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## **The Complexity of Human Experiences: A Study of William Faulkner's Rendering of Time and Memory in *The Sound and the Fury***

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### **Introduction:**

William Faulkner unfolds an unconventional rendering of time and memory in his novels for he was highly influenced by two of the most famous writers of the age, i.e., the French philosopher and thinker, Henri Bergson and the novelist James Joyce, in their perspectives concerning time, memory and human life. Faulkner attempts to reveal how time is continuous and cannot be stopped like a flowing stream, and that time is measured only by the human memories of the past. To him, time is not orderly and it does not follow a linear or chronological pattern. He argues instead that time is fluid and malleable and that it is measured by human experiences and not by the mechanical ticking of a clock.

The paper focuses on Faulkner's novel, *The Sound and the Fury*, and its characters' reaction to their time and past memories. In the present paper I will shed light, and, concentrate on family pressures upon various characters of the novel and what consequences these pressures will bring about. An effort is to be made to show how some characters fall in their life because

they are unable to cope with time and memory, while some others endure, be successful and live in a state of relaxation due to their rightful understanding of time and its progress.

*The Sound and the Fury* offers one of Faulkner's most intricate treatments of time, and this particular dealing with time shows clearly his being influenced by the theories of the French philosopher Bergson as well as by the tradition of the well-known novelist James Joyce. O'Conner explains that this novel is written in "the tradition that said 'Life does not narrate but makes impressions on our brains.' And with that which said the novelist allows, or seems to allow, the story to tell itself."<sup>1</sup> Joyce implicated long sections of interior monologue in Leopold Bloom's narration in *Ulysses*. Quentin Compson's long stream of consciousness narration in sections of his chapter from *The Sound and the Fury* is a clear cut evidence of Faulkner's influence by Joyce. Faulkner was, every now and then, seen reciting Joyce, and then, reaching into the canvas bag for his manuscript of *Light in August*, and Joseph Blotner comments that the way Faulkner "employed interior monologue...suggested James Joyce."<sup>2</sup> The characters in Faulkner's novels, as those of Joyce, narrate their own story without any interruption, or with as little interruption as allowed in the part of the author.

Faulkner's Joycean influence is also to be found in Faulkner's complicated and innovative treatment of time. Both Joyce's Bloom and Faulkner's Quentin unravel their life's history all within the interval of one day. Both characters concentrate on one event for most of the day; Quentin's obsession with his childhood experience with Caddy and her soiled underpants, while Bloom was obsessed by his relationship with his wife and her sexual affair with another man. Both incidents continually overwhelm these men for the entire day time. Similar to how Joyce focuses on Bloom's

relationship with his family, Faulkner also focuses on Quentin's personal and private relationship with his. The pressure of his family's past on his identity is witnessed through his disturbing behaviour, that is, his everlasting wish to destroy time.

Faulkner's treatment in this novel, moreover, adds an additional layer of complexity. Sartre assesses that:

It is man's misfortune to be confined in time...and we confuse time with chronology. Dates and clocks were invented by man: 'constant speculation regarding the position of mechanical hands on any arbitrary dial which is a symptom of mind-function'....To reach real time, we must abandon these devices, which measure nothing: 'time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life.' Quentin's breaking his watch has, therefore, a symbolic value, it forces us to see time without the aid of clocks.... As for Faulkner's concept of the present, 'it is not a circumscribed or sharply defined point between past and future. His present is irrational in its essence; it is an event, monstrous and incomprehensible.... Beyond this present, there is nothing, since the future does not exist. One present, emerging from the unknown, drives out another present. It is like a sum that we compute again and again.'<sup>3</sup>

By the use of the continual flashbacks of past childhood experiences, Faulkner reveals the fluidity of time through which Quentin's past and present melt together into one encompassing time. Quentin's misfortune is that he feels 'confined in time' and he is not able to flee its constant, hammering progress. Quentin also fails to destroy time by breaking his grandfather's watch, for the hands of a clock are not the means of measuring real time. He mixes real time with the time that was 'invented by time,' and he cannot perceive what his father taught him – that these devices measure nothing and that time is dead as long as it is being clicked by off by wheels. Quentin finally commits suicide because he becomes unable to abandon these devices. He does not want to grasp that time is temporary and fleeting. He tries to destroy time or halt it by committing suicide, but the reader is totally positive that this is not going to be a successful try, since time will

always continue its forward movement. Quentin Compson always views time as being his perennial enemy and he unsuccessfully labours to destroy its progression. Hence, all hopes of moving forward are completely lost on Quentin for he remains a slave of his childhood experience, and he finally commits suicide when his madness overtakes complete control of the remaining thread of sanity left undisturbed in his mind. Quentin's narration in the novel exposes his obsession with his sister Caddy and her sexuality; it is her innocence and his family's honour he intends to keep unstained, and his pain in her loss of virtue that he aims to preserve by destroying time. His narration takes place in one day; June 2, 1910. Yet, his section in the novel has the appearance of a time span of several years because he delivers it in a series of flashbacks dating back to the earliest memories of his childhood. The dates themselves have no order because for Faulkner:

The past is not ordered according to chronology but follows certain impulses and emotions. Around some central themes (Caddy's pregnancy, Benjy's castration, Quentin's suicide) innumerable fragments of thought and act revolve. Hence the absurdity of chronology, of 'the round and stupid assertion of clock.' The order of the past is the order of the heart.<sup>4</sup>

What conquers Quentin on this particular day are events that occurred in his past and the past itself becomes increasingly the very substance of his thought. On June 2, 1910, Quentin tries to deliver his story in a methodical fashion, but memories from his childhood persist to interrupt the flow of his thought, and his narration enters into interior monologue in an unordered Joycean stream of consciousness reasoning. Quentin's unmethodical narration exposes the human condition of life lived or the real human experience of time. On the morning of that same day, he first recalls his sister's sexual escapade and his lying at his father by informing him that he

“committed incest...it was not Dalton Ames who impregnated Caddy.”<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, Brooks rightly figures out that:

Quentin’s obsession with the past is in fact a repudiation of the future... Caddy’s betrayal of her honour and the fact that she is cut off forever from Quentin means that he possesses no future he is willing to contemplate.... He would like to do away with time, locking himself into some past from which there would be no development and no progression.<sup>6</sup>

Caddy’s licentious behaviour leaves her with a bastard child, and her family excommunicates her, leaving her away from Quentin forever. Quentin’s memories of this scene devastate him and he desires to alter or change the past. He tries to prove that time is wrong and unreliable because he is overwhelmed by preserving his sister’s virginity and honour. Then he tries to get rid of time when he walks over “to the dresser [where he] took up the watch...trapped the crystal on the corner of the dresser and caught the fragments of glass in hand...but the watch ticked on” (p. 80). Quentin attempts to damage the ticking device that continually reminds him of time’s non stopped progress.

Quentin’s anxiety over time is rooted in his love for Caddy, she becomes token of affection in the novel for both of her brothers; Quentin and Benjy. Quentin’s love for his sister could be easily mistaken to be incestuous or sensual but it is clear that he does not desire her sexually for he tries his best to protect her virginity and keep her away from falling out of the family; “Faulkner speaks of Quentin as the person ‘who loved not his sister’s body but some concept of Compson honour’.... Quentin’s mission is to save the Compson honour by arresting time and thus forcing decay out of the Compson world.”<sup>7</sup> Quentin’s maintains on flashing back to his childhood when he first rejected Caddy’s deed. On the same day he recalls how he used to play with his sister and brothers at the creek on the day of Damuddy’s

death. Caddy innocently wet her dress and removed it to dry so that she will not get in trouble by her parents. As Caddy “took her dress off and threw it on the bank...[she] did not have on anything but her bodice and drawers... Quentin slapped her and she slipped and fell down into the water” (p. 18). Even as a young child Quentin strongly disapproved of his sister’s behaviour despite that it was ultimately innocent. Thus from their childhood, he felt bound to keep his sister’s honour untouched.

A similar episode to the one mentioned above happens later when Quentin has another moral objection to Caddy’s manners. He recollects how he struggled to safeguard her purity as he rejected her flirting with boys. Next, as he was walking towards the little Italian girl’s home, he remembers another memory from his past. His memory is “driven back to the same painful scenes of the past...His present...is a reenactment of his past; his future is past in waiting.”<sup>8</sup> He recollects asking Caddy, “why did you let him for kiss” (p. 133), Caddy replied that she “didn’t let him [she] made him” (p. 133). Quentin slapped her once more; “red print of my hand coming up through her face like turning a light on under your hand her eyes going bright” (p. 133). He then warned her that he would “make [her] give a damn” (p. 137), showing again his disapproval of her a moral action.

On June 2, Quentin remembers another time when he found Caddy at the creek after she lost her virginity. As she sat in the water, he asked her “do you remember the day Damuddy died when you sat down in the water in your drawers.... I held the point of the knife at her throat .... It won’t take about a second just a second then I can do mine I can do mine then” (pp.151-152). This extract clearly shows that Quentin is now experiencing a flashback of a flash back. He remembers Caddy in the water on the day Damuddy died when recalling her in the water as she lost her virginity. In

both scenes from the past, he went through a desperate state of anger upon his sister's immoral behaviour.

In her essay "The Language of chaos," May Cameron Brown explores how Quentin's memories of the past trigger his erratic conduct in the present. As he:

Contemplates killing [Caddy], [he] associates this moment with the night of Damuddy's death.... Caddy's muddy drawers, for which she had been scolded, represent the sexuality for which Quentin now wishes to kill her; and the sensuous water that Caddy is using to purify herself becomes the key which trigger's Quentin's memory.<sup>9</sup>

Caddy's honour is now completely lost, and Quentin is so vexed by his sister's immoral deed that he holds a knife to her throat prone to frustration and despair threatening to kill both her and himself as a means of protecting her honour and his family's name from sin. Nevertheless, what he is doing are nothing but futile attempts to safeguard her innocence despite that it is too late for time has marked her sin and it will continue to progress.

Scenes of water keep on stimulating all of Quentin's memories of Caddy's sensuality:

His contemplation of death and his obsession with virginity are aspects of his consciousness more fully revealed through the most common image of his imagination, water.... Quentin introduces water as a purifying agent.... Quentin's memory of running in the humid darkness to the branch where he finds Caddy...lying in the water...the water flowing about her hips... her skirt half saturated. (pp. 548-9)

Whenever he thinks that Caddy's virtue is threatened, he or she will be pictured close to water. Water is set by Faulkner to be the point that triggers Quentin's memory of the past, especially the past Caddy is engaged in, and so it becomes a purgation agent aiding him to sustain his sister's purity. Thus, it is not a mere matter of chance that Quentin commits suicide by

drowning as a final way of escaping time or cleansing himself of his family's immorality.

Quentin also wishes to give some meaning to events of the past, he would dream of drowning himself in pity, regret and anger over his sister's loss of innocence. His father's words, however, cut him short. He recollects his father informing him that his feeling's of anger are meaningless and of no help. He interprets Quentin's behaviour as:

too serious...[and that he is] blind to what is... general truth, the sequence of natural events and their causes which shadows every man's brow, even Benjy's. You are not thinking of finitude, you are not contemplating an apotheosis in which a temporary state of mind will become symmetrical above the flesh...you cannot bear to think that someday it will no longer hurt you like this now...and he [considered the word temporary to be] the saddest word of all there is nothing else in the world it's not despair until time and it's not even time until it was. (pp. 177-8)

Mr. Compson affirms that Quentin's feelings of despair over Caddy's loss of virtue are only temporary. Time and life move on and that is the 'saddest' aspect for Quentin, he cannot preserve his sister's purity nor he can drown himself in his sorrow and despair forever. Mr. Compson assures his son that "no battle is ever won.... They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an allusion of philosophers and fools."<sup>10</sup> Time will always defeat and decay man, it cannot be conquered or controlled. When Quentin foresees that he cannot shift the past to suit his needs, his father as well becomes frustrated due to the nature of time and the loss of his daughter's virginity. Therefore Swiggart asserts that "both father and son look upon the passage of time as the source of inescapable human frustration. Life is only a battle against time, the very terms of which ensure man's defeat. 'One day you'd think misfortune would get tired, but then time is your misfortune, father said'."<sup>11</sup> Quentin inherits despair from his



father, and both men are frustrated by time's progress. When Quentin confessed to his father his anger and sorrow due to Caddy's loss, he declared to his son that his anger is temporal and that virginity "means less to women.... He said it was men [who] invented virginity not women" (p. 78). Men dwell more on a woman's purity, while women tend to move on with their life after their loss. Despite that Mr. Compson considers pain to be temporary, he also shares his son's despair because his daughter's wantonness had hit him hard, for starts to drink to death the summer he finds out his daughter's loss of honour. He obliterates the past through alcohol because he can accept neither change nor Caddy's sin.

Quentin's battle with time ends in suicide for he fails to overcome time. His destruction of the watch on the morning of his suicide can be viewed as an attempt to kill time and therefore a preliminary act to killing himself. On that morning, he only hears the ticking of grandfather's watch. He rises out of bed, approaches his dresser and destroys the watch. However, the watch keeps on ticking inside his pocket, which makes him remember one of his father's lessons; "only when the clock stops does time come to life" (p. 85). To Faulkner, time comes alive when one is no longer a slave to man-made devices of time. Thus, destroying a clock cannot kill time since it does not measure real time anyway. Rabi, a critic of Faulkner's works, explains this notion, saying:

Before man's fall... the notion of innocence was linked with that of eternity. The divine was outside time, but after the fall man found himself inexorably in time, with its succession of seasons.... To remember their rhythm man created the week, the month, the year – in short, the limits of time.<sup>12</sup>

Quentin's breaking of the watch is symbolic of his attempt to wipe out the past by annihilating the device that marks time's progress. By destroying it, he "secretly hopes to stop time, to flee the world of unbearable duties" (p.

130). At the end of the day, after re-living his most traumatic childhood experiences, the broken watch continues its ticking and he comes to the agonizing conclusion that time cannot be conquered or destroyed. In Quentin's narration, and in his last walk, Faulkner thus shows that man cannot conquer the past or time. The ticking watch follows Quentin to his death. He thinks that if he dies, he will finally annihilate time or at least escape its grasp which conquers life. Suicide is the only solution for Quentin to free himself from the manacles of time. His unsuccessful attempts to stop or control time

underlies his suicide, which is not an act of deliberate self destruction, but an attempt to free his consciousness from the inevitability of change and decay. Quentin wants to live forever in the moment when consciousness still exists but when time, which alone can bring death, has been forever stopped.... He hopes that in death, life's candle will burn its brightest, that his memories of the past will fuse with present reality.<sup>13</sup>

Quentin cannot overcome his family's past nor his father's advice; that everything in this world is temporal, including his frustration over Caddy's virginity. His despair stems from his inability to perceive that change is inevitable, and thus he finally commits suicide as an attempt of escape. Through death, and this final act of departure, he can live in a moment protecting Caddy's honour forever without the threat of time's destruction or decay of it. As has been noticed through his flashbacks of his sister, he interprets water as a cleansing agent. Through drowning, he perceives himself as purified or at least separated from a temporary existence.

A contradictory notion of time to that of Quentin is set down by his brother, Benjy Compson who perceives the world in a timeless existence as an idiot. While Quentin is all past, Benjy is all present; he experiences everything from the past or present as taking place now in the present. His section of the novel sheds light on how time and past experiences are likely

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to become unstable and erratic in the human mind. Almost all that he experiences in what the reader realizes as the present pushes him to re-experience what actually occurred in the past. In this way, the past and the present are mingled and become one in his mind and he is unable to separate the two categories of time. Benjy's section of the novel, though chaotic and confusing, represents thematically exactly what Faulkner is driving at concerning the nature of time and the human experience of life lived. His narrative captures the meaning of Macbeth's soliloquy when he said that life "is a tale/ told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/ signifying nothing" (*Macbeth*: act v, scene v, L.26-28). The reader is forced to struggle through Benjy's thoughts to figure out meaning, which is Faulkner's intent. Through the unchronological order of events, the reader must confront what appears to be a loss of time or an existence that does not abide by the normal meaning of time. His existence is one without days, weeks, or years, but of thoughts, senses, and human experiences. The smell of nature and of the trees outside make him to recollect his memories with Caddy. These are actually past ones, but for Benjy these look as immediate as the present. The reader learns in Quentin's narration that clocks slay time, and that the actual time is that told by an idiot. By disregarding clocks and relying on human experiences instead, Benjy's narration persuades the reader that time is temporary and it signifies nothing.

Despite the fact that Benjy interprets time differently from Quentin and his father, he still shares the same desire to protect his sister's innocence and virginity. As the matter is with Quentin, Benjy recalls the day his sister and brothers played by the creek when Damuddy died, and a great deal of Benjy's narration centers around Caddy's sexual awakening. Benjy, like

Quentin, cannot grasp nor accept his sister's change or development into a woman. He can still smell the:

perfume [she wears]. [His] wailing leads her to wash her face and give the bottle to Dilsey. When she has been seduced by Dalton Ames, Benjy senses a loss or violation pushes her to the bathroom. When she is in the swing, kissing a lover, she allows Benjy to pull her away.... He reacts not to his moral interpretations of Caddy's experience, as Quentin does, but to his awareness of Caddy's own sense of shame.<sup>14</sup>

The majority of his memories are preoccupied with Caddy and her relationships with young men. Like a young child or an animal, he possesses an innocence that allows him to sense the shame, guilt and fear of another. He smells Caddy's guilt in her immoral behaviour, and he wishes to save her by pulling her away from anything that might lead her to shameful feelings.

In Benjy's world, future tends to be absent, it is an erratic blending of past and present, and he cannot accept the fact that Caddy is a maturing young woman with sexual needs. Hoffman concludes that:

Benjy's world is a fixed one, a world of sensations without time: all of these characteristics come from the fact that he is a thirty-three-year-old idiot.... He cannot distinguish between one time and another, and can only react to a number of fine sensory conditions that repeat themselves to him again and again.... These characteristics explain... Benjy's instinctive reactions to any disturbance.<sup>15</sup>

Benjy is a thirty-three year old man, but his mental age is that of a child who owns a naïve logic. He distinguishes a character's moral occupation through the senses, and he "does not want change; it upsets him. He is quite incapable of seeing Caddy as a person who will change" (p. 53). The cases in which Benjy senses Caddy's threatened purity, her development into a woman, traumatize him because he cannot concede her maturation. the novel's section that deals with Benjy, charts, in a sense, Caddy's change into a woman, and it reflects his reaction against her changing conduct. The reader's first time observation of Benjy's preoccupation with Caddy's

morality is when she ascends a tree wearing only her underpants in order to spy on Damuddy's funeral. He juxtaposes the past with the present when he remembers that Versh pushed her up the tree. Versh warns her that her father told her to stay away from that tree, and they all "watched the muddy bottom of her drawers" (p. 39). When Benjy saw them he started to scream and he clawed his hands against the wall. Benjy is not a man who possesses words to reveal his mind's thoughts, but his whole behaviour is a reflection of emotions. He looks at Caddy climbing the tree and inappropriately exposing her drawers to those watching below. This action upsets him, and because he is unable to communicate his objection in words, he screams and cries to draw Caddy's attention.

Benjy's flashback of Caddy on the tree is associated with another episode when he felt her changing behaviour that marks the progress of time, which cannot be understood by Benjy. Without a note of warning to the reader, he recollects his memories concerning his sister when she was still fourteen years old. Her shift into womanhood is portrayed when the reader figures out that she walks around wearing a prissy dress, as her brother Jason called it, and she also puts make up. Benjy cannot speak out his emotions in words, so Jason's cynical criticism of Caddy aids the reader in understanding the reason behind Benjy's disturbance. Jason comments bitterly on his sister, telling her; "you think you're grown up...just because you're fourteen...you think you're something" (p. 41). Benjy's eyes and nose are shocked when he senses her change in clothing and scent. He reacts to her development at once through revealing how he "could not smell trees anymore and [therefore, he] began to cry" (p. 40). He does not cease shedding tears till Caddy took her hat off and wiped out her make up. He listened to the sound of water as Caddy bathed, and when he comes across her after her shower,

he reveals how “Caddy smelled like trees again” (p. 42). Hoffman asserts that “Caddy when she is ‘right’ to Benjy ‘smells like trees’; when she doesn’t smell like trees, something has gone wrong.”<sup>16</sup> Benjy believes that Caddy’s purity and morality are safe when smells like the familiar trees that lead him to ease.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner digs deep into the mind of his characters and shows how some of them deal successfully with the progression of time. Not always, but most of the times, these characters are feminine as noted by Hoffman who says that “negroes, women, and children often possess a spiritual equilibrium, which Faulkner’s major heroes often lack.”<sup>17</sup> the character from the novel who applies to this statement is Dilsey, the black servant of the Compson family. Faulkner offers an illuminating passage that plainly reveals Dilsey’s acceptance of time. This interesting description comes from part IV of the novel which shows her reaction to time while she was in the kitchen on Easter Sunday morning:

On the wall above a cupboard, invisible save at night, by lamp light and even evincing an enigmatic profundity because it had but one hand, a cabinet clock ticked, then with a preliminary sound as if it had cleared its throat, struck five times.  
‘Eight o’clock,’ Dilsey said.

Trying to let the reader to apprehend Dilsey’s state, Hoffman explains that she is:

entirely at home in the erratic world and has calculated accurately the proper balance of errors within it. She is therefore able...to balance the real against the ideal and to ‘endure’ beyond the collapse of the family she has served.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to Quentin who currently struggles with time, Benjy who is oblivious to time, and Jason who races time, Dilsey is ‘able to adjust to time...without permitting it to defeat her’ (p. 29). As similar to the majority of Faulkner’s feminine characters, Dilsey’s womanly and maternal presence

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is in concordance with time, she understands its progress and continues to live her life without drowning herself in her past memories. She is able to flee the trap of past time as opposite to some of Faulkner's men and, sometimes, even women.

Dilsey is a representative of the Compson's "ethical norm" (p. 59). The author dedicates a section in his novel to the narration of this servant because she becomes the most "genuine personality of the novel" (p. 58). Dilsey's hard work and her loyalty to the family she has been serving for a long time to their bitter end suggests her nurturing potentialities and her feminine aura that permits her to endure what the Compson family cannot bear, that is, time, or the changes it brings about. Her motherly essence gives her the right to "become the final means of judging the compson family [as] a final perspective upon the Compson story" (pp. 58-9). Faulkner draws Dilsey's character as being the moral and ethical criterion of the novel because she attends church, and she also nurtures Benjy and comforts him whenever he becomes upset. As she sits striking his head, she tells him "you's de Lawd's chile, anyway. En I be His'n too, fo long, praise Jesus" (p. 317). Throughout the novel, the reader is led to an exposure of the ethical deterioration and the inevitable collapse of a family. Faulkner draws the curtain of his novel, however, with the voice of the sole character in the novel who is not subject to such decay. The novel closes as the genuine voice of femininity is speaking. A voice that is behaving within a rational and reasonable understanding and acceptance of time, an understanding that moves in present reality, casting itself away from the bounds of the past. This voice of Dilsey ends both the novel's events and the long, irritating, and annoying history of the Compson family.

## Notes

- 1 William Van O’Conner, *William Faulkner* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1985), p.13.
- 2 Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 2 Vols. (New York: Eandom Press, 1974), pp.429, 721.
- 3 Jean-Paul Sartre, “Time in Faulkner,” in *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*, Trans. Martine Darmon, Ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (New York: Harcourt, 1960), pp.181-2.
- 4 Ibid., p.184.
- 5 William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York: Vintage, 1984), p.79. All subsequent references to the novel will be to this text.
- 6 Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p.329.
- 7 Frederick J. Hoffman, *William Faulkner*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Twayne, 1966), p.55.
- 8 Andre Bleikasten, *The Most Splendid Failure: Faulkner’s The Sound and the Fury* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p.94.
- 9 May Cameron Brown, “The Language of Chaos: Quentin Compson in The Sound and the Fury,” *American Literature*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (1980), pp.548-9.
- 10 Peter Swiggart, *The Art of Faulkner’s Novels* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p.95.
- 11 Ibid., p.94.
- 12 Rabi, “Faulkner and the Exiled Generation,” in *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*. Trans. Martine Damon, Ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (New York: Harcourt, 1960), pp.129-130.
- 13 Swiggart, p.95.
- 14 Ibid., pp.89-90.
- 15 Hoffman, pp.52-3.
- 16 Ibid., p.53.
- 17 Ibid., p.32.
- 18 Ibid., p.29.



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## Conclusion:

Throughout the paper, it has been noted that Faulkner's dealing with time and memory in *The Sound and the Fury* is a complex, intricate one so that he can reveal the experience of how life must be lived. He expresses how time is continuous and it weaves in and out of the past, present and future. The hands of a clock define time inaccurately and they slay real time. Faulkner's protagonists show how real time can only be measured by an individual's experiences and memories of the past. In addition to that, it is plainly noted, during the course of the paper, that Quentin and his father view time as their enemy because it is temporary and cannot be sustained. Quentin wishes to halt time by breaking his grandfather's watch, but he fails to realize that real time is not measured by man-made inventions. All hopes of moving forward are totally lost on Quentin for he remains a victim to his childhood memories of his sister, Caddy.

Benjy's view to time and memory, on the other hand, exposes how time and past memories can become unstable and erratic to the human mind. Nearly everything he experiences in the present time, urges him to re-experience what actually took place in his childhood. In contrast to the male characters in the novel, Dilsey escapes the trap of time and past memories prone to her acceptance of the movement of time and its continual progression away from the past, and thus Faulkner awards her with peace and rest in living.

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