by performing those rites that actualize the world in which he can enter the flow of this time. (83)

Scafella says that Nick's fishing, a rather ritualistic behavior, is an attempt to create new temporality, sacred time, that merges the past and the present and is different from unidirectional time. But the realization of this "sacred time" is always out of reach. Scafella says it is symbolized by the big trout:

The disappointment was inevitable because the big trout, like Old Ben of Faulkner's "The Bear," can never be caught and is not meant to be held but momentarily by the hand of man. For it is the feeling of that momentary connection, not the killing of the animal, that is everything. The feeling, if it is of enough intensity, lasts forever. It serves the heart of the innermost self as a power against emotions that threaten disintegration, like disappointment. (88)

One of the reasons Nick fails in realizing "sacred time" is that his sense of time is more confused than he seems to think. It is easy to find that Nick tries to escape from his traumatic past because it is clearly shown that the primary aim of his river fishing is that he wants to leave "everything behind."<sup>48</sup> This traumatic past often and irregularly harasses Nick as in "Now I Lay Me," in which it makes Nick sleepless. When it intrudes into the present, it is beyond Nick's control. The future symbolized by the swamp is also problematic. It has often been pointed out by critics that Nick feels uneasy about the swamp (Paul Smith 92). Unlike the river, where water runs, the swamp stagnates. Nevertheless, this ominous swamp that is against the smooth flow of time awaits Nick down the stream.

The past, the present, and the future are more chaotic than Nick, who looks to the river as the model, assumes. This chaos, which Nick seems to shake from his mind, makes his attempt unsuccessful. But, unlike what is the case in "The End of Something," Nick has the power to articulate his struggle. It is hinted that Nick writes this story as a writer afterward.

"Big Two-Hearted River" originally has an ending part, which was separately

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<sup>48</sup> In *A Movable Feast* Hemingway says "[t]he story was about coming back from the war but there was no mention of the war in it" (76) and strongly suggests that Nick's trauma comes from the war experience. Critics have seen wider meaning than that, but they share the view that Nick has some traumatic past.

published as “On Writing,” in which Nick implies that he is the author of the story:<sup>49</sup>

Nick in the stories was never himself. He made him up. Of course he'd never seen an Indian woman having a baby. That was what made it good. Nobody knew that. He'd seen a woman have a baby on the road to Karagatch and tried to help her. That was the way it was.

He wished he could always write like that. He would sometime. He wanted to be a great writer. (238)

Because Hemingway cut off “On Writing” from “Big Two-Hearted River,” it is not so obvious that Nick is the author of the story. Still, the story strongly suggests that. Nick fishes in the river to escape from “the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs.” At the same time, he tries to put off fishing in the swamp as long as possible. We can guess the swamp fishing, which will inevitably occur in the future, represents “the need for thinking, the need to write,” which Nick tries to avoid but knows he must face shortly. When this story ends with the sentence, “[t]here were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp,” it is not hard for us to imagine that Nick will return to what he has avoided and become a writer in the future.

Here we are given Nick as a writer who writes about the attempt at synthesis of two understandings of time. The attempt is unsuccessful in the story, but the story is about young, immature Nick. Nick as a writer, who is more mature, has an ability to view two understandings of time and make them coexist in one story. It is what the story suggests. In this way, it is hinted that Nick the writer will be able to deal with the aporia of time far more adequately than young Nick. Like Hemingway himself, as a writer, Nick has an advanced knowledge of time and can reflect it in his work. But this suggestion of Nick as a writer, who can explore a new perspective on temporality, also leads to the idea that betrays such newness.

“On Writing” plays a similar role to that of the last line of “A Canary for One.” It

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<sup>49</sup> Debra Moddelmog examines “On Writing” and convincingly argues that Nick is an implied author not only of “Big Two-Hearted River” but also of *In Our Time*.

makes clear that a story describes what occurred in the past, and the present, when a narrator describes the story, is different in quality from the past. In fact, “On Writing” is totally different from “Big Two-Hearted River.” In the former the description is mostly introspective, and the narrative is much closer to the first-person narrative of “Now I Lay Me.” It is not so much the scenes filmed by a narrator as a movie camera as a monologue of a narrator with a movie camera. The tone is as different as the river is different from the swamp. “Big Two-Hearted River” does not mention the swamp fishing, and it seems that “On Writing” does. The river and the swamp share the same water, but the difference between the two works shows that their qualities are different. “Big Two-Hearted River” tells us that the swamp fishing will happen in the future. So that makes clear that there is a difference between the future and the present that is impossible to transcend.

Of course, Hemingway wisely cut off “On Writing.” Because of that, the difference between the future and the present is not as clear as I have just said. But Nick’s anticipation of the swamp fishing, where he will probably face what he has avoided such as “the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs,” is sufficient for us to expect a future that is quite different from the present. “On Writing” confirms this expectation of ours. In this regard, we can say there is a border between the future and the present, contrary to the advanced sense of time “Big Two-Hearted River” presents.

The same applies to the relationship between the past and the present. Like Hortons Bay in “The End of Something,” Seney has already been lost.<sup>50</sup> It means that burned-down, irrevocable Seney, which exists upstream, represents the irrevocable past.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> According to Frederic J. Svoboda, like Hortons Bay, Seney in the story is different from the real Seney. He says Seney “never was completely burned over, as Nick Adams ‘sees’ it in ‘Big Two-Hearted River,’” and Seney was in its prime “in the 1880s and early 1890s, before the fictional Nick or the actual Ernest were born” (19). Nick’s experience of the change of Seney is clearly made up by Hemingway in order to emphasize the separation between the past and the present.

<sup>51</sup> Jack Jobst says in “Along with Youth,” one of Hemingway’s early poems, Seney symbolizes “a

The description in “Now I Lay Me” also underscores the separation between the past and the present. In the story Nick does imaginary fishing, walking downstream and then upstream. This movement is compared to the process of remembrance. But Nick finds that he “could only remember back to that attic in my grandfather’s house” (146). Then he remembers that after his family moved from his grandfather’s house and into “a new house designed and built by [his] mother,” a traumatic event happened to his father and him due to his mother’s insensitiveness. Nick’s antipathy toward his mother and sympathy with his father are clearly described in works such as “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife” and “Fathers and Sons.” For Nick, his unhappy memory began when his family left his grandfather’s house, and the incident marks the border that distinguishes before and after. The present and the past partly merge, but, as in *The Great Gatsby*, there is the past period that is supposed to be completely different from the present. While in *The Great Gatsby* it is represented as the romantic moment that can be realized only in Nick’s imagination, in Hemingway’s works it is the lost and thus hardly accessible time period.

Most of Hemingway’s stories have this structure, which emphasizes at once the differences and the merge among the past, the present, and the future. As I have already stated, his stories are usually set at a critical moment for protagonists, who are aware that happier days have already passed and something bad awaits them. These “happier days” are never described in his works.<sup>52</sup> In “The End of Something” the happiest days of Nick and Marjorie have already gone, and in “A Canary for One” we find the same situation as to the American couple. This gives us an impression that the border between the past and the present is emphasized in spite of the attempt at nullifying it. This separation between the past and the present provides a strong sense of nostalgia in Hemingway’s works.

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more specific loss for Hemingway, that of his unattached bachelor youth” (26).

<sup>52</sup> “The Last Good Country,” in which Hemingway apparently tried to describe the happy, innocent days, is unfinished.

Hemingway's short stories always have this type of ambivalence. The past, the present, and the future are pushed into one moment while they are chronologically arranged. This ambivalence evokes a tension in his works and prevents them from just becoming nostalgic memoir or overtly experimental works. Sharing a romantic lament over something irrevocable with other American high modernists, Hemingway found a fitting modern expression for it. Hemingway's works are sometimes overtly reactionary and often nostalgic, but they do not rely on the old scheme. I think this is what his "fifth dimension" made possible.

Simple nostalgia presupposes the "three dimension" of time, that is, traditional understanding of time because nostalgia suggests linearity of time and irrevocability of the past. On the contrary, the "fourth dimension" of time is far more complex. In the "fourth dimension" time is no longer linear, and the past is present as in Proust and Joyce's works. I think Hemingway's "fifth dimension" is an idea with internal contradiction; it follows an idea of the "fourth dimension" while sticking to the "three dimension." But this self-contradictory idea serves Hemingway well, a writer whose works, like those of Cather and Fitzgerald, almost always show at once an interest in high modernist sensibility to temporality and a strong sense of nostalgia.

**CHAPTER 3 HOW TO OVERCOME “SHADOWY PARADOXICAL”:  
BERGSONIAN CONTINUUM IN *THE SOUND AND THE FURY***

Unlike Fitzgerald and Hemingway, Faulkner often explores a new representation of temporality in his works in a pretty obvious way. Actually, it is often argued that time is one of his important subjects.<sup>53</sup> So, it is natural that many critics of Faulkner had focused on temporality in his works until the early 1980s. After that, the interests of critics gradually shifted to gender studies, sexuality studies, racial studies, and postcolonial studies.

It seems that temporality in Faulkner’s works, at least in his major novels, has been thoroughly discussed, and there is nothing to add. But I think we still have things to examine regarding Faulkner’s sense of time, and in this chapter I would like to probe how Faulkner handles time in his early masterpiece, *The Sound and the Fury*, in relation to the discussions in the previous chapters. My argument will show how Faulkner is conscious of temporalities of Fitzgerald’s and Hemingway’s works and tries to achieve his own representation of temporality beyond them.

Koichi Swabe says that *The Sound and the Fury* is one of the masterpieces of high modernism, and other American high modernists such as Fitzgerald and Hemingway did not achieve what Faulkner did in the novel. He also says Fitzgerald and Hemingway seem to behave like the three Compson brothers (24). I agree with him, at least from a perspective regarding the representation of temporality. Faulkner published *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929, when major masterpieces of high modernism such as *The Waste Land*, *Ulysses*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *In Our Time* had already been published. This temporal advantage doubtlessly gave Faulkner an opportunity to review representations of time in high modernist works and make use of them in his novel. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner seems to be

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<sup>53</sup> His challenge to a traditional representation of temporality is most discernible in *The Sound and the Fury*. Thus, beginning with Sartre’s incipient essay, major critical works on the novel such as André Bleikasten’s *The Most Splendid Failure* and *The Ink of Melancholy*, John Matthews’s *The Sound and the Fury: Faulkner and the Lost Cause* deal extensively with Faulkner’s temporality.

conscious of various senses of time that are expressed by ordinary modern men and in the works of other high modernist writers, such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Joyce. He tries to organize these different senses of time into one novel. Donald Kartiganer says, “In each of the four sections there is a dominant literary mode which Faulkner employs but always with the parodic twist that transforms it into his own unique expression” (“Now I can write” 78). Though I do not wholeheartedly agree with his opinion because his association of four sections with four literary modes is quite far-fetched, his indication is important. Each of the four sections of the novel reflect a sense of time that is dominant in everyday life or the literary and academic world in the 1920s “with the parodic twist.”

In the following discussion, I would like to address this point first. I will see how Faulkner deals with various senses of time of his day in the four sections of his novel. This is partly similar to a rather traditional method of analyzing *The Sound and the Fury*, which examines how time is represented in each section, but my focus is on how Faulkner reacted to other high modernists’ representations of time so that he could present a wider view of time.

Then I will look at two forms of temporality that flow through the novel, associating them with two absences in the novel. Many critics share a view that this novel is constructed around the absence of Caddy. But I believe there is another absence: that of Quentin. I will explore how these two absences are related to two temporalities that have paradoxical relationships with each other.

Lastly, I will see how Faulkner organizes, or sublates, these two “shadowy paradoxical” temporalities into a bigger framework. The representation of temporality he finally presents in *The Sound and the Fury* strongly suggests a Bergsonian idea of time.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Cleanth Brooks claims that a widely accepted assumption that Faulkner was under a strong influence of Bergson is wrong because we do not need to draw upon Bergson to discuss Faulkner’s sense of time. If, as Brooks says, Bergson’s influence over Faulkner is shown only as “fluidity of time” (252) or “the idea of the ‘presentness’ in the human consciousness of the past and of the future,” (253) his argument is convincing. But there are different aspects of Faulkner’s

The novel urges us to constantly refer back to the past without making us realize it and finally creates a Bergsonian continuum in our consciousness.

In *Melancholic Design*, Takaki Hiraishi points out the double structure of Faulkner's works. He focuses on two temporalities that coexist in Faulkner's each work - and Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha Saga as a whole, using Frank Kermode's ideas: Chronos and Kairos.<sup>55</sup>

Since *The Marble Faun*, Faulkner had almost always transcended and remotely observed his characters, who suffer from the flow of time. . . . What helped him is the paradox of the tradition of the south that refusal of time itself involves the flow of time. By adopting this paradox into the structure of his novel, he recognizes the time that runs through the refusal of protagonists, that is, the tradition and can keep a distance from and transcend them as the recording author. There are first the flow of time that washes everything away, chronos, then the time of stories in which the characters refuse it and are finally defeated, kairos, and lastly the tradition of the south that sums them up and makes them a series of tragic kairos. (185)

He says that each of Faulkner's works, where characters often resist flow of time, constitutes kairos, but at the same time, we have to be conscious of chronos that "washes everything away" and defeats characters. Faulkner is on the side of chronos and records characters' fruitless resistance from a distance, which makes "a series of tragic kairos," namely Yoknapatawpha Saga.

I do not discuss how Faulkner performs in relation to this novel in my argument. But Hiraishi's indication is especially important when we discuss *The Sound and the Fury* because this novel has four sections, each of which constitutes kairos, while we can sense chronos that runs through those sections, and in doing so, clearly visualizes the structure Hiraishi mentions. In other words, *The Sound and the Fury* realizes in one novel what the entire rest of the Yoknapatawpha Saga does. My aim in this chapter is to probe how this combination of chronos and kairos creates a unique representation of temporality in *The Sound and the Fury*.

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works where it is productive to refer to Bergson. In addition to that, I think we should not downplay the fact that Faulkner repeatedly expresses his approbation for the Bergsonian idea of time in his interviews.

<sup>55</sup> Please refer to my Fitzgerald chapter about further explanation of kairos and chronos.

## TEMPORALITY IN FOUR SECTIONS OF *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*

*The Sound and the Fury* consists of four sections: Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and “Faulkner.”<sup>56</sup> Faulkner tries four different ways of narration in those sections. Among them, the Benjy section is the most experimental, and critics’ attention has been focused on this section as well as on the Quentin section, which is as innovative.

In the Benjy section Faulkner tries to verbalize the thoughts of an intellectually handicapped man in a real-time way. Benjy’s consciousness always focuses on what is happening in front of him and cannot tell the present from the past, even when he seems to remember something. He is a narrator but does not give his own comments at all while narrating. As Gail Morrison says, He “reports only what he sees, not what he thinks: action, not abstraction; fact, not probability; dialogue itself rather than the meaning behind it” (50). As a result, “the idiot’s mind seems to function like a camera or a tape recorder out of human manipulation and control” (*Splendid* 86). For example, Benjy is not conscious that he is bellowing. He just records how other people react to him.

“I forgot your coat,” T. P. Said. “You ought to had it. But I ain’t going back.”

Dan howled.

“Hush now.” T. P. said. Our shadows moved, but Dan’s shadow didn’t move except to howl when he did.

“I cant take you down home, bellering like you is.” T. P. said. (35)

He is a camera since he does not care about his own thought or feelings and reports what is going on in front of him in real time without embroideries. This characteristic of Benjy’s narrative reminds us of Hemingway’s use of a narrator as a movie camera. Faulkner seems to exaggerate Hemingway’s method. Hemingway implicitly or explicitly shows that his stories are like movies that are filmed for later appreciation. In other words, he implies both a camera and a videographer. On the other hand, Benjy is just a camera. He does not

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<sup>56</sup> Of course, it does not mean that Faulkner himself appears in the final section. But many critics use this appellation as a matter of convenience because it is the section in which the narrator is the most author-like, and in 1957 Faulkner himself said that “I tried myself - the fourth section - to tell what happened” (*FU* 1).

have any intention to review what he is recording. It seems that he lives only in the present without being conscious of the fact.

Faulkner does not just push forward a parody of Hemingway's method. In doing so, he also makes clear the ambivalence involved in Hemingway's representation of time in a different way from Hemingway's. Above, I argued that Hemingway tries to merge the present and the past by implying that what a narrator is recording will be looked back at in the future, but because this attempt is paradoxically based on recognition that there is a border between the present and the past, or the present and the future, the merging of two tenses embraces the oppositional idea.

Benjy's narrative apparently achieves the merging of different tenses. Some critics find that the present and the past merge there. For example, John Hagopian says, "Benjy's view is that of the eternal present. He has no awareness of the past as past: fragments of past events occur to him in an achronological sequence, all as if they were occurring on April 7, 1928" (204). If Hagopian is right, we can say that Benjy's narrative accomplishes the perfect unity of the present and the past. But Benjy clearly senses the past as the past though he does not verbalize it. As Arthur Kinney and John Matthews point out, Benjy's narrative revolves around the losses, namely those of beloved Caddy, his former name, and his penis, which are echoed by other present losses: Luster's lost quarter and the lost golf ball (Kinney 299; Matthews 35). André Bleikasten says Benjy's recognition of these losses points to the fact that Benjy intuitively distinguishes the present from the past or the future:

To begin with, his present lacks the fullness of the presence. If Benjy existed, as has been argued all too often, in the perfect enclosure of an atemporal world, it would be hard to understand why the very sound of Caddy's name makes him whimper with grief. . . . But to sense loss takes at the very least a subliminal awareness of the difference between was and is. And if Benjy is not granted a minimal sense of the future, how to explain his waiting at the gate after Caddy's departure? (*Splendid* 76)

Benjy's narrative also emphasizes the difference between the past and the present. The past, when his beloved Caddy was still with him, was clearly happier than the bleak present.

Benjy's narrative is formally close to that of Molly's chapter in *Ulysses*, but unlike the latter, in which at the end Molly feels ecstasy in the unity of the past, the present, and the future, the former does not present the dissolution of temporal boundaries. As Bleikasten says, "each sentence hardens into a discrete unit, a brittle concretion of meaning, standing by itself in utter isolation, and as they accumulate, they become a random collection of atoms - all equal, adding together, never adding up" (*Splendid* 69). In this way, in the Benjy section Faulkner pushes forward Hemingway's method and consequently stages the temporality represented in Hemingway's short stories.

The Quentin section presents another characteristic temporality we can find in American high modernists' works. Quentin seems to show strong nostalgia, which we can find in *The Great Gatsby* and Hemingway's works to a varying extent. *The Great Gatsby* is especially important in examining the Quentin section, because Quentin plays both Nick's and Gatsby's parts himself. As critics say, on his last day, Quentin does not look like a person who abandons himself to despair. He organizes his things<sup>57</sup> and breaks his watch meaningfully. He seems to dramatize himself as a tragic hero who resists time in vain. This is what Nick does in relation to Gatsby. Nick dramatizes Gatsby as a tragic hero who tries to go against the flow of time. What is important is that, if Quentin takes both roles, he cannot help becoming aware of what Nick knows and Gatsby does not. In short, Quentin performs as a tragic hero while knowing it. As a result, he cannot play a tragic Gatsby-type hero. His performance is somewhat farcical as we can see in the episode of the little Italian girl.

Quentin's strong attachment to Caddy also reminds us of the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy. Both Caddy and Daisy are like blank screens onto which each man projects his own image of her. Quentin and Gatsby do not care about who Caddy and Daisy

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<sup>57</sup> "I laid out two suits of underwear, with socks, shirts, collars and ties, and packed my trunk. I put in everything except my new suit and an old one and two pairs of shoes and two hats, and my books. I carried the books into the sitting-room and stacked them on the table, the ones I had brought from home and the ones ... and locked the trunk and addressed it" (81).

really are. They only see in their beloved women what they want to see. Caddy and Daisy are also both strongly associated with the past. They look all the more attractive because they are hardly obtainable (Caddy is also hard to obtain in another way because she is Quentin's sister) in the present and become the object of nostalgia.

Here Faulkner pushes forward a nostalgic tone again. Quentin does not so much feel nostalgia as he is obsessed with the past. At first glance, it seems that Quentin's way of perceiving the past is similar to strong nostalgia, which we can find in *The Great Gatsby* and Hemingway's stories. But actually, Quentin does not have a firm hold on the present that enables nostalgic feelings, which require a stable relationship between the past and the present. As Sartre says, Quentin is like "a man sitting in a convertible looking back" (228).<sup>58</sup> The narrative always follows Quentin's current thought and behavior, but his eyes are fixed on the past. For him, the past is far more real than the elusive present. The past is as important for him as for people who feel nostalgia, but the problem is that Quentin's past is so dominant that it constantly bothers him. There is no stable relationship between the past and the present that allows one to sentimentally look back to the past. Here Quentin is a pathetic parody of Nick or Nick's image of Gatsby.

Quentin is similar to Nick in another aspect. Nick seeks a romantic moment when Gatsby and Daisy can innocently unite. Such a moment apparently belongs to the past but, at the same time, transcends time. Bleikasten says that because of his "romantic ego," though "lacking the energy to match his dream of 'apotheosis' in heroic self-immolation, Quentin dies as lamentably as he lived." He "too seeks in death a form of immortalization, and one of the paradoxes of his suicide is that self-destruction becomes a way to self-aggrandizement"

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<sup>58</sup> This remark of Sartre's is supposed to refer to Faulkner's entire "vision of the world." But, as many critics have already pointed out, this remark applies only to Quentin. When Bleikasten says "[t]ime is thus reduced to just one of its dimensions: the past enjoys absolute dominion, and not content with eating up the present, it rules out any projection into the future" (*Splendid* 129), he gives full endorsement to Sartre's interpretation.

(*Ink* 102). In this way, Quentin tries to survive his own death, in which he finally unites with Caddy, who is almost always “in close conjunction with water” (*Ink* 51) as “a disembodied I/ eye” and stands “outside and beyond his self - without any self-loss” (*Ink* 103). For Quentin, transcending his self naturally means transcending time since he always anguishes over changes in people with passing time.<sup>59</sup> The place where Quentin expects he can overcome passing time is hell. He thinks that his suicide will lead him to hell, where Caddy and he can stay alone forever:

Like all the bells that ever rang still ringing in the long dying light-rays and Jesus and Saint Francis talking about his sister. Because if it were just to hell; if that were all of it. Finished. If things just finished themselves. Nobody else there but her and me. If we could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us. (79)

and i it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee us of necessity and then the sound of it would be as though it had never been (177)

Quentin desperately needs the place where Caddy and he can be apart from the outside world and time, which reminds us of Nick’s similar desire. But, unlike Nick, what Quentin seeks is hell. It tells us of the negative elements in Quentin’s desire. Unlike Nick, the past is no longer available for Quentin as a place for romantic union. All he can do is to expect to get out of time by his own death even though he is aware of its futility.

As Nick dramatizes Gatsby, Quentin tries to dramatize himself as a tragic hero who is doomed to be defeated, as I have already stated. But, though his suicide is partly heroic, most readers would feel that “since [Quentin] can neither accommodate himself to time nor escape it alive, it is hardly surprising that he should eventually seek refuge in death” and his suicide “is no more heroic than his life” (*Casebook* xiv). The meaninglessness of Quentin’s death is emphasized by the subsequent Jason section. Jason, who has a different type of

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<sup>59</sup> John Matthews mentions the similarity between *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Great Gatsby* in a more direct fashion. According to him, the famous scene in which the young Compson brothers look up at Caddy with her dirty drawers on the tree as well as Nick’s imaginary and mythical scene in which Gatsby and Daisy unite “reinforces the strain between the unutterable vision and the perishable breath” (22). Gail Mortimer and Daniel Singal also point out Quentin’s desire for reversing and transcending time (Mortimer 68; Singal 129).

self-centeredness from Quentin and Benjy, pays attention only to what is around him and the impact of Quentin's suicide is smaller for him than for readers who have just finished the Quentin section. For Jason, Quentin's death is just one of the symbols of what deprived him of chances he should have had. Other characters such as Mr. Compson, Dilsey, and Caddy, who possibly understand the meaning of Quentin's suicide, have no voice in the Jason section. The main characters are Jason, Mrs. Compson, who loves Jason far better than her other children, and daughter Quentin, whose name has an ironic tone because of her personality which is completely opposite from brother Quentin's. As a result, as Bleikasten says, "Quentin's story can be read as an ironic version of the familiar journey of the Romantic ego" (*Splendid* 142).

Like the Benjy section, Quentin's section seems to share the sense of time with other high modernists' works. Due to constant reminiscences of the past, the past gnaws into the present, and it seems to realize the merging between the past and the present. But the Quentin section is closer to what is called high modernism in its narrative technique, not in temporality. The temporality represented in the section is not Bergsonian, because Quentin cannot grasp the past and the present as one continuum meaningful to him.<sup>60</sup> As the Benjy section stages the temporality of Hemingway's short stories in a pretty parodic way, the Quentin section magnifies the concern about time in *The Great Gatsby* and other high modernists' works and highlights a romantic vein in them. It can be said to be another parody of precedent high modernist works, but it is a pathetic and tragical parody.

In the Jason section the narrative is not experimental, unlike what is the case in the previous two sections. It is actually the first section in the novel that we can understand without much effort. It tells about Jason's day in a rather straightforward and traditional way.

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<sup>60</sup> Bleikasten says, "there is nothing to suggest the unbroken flow of a *durée*. Quentin's present is a line, but it is a dotted one. Moments swirl up out of an opaque emptiness and vanish again, following one another without merging into a continuity" and "ands" which frequently appear in the Quentin section operate "as disconnecters" (*Splendid* 128).

Here, the ordinariness of the way of narration points to that of the main character, Jason.

He is an ordinary modern man. He lives like most of other people in the town, at least on a superficial level. He neither has suicidal impulses nor a passion to go out of his hometown and is, in that, similar to unnamed characters in Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants." For them, time is just clock time. They do not give much thought to abstract questions such as what time really is, and only recognize what Bergson calls "spatialized time." They are pressed for and constantly fight time, but for a different reason from Quentin's. They fight time for their personal profit. A man in "Hills Like White Elephants" tries to persuade his girlfriend to get an abortion before the train comes.<sup>61</sup> He has to fight time for his own selfish motives. Like him, Jason always cares about time because of his investment in the stock market. As John Matthews points out, time "is leisure to Jason, and he has none ... [t]ime is also money to Jason, and he does not have enough" (74).<sup>62</sup>

All of the above reactions to the fast pace of time are considered to be rather typical among people in the 1920s. The popularizations of cars, the expansion of the rail networks, and the development of radiotelegraphy, together with advancements in other techniques, made people feel that their lives were accelerating. It is symbolic that a man in "Hills Like White Elephants" feels pressure from the imminent arrival of a train and Jason is always irritated about the belatedness of stock information by telegram. In the next section, Jason also chases Quentin, who gets away with his hidden money, by car, being vaguely aware that he cannot catch up with her. Nevertheless, he cannot stop chasing because he has never stopped to examine metaphysical ideas. He drives a car and has to keep pace with accelerated life because he has to keep up with things even though he does not truly know what he is chasing after.

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<sup>61</sup> As Michael O'Malley says, expansion of the rail networks requires standardized time. In that regard, train is closely related to "spatialized time."

<sup>62</sup> Bleikasten gives a similar comment about Jason's sense of time. He concludes that "Jason's life is nothing but a long and exhausting race against the clock" (*Splendid* 162).

The Faulkner section is the easiest to read. It does not employ unique narrative techniques like the Benjy and Quentin sections. But, in terms of temporality, it is as significant as those two sections because it has a romantic moment, in which the past and the future converge on the present.

The episode in the Faulkner section that is the most important for my argument is The Easter service Dilsey and Benjy attend. Reverend Shegog says that he sees and hears past events; he does not just know them:

I sees de light en I sees de word, po sinner! Dey passed away in Egypt, de swingin chariots; de generations passed away. . . . I sees de day. Ma'y settin in de do wid Jesus on her lap, de little Jesus. Like dem chillen dar, de little Jesus. I hears de angels singin de peaceful songs en de glory; I sees de closing eyes; sees Mary jump up, sees de sojer face: We gwine to kill! (296)

He also says that he sees an apocalyptic vision and the resurrection of Christ in the future:

I tell you; sistuhn, I says to you, when de Lawd did turn His mighty face, say, Aint gwine overload heaven! I can see de widowed God shet His do; I sees de whelmin flood roll between; I sees de darkness en de death everlastin upon de generations. Den, lo! Breddren! Yes, breddren! Whut I see? Whut I see, O sinner? I sees de resurrection en de light; sees de meek Jesus saying Dey kilt me dat ye shall live again; I died dat dem whut sees en believes shall never die. Breddren, O breddren! I sees de doom crack en de golden horns shoutin down de glory, en de arisen dead whut got de blood en de ricklickshun of de Lamb! (297)

With his adept manner of speaking, Shegog succeeds in sharing his vision with the audience in a feeling of unity. The audience sees and hears the past and the future with Shegog, and those visions merge in the present religious excitement and bring about an epiphany to Dilsey.<sup>63</sup>

This type of epiphany, which integrates the past and the future into the present and puts the person beyond space and time, is represented in St. Augustine's *Confessions*, T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and often has a

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<sup>63</sup> "Dilsey sat bolt upright beside, crying rigidly and quietly in the annealment and the blood of the remembered Lamb" (297).

religious tone.<sup>64</sup>

In a way, here we might say that Faulkner alludes to a religious epiphany that can be found in European high modernists' works. But the importance of this epiphany of Dilsey's is not limited to this section. It has a broader implication when we associate it with other themes of this novel, especially the absence of Caddy. In the next section I will discuss in detail the absences this novel embraces.

### **TWO ABSENCES IN *THE SOUND AND THE FURY***

It is often said that in *The Sound and the Fury* Caddy represents absence as the center. She is absent throughout the novel except in reminiscences of the Compson brothers and an object of their desire. In spite of her importance, her figure blurs because we see her only through the eyes of the brothers. In the novel she never has a chance to assert herself, but nevertheless, and therefore, "she is . . . the bewitching image around which everything revolves . . . without ever really assuming shape and substance in the space of fiction" (*Splendid* 56).<sup>65</sup>

Caddy is absent from the present of each section, but she was with the members of the Compson family in the past. So, for most of the characters, she represents loss. As Eric Sundquist says, "she is the very symbol of loss in Faulkner's world - the loss of innocence, integrity, chronology, personality, and dramatic unity, all the problematic virtues of his

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<sup>64</sup> As I have mentioned in the introduction, this moment of revelation prevails in high modernists' works. If it happens in the present, it tends to bear a religious tone probably because, as St. Augustine says, God is eternally present in the present. Joyce's epiphany is rather secular in a strict sense, but I think he uses the framework of religious epiphany because we can say that for Stephen Dedalus, it is important to experience another sacredness that is at once religious and secular through his epiphany.

<sup>65</sup> Bleikasten also points out how Caddy has an influence over the entire novel with her absence, saying, "Caddy remains to the end a being out of reach, an elusive figure not unlike Proust's 'creatures of flight.' She is the presence of what is not there, the imperious call of absence, and it is from her tantalizing remoteness that she holds her uncanny power over those she has left" (*Splendid* 59).

Suwabe associates Caddy with the Lacanian concept of the "Phallus" (23). He says that Faulkner makes her a scapegoat and puts her in the ground zero. Then, in relation to this center zero, every character and episode carries a meaning in "its ordered place" (36-7).

envisioned artistic design” (10). As I will state later, one of the most important themes of this novel is how to redeem the loss represented by Caddy.

But I think this novel has another absence at its center, which is represented by Quentin. The story revolves around this as well. I think that critics have downplayed the importance of the implicit or explicit absence of Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury*. As Noel Polk says, Quentin-like characters had a central role in Faulkner’s early fictions.<sup>66</sup> In addition to that, his reappearance in *Absalom, Absalom!* implies that he is a special character for Faulkner,<sup>67</sup> and Faulkner loves him as well as Caddy.<sup>68</sup> Faulkner once called him “the protagonist.”<sup>69</sup> He reflects a romantic aspect of young Faulkner, as Singal says.<sup>70</sup> In *The Sound and the Fury* he is provided the most tragic and dramatic role and has a strong presence. Nevertheless, it is also true that not only his voice but also his absence shapes the story.

In his interviews, Faulkner repeatedly said that the novel comes from one image: “the picture of the little girl’s muddy drawers, climbing that tree to look in the parlor window with her brothers that didn’t have the courage to climb the tree waiting to see what she saw” (*FU* 1). In the introduction to the 1946 edition of *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner gives a more concrete explanation of this scene. He says that it describes “Caddy climbing the pear tree to look in the window at her grandmother’s funeral while Quentin and Jason and Benjy and the negroes looked up at the muddy seat of her drawers” (299).

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<sup>66</sup> Polk says that in Faulkner’s early fictions “all except the idiot in ‘The Kingdom God’ are recognizable avatars of Quentin Compson” (6).

<sup>67</sup> Among Faulkner’s character, only he appears as a main character in multiple novels. I think Quentin remained an important character for Faulkner.

<sup>68</sup> It is well known that Faulkner often declares his love for Caddy. He once said that “[t]o me she was the beautiful one, she was my heart’s darling. That’s what I wrote the book about and I used the tools which seemed to me the proper tools to try to tell, try to draw the picture of Caddy” (*FU* 6).

<sup>69</sup> In “Interview in Japan,” Faulkner explains how the storyline of *The Sound and the Fury* developed. He says it “began as a short story” and then Benjy, Caddy, and Jason appeared in order. “Then it needs the protagonist, someone to tell the story, so Quentin appeared” (15-6).

<sup>70</sup> “[Quentin] can most accurately be seen as an extrapolated version of the post-victorian self Faulkner was then in the final throes of shedding” (116).

This scene, which is called the “primal scene” by several critics, appears in the Benjy section:

She went to the tree. “Push me up, Versh.”

“Your paw told you to stay out that tree.” Versh said.

“That was a long time ago.” Caddy said. “I expect he’s forgotten about it. Besides, he said to mind me tonight. Didn’t he didn’t he say to mind me tonight.”

“I’m not going to mind you.” Jason said. “Frony and T. P. Are not going to either.”

“Push me up, Versh.” Caddy said.

“All right,” Versh said. “You the one going to get whipped. I ain’t.” He went and pushed Caddy up into the tree to the first limb. We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers. Then we couldn’t see her. We could hear the tree thrashing.

“Mr Jason said if you break that tree he whip you.” Versh said.

“I’m going to tell on her too.” Jason said.

“The tree quit thrashing. We looked up into the still branches. (39)

The passage cited above confirms Faulkner’s explanation of the “primal scene.” But there is a decisive difference from Faulkner’s explanation of this scene in the introduction: Quentin’s presence.

According to Faulkner’s often-used explanation of this scene, it is three Compson brothers - Benjy, Quentin, and Jason - and negroes who look up at Caddy on the tree. But when it is described in the novel, Quentin is absent from the scene. It is not that Faulkner fails to mention him. Quentin’s absence is confirmed by the later conversation between Caddy and Dilsey:

“You hush your mouth and get quiet, then.” Dilsey said. “Where’s Quentin.”

“Quentin’s mad because we had to mind me tonight.” Caddy said. “He’s still got T. P.’s bottle of lightning bugs.”

“I reckon T. P. can get along without it.” Dilsey said. “You go and find Quentin, Versh. Roskus say he seen him going towards the barn.” Versh went on. We couldn’t see him. (45-6)

Importantly, Quentin is excluded from the “primal scene.” But we also have to note that, in a sense, Caddy is also absent from this scene. In the moment when the Compson brothers look up at her, that is, in the moment when the scene is the closest to Faulkner’s “picture” which he mentions in his interview, as I have already cited, “we couldn’t see her.” From the scene both Caddy and Quentin are functionally absent, and I think these absences

foreshadow the two absences that are important in considering temporality in this novel.

Quentin is also absent from the narrative present in the Benjy, Jason, and Faulkner sections. By dating those sections, the author makes clear that they describe episodes that take place after Quentin's suicide. But, in a way, Quentin is absent even from the Quentin section. From the beginning, Quentin is strongly conscious of his coming suicide. As Kartiganer says, "Quentin wakens to the last day of his life with the details of its beginning and end already intact in his mind," and "[f]rom about 7:45 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. Quentin meticulously carries out each of the stages that will end with his death later that evening" ("Now I can write" 82). Quentin knows he will commit suicide at the end of the day and lacks the will to live. He is still physically present, but in his mind he is already absent from the world. As Sartre says, "all Faulkner's art aims to suggest to us that Quentin's soliloquy and his last walk *are already* his suicide" (230). While reading the Quentin section, we feel at once his presence and absence.

Moreover, in the Jason section subsequent to the Quentin section, daughter Quentin takes a major role for the first time. Her personality is completely different from brother Quentin's. So frequent appearances of the name "Quentin" in the Jason section convey to us not Quentin III's presence but the fact that the man who has that name in the Quentin section is no longer there.<sup>71</sup>

Also in the Faulkner chapter all the characters, with the exception of Caddy, Quentin, and Versh, who are in the "primal scene" appear.<sup>72</sup> This novel ends with the phrase, "each in its ordered place," and seems to be concluded in the proper way. But what is important is that among main characters who are in the "primal scene," only Caddy and Quentin are absent

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<sup>71</sup> The fact that Caddy names her daughter after her brother suggests strong emotional ties between her and her brother that are not understood by most people in the Jason section like daughter Quentin. For readers of the Jason section, this seems to situate the two characters in a different sphere from that of other characters.

<sup>72</sup> Quentin is absent from the "primal scene" in the text but, as I have already mentioned, Faulkner erroneously includes him in his interview.

from this “ordered place.”

The absences that are stressed throughout the novel in this way are associated with two different temporalities. As Catherine Baun says, the novel implicitly narrates “the chronology of Caddy’s life” (187). In the Benjy section Caddy is still in her childhood, and the Quentin section shows an adolescent Caddy. In the Jason section we find an adult Caddy. Caddy becomes mature as the novel progresses.

As I have repeatedly stated, Caddy is absent from the narrative present and beyond the reach of other characters throughout the novel. In a different sphere from that of other characters, Caddy changes with the passage of time - unlike the Compson brothers, all of whom remain almost unchanged from their childhood, and represent the passage of time.

Hiraishi’s schema would be helpful here in understanding Caddy’s role. As I have already mentioned, he points out the double structure of Faulkner’s works, in which the relentless flow of time, *chronos*, runs through multiple tragic episodes, which suggests *kairos*. The passage of time associated with Caddy is *chronos*, the meaningless flow of time. It runs through the four sections, in which each Compson brother tragically resists time. This tragical resistance constitutes *kairos*, or meaningful time. So we can say that in this novel *chronos* runs through the four types of *kairos*. But characters can vaguely sense yet cannot explicitly recognize *chronos* in the same way that they always seek her image but cannot reach her. Because of her absence, Caddy is connected with the meaningless passage of time that underlies the novel.

The passage of time is closely related to loss for most of the characters in this novel. Then it is no wonder that Caddy, who represents the passage of time, is often associated with loss. In relation to the Faulkner section, this loss, represented by Caddy, takes on a new meaning, which is important in considering temporality in this novel.

One of the important losses Caddy symbolizes is that of innocence. This novel is

permeated with concern about innocence. In the introduction of *The Sound and the Fury* of the 1933 edition, Faulkner explains how the “primal scene” affects the Compson brothers:

I saw that peaceful glinting of that branch was to become the dark, harsh flowing of time sweeping [Caddy] to where she could not return to comfort him, but that just separation, division would not be enough, not far enough. . . . And that Benjy must never grow beyond this moment. . . . That he must never grow up to where the grief of bereavement could be leavened with understanding and hence the alleviation of rage as in the case of Jason, and of oblivion as in the case of Quentin. (293)

Benjy, who “never grow[s] beyond this moment,” eternally stays at the world prior to the “primal scene.” In his interview at Nagano, Faulkner says this Benjy, is the symbol of innocence, and his novel starts with this idea:

then the idea struck me to see how much more I could have got out of the idea of the blind, self-centeredness of innocence, typified by children, if one of those children had been truly innocent, that is, an idiot. So the idiot was born and then I became interested in the relationship of the idiot to the world that he was in but would never be able to cope with and just where could he get the tenderness, the help, to shield him in his innocence. (103)

These remarks of Faulkner’s strongly suggest that the “primal scene” can be interpreted as the moment when innocence, associated with Caddy, has been lost.<sup>73</sup> That is why only Benjy remains innocent even after this scene.

Then it is natural that critics have often compared Caddy to Eve and found a biblical imagery in this scene parallel to that of when Eve eats an apple from the tree of knowledge and is expelled from Eden.<sup>74</sup> If Caddy is Eve, their corruption means the end of happy days in Eden, the timeless world, and they continue to corrupt further with the passage of time, which also gradually destroys the Compson family.

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<sup>73</sup> Symbolically, innocence has been lost on that day for those who look up Caddy’s muddy drawers, including Faulkner himself. All Caddy’s corruption traces back to that moment as all sins come from original sin in Christianity.

<sup>74</sup> Richard Adams says, “[i]n another aspect [Caddy] is like Eve, seeking forbidden knowledge, which happens to be knowledge of death. Perhaps that is why Faulkner remembered the tree as an apple in the interview, which took place in 1957, although he had remembered it as a pear in the draft introduction, written about 1932 or 1933. Perhaps that is also why we are told that ‘A snake crawled out from under the house’ (*S&F* 45) just before Caddy climbs the tree, and why a few minutes later Dilsey says to her, ‘You, Satan.... Come down from there’ (p. 54)” (218-9).

Robert Hamblin also argues how the imagery of Eden is important in the novel.

This corruption of Caddy/ Eve is redeemed in Dilsey's epiphany in the Faulkner section.<sup>75</sup> Shegog's sermon creates a religious ecstasy in which the past and the future merge into the present. In this eternal present, which is sacred time, or time for redemption, for St. Augustine, early Joyce, and later Eliot, everything is redeemed, and the meaningless passage of time comes to be meaningful for Dilsey. Hence, she says that "I've seed de first en de last" (297). Here *chronos* has changed to *kairos* in her recognition.

Her epiphany enables Dilsey to attach a meaning to clock time, which represents the meaningful flow of time, and remain "at peace with the clock" (Matthews 83). Because this novel does not depict the universal influence of clock time but limits the description to the family which is corrupted with the progress of cruel clock time, Dilsey's newly acquired power to attach a meaning to clock time means that she comes to be able to recognize the history of the Compson family as one meaningful entity. There is a famous scene where Dilsey successfully guesses the time the broken clock is supposed to be telling. It is important that the clock is in the Compsons' house. Though Dilsey can be in harmony with clock time, her ability is limited. This limitation is important, as I will state later in detail.

Dilsey's ability is what Quentin coveted and failed to grasp. He sometimes expresses a wish to go along with and master clock time, which is represented as river as in Hemingway's "The Big Two-Hearted River," as Singal says.<sup>76</sup> The reason for Quentin's failure to

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<sup>75</sup> John Matthews supports this idea and says:

The fall from innocence into historical knowledge suggested by Quentin's misery, Jason's ferocious efforts to preserve a social system in ruins, Caddy's and her daughter's flagrant defiance of that system, Dilsey's quiet determination to subvert its authority even as she works within it - all these may be explained by the pattern of Edenic sin, the exile from the garden, the descent into labor, property, and domination, and the ultimate divine redemption of human failure. (85)

Arthur Geffen gives a similar argument. He uses Eliade's idea of "sacred time" and says, "Faulkner presents the time surrounding the black Easter Sunday service as a time out of time" (236) and with the power of the black church, Dilsey and Benjy go to "the sacred place of existence" (237).

<sup>76</sup> "Part of Quentin yearns to synchronize with the natural flow of time. Those able to do so earn his envy, particularly his college classmate Gerald Bland, whom Quentin pictures rowing 'in a

synchronize with clock time like Dilsey is his ambivalent attitude toward the family and the past.

It is clear that for Quentin the past has two contradicting aspects. It is closely linked with the memories of beloved Caddy, but at the same time, Caddy's corruption occurred in the past. In the novel this ambivalent past of Quentin's is always recalled in relation to his family members. First and foremost, for Quentin the past is inseparable from his family, and the past exerts its power on him through the family. Bleikasten says, "[w]hat Mr. Compson represents to his son is all this past, and through this past he has a hold over him. Mr. Compson is weak, and yet, regardless of what he is or does, he has a power - a power originating in his priority. And because he comes after his father, Quentin is inevitably caught up in a test of fidelity" (*Ink* 84). So Quentin occasionally tries to modify his past by imagining it if his mother had been different.<sup>77</sup> For him, if his mother had been different, his family, which is closely related to his past, would be different though it is clear that the paternal line is more important, as Bleikasten says. I think the paternal line is too influential for Quentin to assume another possibility.

Quentin's confession of the incest with Caddy is the attempt to attack his family, which is linked with the past, as well as an attempt to strengthen his family ties. It is an attempted attack on his family because, as Claude Lévi Strauss says in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, the inhibition of incest is the basis of the modern family, and ultimately all culture. At the same time, the incest with Caddy is also Quentin's desperate attempt to protect her from the outside world. If he succeeds in strengthening the tie with her to the extent that he

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steady and measured pull' up the Charles River 'like an apotheosis, mounting into a drowsing infinity'" (120).

Similarly, Kartiganer says that "[Dilsey's vision] is what Quentin wishes he could do: see in the midst of action the direction of action, understand the living moment because it is part of a history that has already, and always, ended" (*Fragile* 20).

<sup>77</sup> "My little sister had no. If I could say Mother. Mother" (95) "If I'd just had a mother so I could say Mother Mother" (172)

commits incest with her, he can maintain the honor of his family. But if he commits incest with her, it means the destruction of his family. The idea of the incest is trapped in this contradiction.<sup>78</sup>

Since the idea of incest is contradictory, like his attitude toward the past and the family, he can just repeatedly give out his incest with Caddy in imaginary conversations with his father<sup>79</sup> and without much effort for persuasion.<sup>80</sup> As Kartiganer says, the incest with Caddy is just a gesture.<sup>81</sup> But Quentin has to carry on this gesture in the “shadowy paradoxical” world, where he can never be relieved from the contradictions contingent on the past and the family.

Quentin’s imaginary confession of incest, though it is just a gesture, can be interpreted as an attempt to “see words as the originator rather than the imitator of deeds” (*Fragile* 13). He tries to invert the normal relationship between the signifier and the signified. For him words do not describe deeds that precede them, but they are supposed to originate deeds. Quentin seems to think that if he keeps saying that he committed incest with his sister, it will come true one day. This behavior of Quentin’s suggests that he is keenly aware of the distinction between the signifier and the signified, and that is why he tries to resist clock time

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<sup>78</sup> Gary Storhoff argues about this contradiction that “[i]f [Quentin] has seduced and impregnated his own sister, he has both defended her from outside lovers (enacting his role as family hero), but has also simultaneously degraded her (satisfying his claim as family failure)” (247).

<sup>79</sup> “Father I have committed” (95) “i think you are too serious to give me any cause for alarm you wouldnt have felt driven to the expedient of telling me you had committed incest otherwise and i i wasnt lying i want lying” (176-7)

<sup>80</sup> Faulkner admits that Quentin’s conversation with his father is imaginary:

He never did. He said, If I were brave, I would – I might say this to my father, whether it was a lie or not, or if I were – if I would say this to my father, maybe he would answer me back the magic word which would relieve me of this anguish and agony which I live with. No, they were imaginary. He just said, Suppose I say this to my father, would it help me, would it clarify, would I see clearer what it is that I anguish over? (*FU* 262-3)

<sup>81</sup> “Quentin’s most extreme efforts at finding aesthetic arenas that are beyond the impertinent testings of reality are his attempts to claim incestuous relations with Caddy and his suicide. In the first of these Quentin predictably is indifferent to Caddy’s body and literal incest. The incest he seeks is the purely poetic one he tries to impose on Caddy through verbal pressure alone - an engagement not of flesh but of metaphor” (“Quentin Compson” 392).

(the signifier).

Contrary to Quentin, as I have already mentioned, Jason does not care about the signified. It is only the signifier that matters to him. Jason saves much money without giving careful consideration to what benefit it will bring to him. He saves money because he believes that saving money is meaningful in itself. The narrator of the Faulkner section says, "Of his niece he did not think at all, nor of the arbitrary valuation of the money. Neither of them had had entity or individuality for him for ten years; together they merely symbolized the job in the bank of which he had been deprived before he ever got it" (306). For Jason, things are just vague concepts like "the job in the bank" which he has never seriously tried to get, and he does not probe what those vague concepts really mean.

We can find this trait in other descriptions in his section. For example, he tells "the dam redneck" who cannot decide whether to buy "a twenty cent hame string or a thirty-five cent one" to buy an expensive one:

"You'd better take that good one," I says. "How do you fellows ever expect to get ahead, try to work with cheap equipment?"

"If this one aint any good," he says, "why have you got it on sale?"

"I didn't say it wasn't any good," I says. "I said it's not as good as that other one."

"How do you know it's not," he says. "You ever use airy one of them?"

"Because they dont ask thirty-five cents for it," I says. "That's how I know it's not as good." (195)

Of course, since Jason works at the shop, it is natural that he recommend an expensive one to the farmer. But what is important is Jason's logic. He says that an expensive one is better because it is expensive. What the price signifies does not matter to him.

This pattern of thinking also applies to his sense of time. As I have already stated, he only cares about clock time (the signifier). He never pays attention to metaphysical questions such as what time really is. For him the past is separated from the present and thus unimportant.

Both Quentin's and Jason's ideas of time tend to emphasize their troubles in

understanding time. It goes without saying that Benjy's sense of time is the most troubled. Dilsey's epiphany overcomes these troubled senses of time and enables her to intuit a meaningful historical time, in which everything is in its ordered place. She can have an overview of this time without the troubles the Compson brothers have. Her time does not stop at a certain point like Benjy's, is not chaotic like Quentin's, and is not meaningless like Jason's. It flows meaningfully and orderly. But her sense of time is still linear. It comes to mean something with a specific beginning and end like a chronology. Time flows from the beginning to the end there.

But the novel does not necessarily present Dilsey's sense of time as the final solution to all the troubles regarding temporality. As Bleikasten says, in the Faulkner section Dilsey's epiphany is not the only main event. The Easter service and Jason's misadventures are "juxtaposed in ironic counterpart" (*Casebook* vii).<sup>82</sup> What Dilsey's epiphany suggests is not the only temporality that is supposed to bind up all the sections. Dilsey's epiphany is what redeems the loss Caddy symbolizes and gives unity to the novel. There is another temporality that covers all the sections, and it is associated with the other loss: the loss of Quentin.

Unlike the absence of Caddy, or the loss associated with Caddy, that of Quentin tells us that something has decisively been lost. The absence of Caddy is linked with *chronos*, the meaningless passage of time, rather than a decisive difference between the present and the past. The various losses attributed to Caddy are redeemed by Dilsey's epiphany in a biblical context. On the other hand, the loss of Quentin cannot be redeemed in any context. He

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<sup>82</sup> Other critics also show doubt about the view that Dilsey's revelation concludes the novel. Beverly Gross says that though the novel seems to end in "tranquility and order," the real climax is "Benjy's anguished howling," and "Benjy's howl is a final reflection of the disorder, the outrage, the meaninglessness to which the Compsons are reduced" (145). Matthews denies the authority of Dilsey's vision by pointing out the fact that Dilsey cannot explain her vision to anyone. He adds that the phrase, "everything in its ordered place," reflects the wish of white males such as Faulkner and Jason, and the novel itself betrays their wish (85). Kartiganer says Dilsey's view which her faith has brought about is "remote from that complexity of existence by which the novel lives" (*Fragile* 20).

commits suicide because he refuses to live anachronistically.<sup>83</sup> His father lives anemically, being fully aware that he is an anachronism. Jason has an anachronistic aspect but he does not notice it. Benjy “never grows beyond” the moment when he looked at Caddy on the tree. Quentin cannot keep pace with chronos like Caddy, and only he tries to build a monument that declares the end of the old days with his death.

His absence represents the irrevocable past and underlies the novel. It is symbolical that the Jason section, which is subsequent to the Quentin section, gives an impression that every main character except Dilsey has stopped thinking seriously about the past. Quentin’s death seems to bring a definitive end even to the possibility of anguish over the irrevocability of the past for the characters in the Jason section. But it latently signifies the irrevocability of the past through the whole novel.

The two absences in this novel — Caddy’s and Quentin’s — are in a paradoxical relationship. Caddy’s absence suggests the seamless but meaningless flow of time, about which we cannot do anything; Quentin’s absence implies our sense of time that draws an imaginary line between the past and the present and makes us feel that things beyond that line have been irrevocably lost. Both of them are constituents of our understanding of time. There seem to be no borders in time, but our consciousness tends to constantly put borders that separate the present and the past, or the future and the present. They are two sides of a coin, and coexist in a paradoxical way as an aporia of time. With the two absences, *The Sound and the Fury* presents the paradox of time as its important subject.

However, Faulkner does not leave this aporia untouched. While one of the important subjects of the novel is this paradox of time, reading this novel gives us an experience that shows the potential of overcoming it.

#### **THE BERGSONIAN CONTINUUM IN *THE SOUND AND THE FURY***

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<sup>83</sup> Asked about the trouble with the Compsons, Faulkner answers, “They are still living in the attitudes of 1859 or ‘60” (*FU* 18).

The most distinct characteristic of the Bergsonian view of time is the presentness of the past. Some stimulation in the present arouses particular past memories. We react to something in the present by making use of such past memories. In other words, the past gnaws into the future. The present, which theoretically exists in the contacting surface between the past and the future, is almost dominated by the past.

Another characteristic we should not ignore is that the passage of time is not linear. Each stimulation activates a different region of the sum of the past memories, one after another, and those activated memories are not necessarily chronological. It is quite possible that an older memory is activated after a newer memory.

It is obvious that Faulkner is conscious of the Bergsonian view of time. In his interview he says:

Also, to me, no man is himself, he is the sum of his past. There is no such thing really as was because the past is. It is a part of every man, every woman, and every moment. All of his and her ancestry, background, is all a part of himself and herself at any moment. And so a man, a character in a story at any moment of action is not just himself as he is then, he is all that made him, and the long sentence is an attempt to get his past and possibly his future into the instant in which he does something. . . . (FU 84)

In fact, in *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner places various devices to show “the past is.” At the level of sentences, he uses characteristic long sentences, as he says above, and at the level of the story, he employs the technique that we can find in mystery novels but is modified to represent a more complex temporality.

In mystery novels some mystery is brought up in the beginning. As the narrative progresses, a detective finds a new fact and urges the readers to refer back to the initial mystery. So, it is often said that in mystery novels there is another progress toward the past while a narrative progresses to the future. At the end, the detective solves the mystery and puts everything in order. In other words, the detective consequently restores unidirectional temporality.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, the first section is almost incomprehensible for most

first-time readers. Chronology is confused, and there is no explanation about the characters. Each time we move on to the next section, the narration becomes more objective, and chronology becomes more ordered. The increasing clarity of the narration enables us to deepen our understanding of the story and the characters little by little, and it is always accompanied with reference to the early parts of the novel. For example, the readers, who cannot understand the Benjy section well, discover new meanings in some descriptions in the Benjy section whenever they grasp something about the novel in later sections. Every time readers find something, past descriptions reappear with new meanings. Actually, the structure of the novel, which is close to that of mystery novels, requires us to constantly refer back to the past descriptions, which happens far more frequently than in mystery novels. Besides, unlike what is the case in mystery novels, the mystery cannot be organized into a single episode. Rather, the mystery even multiplies as the narrative moves on and makes the situation more complex. As readers read the novel, they constantly refer back to various places, which reminds us of Bergson's theory about the constant reference to the past caused by present stimulations.

Moreover, this "past" is actually the future because the Quentin and Jason sections are chronologically prior to the Benjy section. Our reading experience suggests no linear temporality at all. The various past descriptions are continually activated, and there are no clear marks that distinguish the present, the past, and the future.

The most striking difference from mystery novels is that there is no final solution in this novel. As I have already stated, Dilsey's view that seems to conclude the novel is relativized. What the novel shows is not unidirectional temporality, in which we can easily find the linear passage of time, but repetition without any solutions. Duncan Aswell points out the circularity of the Benjy, Quentin, and Jason narratives<sup>84</sup> and of the narrative as a

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<sup>84</sup> "Yet the one supremely important subject that [Jason] cannot keep away from is the

whole.<sup>85</sup> While we can sense the passage of time from the date Faulkner gives to the beginning of each section, the narrative does not progress smoothly. It returns to what it began with. Some character's personalities underpin this structure. As many critics point out, the Compson brothers never grow up. Their personalities remain the same as in their childhood. Consequently, the novel gives us the impression that the same episodes are repeated over and over again. Mentioning the "primal scene," Faulkner himself says:

And I tried first to tell it with one brother, and that wasn't enough. That was Section One. I tried with another brother, and that wasn't enough. That was Section Two. I tried the third brother, because Caddy was still to me too beautiful and too moving to reduce her to telling what was going on, that it would be more passionate to see her through somebody else's eyes, I thought. And that failed and I tried myself - the fourth section - to tell what happened, and I still failed. (*FU* 1)

Faulkner's image would be that the Compson brothers and Faulkner himself look up at Caddy on the tree, and each of them tells his own story of Caddy.<sup>86</sup> He says he has repeated the same attempt four times. In this circularity, the boundary between the past and the present becomes less obvious.

In this way, *The Sound and the Fury* creates a Bergsonian continuum, in which the past and the present almost merge and what is in the present is also from the past because our consciousness is ceaselessly drawn back to the past, reacting to the present stimulations. In this continuum, time no longer flows linearly and meaninglessly, and nothing is irrevocable. Of course, as Hiraishi says, we can sense *chronos*, which runs through the novel, but reading *The Sound and the Fury* gives us a glimpse into the possibility of overcoming *chronos* without relying on the tragic methods the Compson brothers employ. This temporal

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promiscuity of Caddy and her daughter. He begins and ends with it; his mind revolves endlessly around and around this one track. His monologue, like Benjy's and Quentin's, moves in a circle, but Jason's has the smallest radius" (209).

<sup>85</sup> "Ben and Luster are again at the fence, watching the golfers in the pasture. Despite Jason's and Quentin's absence, the life of Compsons has resumed itself, in all its pointless repetitiveness" (209).

<sup>86</sup> I think that is why Faulkner mistakenly includes Quentin in the "Primal scene" in his interview. Also, when he mentions this image, it shows that he abandons himself to the impulse to make a certain woman an object of desire, which is shared by Fitzgerald and Hemingway.

continuum is also different from time that is saved by Dilsey's religious revelation. In the continuum, time is a multi-directional flux; no moment is lost there because the past and the present are no longer separated. *The Sound and the Fury* gives readers a chance to experience this redeemed time through the power of art.

**CODA**

With the contemporary popularity of postcolonialism and ecocriticism, which tend to privilege the treatment of space in works of fiction, the treatment of time has been de-emphasized in recent literary analyses. But much still remains to be discussed with regard to temporality in high modernism. It is true that in a critical discussion about some high modernist writers such as James Joyce and William Faulkner, temporality has been one of the most important topics. But there are high modernist writers — even “canonical” writers — who have not had enough academic attention paid to temporality in their works, though there has been a general awareness that a new understanding of time is one of the most important aspects of high modernism. One of my purposes was to examine high modernist works whose treatment of temporality had not been given sufficient attention. That is part of the reason why all of the writers I have discussed in this dissertation are “canonical.” I intended to shed light on new aspects of those writers’ works and show how temporalities in their works are more complex than previously not. I wanted to contribute to the literary analyses of high modernism by revising a traditional view of temporality in the works of some of those writers that arise from approaches critics have been using, coming from various fields. My subject, temporality in high modernism, is all the more meaningful now that a view on temporality in high modernism has almost been solidified.

Also, I aimed to create a literary map of high modernists’ works regarding their representation of temporality and situate the writers I have discussed on that map. I focused on differences between European and American high modernist writers: an “old” understanding of time that separates the present from the past, or the present from the future, matters more to American writers despite their advanced idea of time: they are influenced by a Bergsonian idea that questions boundaries between and the linearity of time. I think so far academic analyses of those writers have tended to emphasize the similarities between the two

sets or discuss each of them individually. However, after examining underlying similarities among the writers, I wanted to analyze the uniqueness of the position of each writer in high modernism. The matter is important and will support further scrutiny: as I said in the Introduction, there is no clear demarcation between European and American high modernists with regard to temporality, and geography is not the only element that affects their sense of time.

For example, though Virginia Woolf is a British writer, her works show both “European” and “American” characteristics. Chapter 1 of *To the Lighthouse* converges on the joy in the present moment, experienced by Mrs. Ramsey, in a manner typical of “European” high modernism:

With some irony in her interrogation, for when one woke at all, one’s relations changed, she looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call . . . but for all that she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotised, as if it were stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough! (47)

But in subsequent chapters characters reflect upon Mrs. Ramsay’s life, which seems to approach a kind of crescendo in her joyous experience of the present moment in Chapter 1. In other words, they look back at the past moment that looks much happier than the “now” and try to analyze the mystery of it only to realize the impossibility of their attempt and the unapproachability of the past. The present revelatory moment itself is Hemingwayesque. It is strongly implied that the moment is beautiful because it is just a fleeting moment and once it has passed, we can never get it back. Actually, Mrs. Ramsey’s revelatory moment is preceded by her wistful lament over the passage of time.<sup>87</sup> Then, this fleetingness is examined over

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<sup>87</sup> “Oh, but she never wanted James to grow a day older or Cam either. These two she would have liked to keep for ever just as they were, demons of wickedness, angels of delight, never to

and over again in subsequent chapters. Eventually this novel proposes the possibility of merging past and present in the present, as does *The Waste Land*, but the separation between the past and the present and nostalgia contingent on that are foregrounded more clearly than in *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, *Ulysses*, and *The Waste Land*.

I think that *To the Lighthouse* suggests that not only one, but various differences affect writers' sense of time. In this case, we should pay attention to temporal as well as geographical difference. *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* was published from 1913 to 1927, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1916, and *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* in 1922. *To the Lighthouse* was published in 1927, which was two years after the publication of *The Great Gatsby* and *In Our Time*. In Chapter 3 I mentioned the possibility that, because of his late publication of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Faulkner had a chance to grasp temporalities represented in previous high modernist works and take advantage of them in his novel. The same thing is likely to have happened in the case of Woolf as well as of Fitzgerald and Hemingway, enabling them to modify the ideas of previous high modernist writers.<sup>88</sup> Writers usually use and develop the ideas of previous writers in their own way, so temporal difference is as important as geographical difference. Thus, in a way, my discussion is also an exploration of the development of the representation of temporality in high modernism: how Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner translated the ideas of previous writers in their own ways.

In addition to this, gender distinction can be an important element in the representation of a sense of time. As Julia Kristeva says in "Women's Time," historically men and women

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see them grow up into long-legged monsters. Nothing made up for the loss" (42).

<sup>88</sup> It reminds us of the argument T. S. Eliot develops in "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Treatment of temporality in high modernism constantly changed every time each high modernist published his or her work, which then affected the representation of temporality in subsequent works. As Eliot says, "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (101).

have been linked to different modalities of time.<sup>89</sup> The idea of a gendered sense of time doubtlessly makes any literary map of high modernist writers more complex.

As I have mentioned so far, it is hard to simply draw a line between American and European high modernism; nevertheless, I believe we can find differences between European high modernists, especially early ones, and American high modernists, and the “difference,” whatever it is, is important for my discussion. For it can be a foothold for highlighting some characteristics shared by American high modernists, at least the writers I have discussed, which is one of the purposes of this dissertation.

Because I have tried to make a considerable modification to the prevailing view on temporality in the works of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner, I have mainly discussed their representative works. In Chapter One I have discussed Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*. Little academic attention has been paid to temporality in this famous novel. I think that most critics share the opinion that it describes the defeat of an anachronistic Gatsby by modernity. But I felt that many of them have overlooked the importance of Nick in the structure of this novel. I have reconsidered the role of Nick, and taking into consideration his sense of time, analyzed temporality in this novel from a new perspective.

I have posited that Gatsby is a main character of the story created by Nick, and Gatsby’s anachronism partly reflects Nick’s anachronistic desire. Nick has a nostalgic longing for the old scheme of time, but the novel shows the unreality of his longing in the modern world where the perception of time seems to be more complex. The novel proposes the frustration not only of Gatsby’s but also of Nick’s desire in the modern world. Nevertheless, and interestingly, Nick’s desire is gratified in the past romantic moment, where the past and the present merge. This longing for the “past romantic moment” is what Fitzgerald shares

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<sup>89</sup> Kristeva says that while men are linked to linear temporality, women are associated with repetition and eternity, and this “women’s time” has been a problem “with respect to a certain conception of time: time as project, teleology, linear and prospective unfolding . . . the time of history” (17), as female sensibility can often be a problem in a male-dominated society.

with Hemingway and Faulkner.

Compared with Fitzgerald's treatment of it, temporality in Hemingway's works has attracted a good deal of critical attention. One of the distinct characteristics of Hemingway's short stories is their concentration on the present. In Chapter Two I developed my discussion through an analysis of this characteristic with reference to earlier studies and discussed how this concentration on the present conforms with high modernist ways of representing time. However, we can also find a "reactionary" element in his representation of time, and a tension between the two views of time plays an important part in his works. Thus my discussion constitutes an extension of recent studies of Hemingway's works, which examine Hemingway's contradicting attitude toward gender and sexuality, in that it reconsiders Hemingway's often-noted characteristic view of temporality and reads his contradicting attitude in a similar way. Like Fitzgerald, Hemingway also shows a nostalgic longing for the past, which is supposed to be happier than his "now" and is clearly different from the present.

There are many earlier studies on temporality in Faulkner's works, and *The Sound and the Fury*, which I discussed in Chapter Three, has attracted particular interest. Thus, I sought to add a new perspective to the studies on Faulkner's temporality, linking them to what I discussed in the previous two chapters. I have mainly discussed how Faulkner was aware of the characteristic aspects of earlier high modernists' representation of time and presented his own understanding of time, showing that it is possible to overcome sometimes the conflicting views of time of other high modernists. Faulkner's Bergsonian view of time in *The Sound and the Fury* highlights his difference from earlier American high modernists such as Cather, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway, but he also shares their concerns. In the novel, Quentin, one of his most important characters (considering that he appears in other works), anguishes over a decisive separation between the past and the present, and his tragedy plays a central role in the novel.

On the whole, we can say that separation between the present and the past, or the future and the present, has an especially strong presence in the works of American high modernists. I think this tendency reflects the writers' nostalgic longing for innocence, which they locate in the past. Or rather, the past becomes innocent once it appears to have been lost. Nostalgia, which presupposes the separation between the present and the past, makes the past innocent. The writers I have discussed describe this feeling rather directly. I would like to conclude by looking at how each writer approaches the notion of innocence. For those writers, innocence tends to be connected with time: it is an earlier time, before suffering, knowledge, or experience.

Of the three writers I have discussed, Fitzgerald expresses his longing for lost innocence most clearly. In "My Lost City" he nostalgically looks back at New York when he was in his prime:

And lastly from that period I remember riding in a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky; I began to bawl because I had everything I wanted and knew I would never be so happy again.

It was typical of our precarious position in New York that when our child was to be born we played safe and went home to St. Paul - it seemed inappropriate to bring a baby into all that glamor and loneliness. But in a year we were back and we began doing the same things over again and not liking them so much. We had run through a lot, though we had retained an almost theatrical innocence by preferring the role of the observed to that of the observer. But innocence is no end in itself and as our minds unwillingly matured we began to see New York whole and try to save some of it for the selves we would inevitably become. (29)

Innocence is associated with his past happy days in New York, of the imminent end of which he is strongly conscious. For Fitzgerald, his happy days have already and decisively ended, and this realization leads to his nostalgia for lost innocence.

Innocence is also important in *The Great Gatsby*. Gatsby is depicted as an innocent man. But we have to remember that Gatsby is also anachronistic because of his innocence. Fitzgerald describes innocence as something that has always been lost and expresses longing for the innocent past.

Faulkner also mentions innocence in a rather straightforward way. As I have already cited, he says that on writing *The Sound and the Fury*, he develops the idea from the image of an idiot, Benjy, because he is “truly innocent” (103). Benjy is one of the main characters of the novel, and importantly the novel begins with his monologue and ends with his cry. Of course, as I have already pointed out, Faulkner proposes the idea that is possible to overcome a perception of time associated with each Compson brother. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the importance Faulkner attaches to the innocence of Benjy, who is, in the end, as anachronistic, or atemporal in his case, as the other Compson brothers.<sup>90</sup>

Hemingway did not explicitly express his longing for innocence, if any. Obviously, his hypermasculine attitude prevented him from being sentimental in his works. But in *A Movable Feast*, we can find a few descriptions about innocence.

Hemingway says that, after a trip with Fitzgerald, he meets his wife and “[w]e were happy the way children are who have been separated and are together again and I told her about the trip” (175). Then, he says about his life in Schruns that “[t]he winter of the avalanches was like a happy and innocent winter in childhood compared to the next winter, a nightmare winter disguised as the greatest fun of all, and the murderous summer that was to follow” (207). Here childhood is associated with “innocence,” which, I think, implies that the pleasure he feels at the reunion with his wife is nothing other than that of being innocent. The connection between childhood, the past period, and innocence is also important. When Hemingway concludes this book saying, “That was the end of the first part of Paris. Paris was never to be the same again although it was always Paris and you changed as it changed.... But this is how Paris was in the early days when we were very poor and very happy” (211), we realize that this book itself is about the period which is irrecoverable in the form as it was and maybe innocent because it no longer belongs to the present.

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<sup>90</sup> In his interview, Faulkner says the trouble with the Compsons is that “they are still living in the attitudes of 1859 or ‘60” (18).

I think the American writers above maintained a lifelong obsession with the period that seems innocent because of its decisive difference from the present despite their high modernist sensibility about time. It is a nostalgic feeling for a distant place or period, and thus it seems natural that American high modernists, who experienced a drastic change of dwelling environment, express this feeling in their works. For them the past is recoverable in the present but still distant and innocent.

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**ABSTRACT****TIME IN AMERICAN HIGH MODERNISM:  
READING FITZGERALD, HEMINGWAY, AND FAULKNER**

by

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There were important changes about understanding of time in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Newtonian view of time that supports linearity and irreversibility of time was challenged in various fields. This trend promoted high modernists to seek new representations of time.

On the whole, high modernists denied Newtonian view of time and tried to describe merging of the past, the present, and the future. They often envisioned a romantic moment, in which this merging is perfectly achieved. But unlike European high modernists, American high modernists were more attracted to a traditional understanding of time that emphasizes a decisive difference between the past and the present, or the present and the future. As a result, two almost contradictory ideas about time, the traditional and the advanced, coexist in their works, which gives uniqueness to the works of American high modernists. Also, in their works, a romantic moment appears in the past, which is decisively different from the present, while it often appears in the present in the works of European high modernists.

In *The Great Gatsby* Scott Fitzgerald depicts Nick, a modern man who has a complex sense of time. Nick tries to dramatize Gatsby, create a meaningful time by telling a mythic tale, and redeem his past, which proves futile in the end. However, the novel also shows a romantic moment in the past, in which the present and the past merge and time is redeemed.

In his short stories, Hemingway tried to achieve the merging of time by imposing the

present on the past or the future on the present with his unique style. But this style also makes clearer the boundary between each tense. This representation of time, which embraces internal contradiction, clearly shows conflict of Hemingway as a high modernist, who was torn between new and old understandings of time.

*The Sound and the Fury* shows that Faulkner was obviously conscious of how the previous high modernists represent time. He examines problems concerning various ways of recognition of time, including paradox inherent in recognition of time, and proposes Bergsonian view of time to overcome those problems.

**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

Born in Japan. B. A. at the University Tokyo. (2000) M. A. at the University Tokyo.  
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