

## The Triumph of Time As Seen in *The Sound and the Fury*\*

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Time is Jesus walking “down the long and lonely light-rays.” (SF 64) This is the proclamation stated by Mr. Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* who can see things very clearly. Time is the fundamental substance of our existence, which begins with Jesus and ends with Jesus. The existence is seemingly nullified because of people who crucified Jesus. Faulkner himself explained his positive conception of time: “There is only the present moment, in which I include both the past and the future, and that is eternity. In my opinion time can be shaped quite a bit by the artist; after all, man is never time’s slave.” This concept has a tone similar to Tillich’s concept of “eternal now.”<sup>1)</sup> In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner is trying to revalue time and its function, as he believes,

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- 1) Faulkner’s affinities with existentialism have been pointed out. His methodology—his narrative style and its technique—has one fundamental aim: to comprehend experience by encountering it from within. His world is filled with anguish, anger and fear of nothingness. [Cf. Hyatt H. Waggoner, *William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World* (Lexington, Ky., 1959), pp. 84, 86, 109–112, 113–114, 119, 240, 251, 257, 271; Harry Modean Campbell and Ruel E. Foster, *William Faulkner: A Critical Appraisal* (Norman, Okla., 1951), p. 124; Robert M. Slabey, “Joe Christmas, Faulkner’s Marginal Man,” *Phylon*, XXI (1960), 266–277, and “Myth and Ritual in *Light in August*,” *Studies in Literature and Language*, II (1960), 328–349.] And his affinities with Tillich have been taken up by Philip Bliar Rice in “Faulkner’s Crucifixion:”

In trying to get some kind of foothold on the implicit ideational purport of the book, we can at least note some remote parallels to doctrines of such theologians as Tillich and Niebuhr. For the former, man’s precarious triumph consists in his Courage to Be, which includes the courage to face anxiety and the eventual non-being in time which is his individual destiny: the Christ figure as the “concrete absolute” is the paradigm for this courage. For both theologians, man’s redemption is not an ultimate victory of the Christian message in time, but both a timeless realization and a never-ending battle to wring some approximation to it from the relativities of history. [*Kenyon Review*, 16 (Autumn, 1954) p. 669]

Also John W. Hunt in *William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension* (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd, 1973) uses Paul Tillich’s clarification of his notion to interpret Faulkner. (pp. 28, 31, 55, 67, 126–7, 172)

And Hyatt H. Waggoner says that Faulkner’s fiction is existentialist as much of modern painting is existential, and the fiction of Kafka, and the earlier poetry of T. S. Eliot, and the theology of Paul Tillich. (*William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World*, p. 251) And as Tillich himself has said, existentialist art rediscovers in a manner appropriate to our time “the basic questions to which the Christian symbols are the answers.” (“Existential Aspects of Modern art,” in Carl Michalson, ed., *Christianity and the Existentialists*.)

Much Protestant theology implies that man is innately evil, that he can do nothing, since he is imperfect, to save himself, that only the grace of God is sufficient to raise him. Faulkner, however, insisting that values are imposed from within rather than from without, seems to suggest, man’s work can save man. His spiritual vocabulary, “prevail” symbolizes his theological concept. For him free will must end as action because it is expressed only in action, which may be defined as executed choice. He was once asked, “Would it be true to surmise that you favor strongly individual rather an organized religion?” He answered, “I do, always.” He was then asked if he thought men worked out their own

in order to reestablish authentically man's existence, because he declares, "Time is Jesus." The aim of this paper is to clarify his process.

*The Sound and the Fury* presents the world of the South where the existence is constantly being nullified by the Southerners. We can see that the title, *The Sound and the Fury*, quoted from *Macbeth*, "[Life] is a tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/ Signifying nothing," connotes that life has no meaning whatever. This interpretation is applicable not only to the first section but also to the whole story. The novel begins with Benjy's section, a tale told literally by an idiot and ends with Benjy's being driven around the town square by Luster. Benjy's bellow, the sound which is in itself "the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun" (*SF* 332), becomes symbolic of the divine grief in Christ's, "I thirst" [Jn 19:28]. With Quetin's chilling claim, "That Christ was not crucified: he was worn away by the licking of little wheels" (*SF* 65), time seems to have lost all positive value at all in the novel but remains only to be a destroyer. In other words, because of the sins of not accepting the guilt of the South, time is subjected to futility [Rom 8.20]. As the saddest odour of honeysuckle (*SF* 145) fills Quentin's world, the novel is filled with the anxiety of nonbeing to which man's ontic self-affirmation is about to be reduced, being filled with in Paul Tillich's words the awareness of one's finitude as finitude (*CT* 36).

The four chapters of the novel are constituted as four units of time seen in its various aspects and Faulkner was very careful in fixing the temporal order of the novel. In each chapter we see how one's concept of time defines one's existential reality, which also reflects one's relationship to Christ.

The first section of the story is told by Benjy, an idiot of age thirty-three years. According to Faulkner, Benjy is a pitiable "animal," a device used in the telling that "serves Faulkner's purpose and is gone."<sup>2)</sup> But we

salvation. Again he answered, "I do, yes" (*FU* 73).

As for Faulkner's concept of faith I understand that faith is hope raised to belief. It is born of confidence in a principle which always lacks demonstrable evidence. Faith demands particular responses without first establishing guarantees. In this way faith demands to a certain degree on courage, on the adventure of real chance. Some of the characters Faulkner most openly admires; Dilsey, Nancy Mannigoe, Lena Grove, even Mink Snopes of *The Mansion* have embodied his notion of faith. It is the individual's response to evil. It is here that free will receives its best and most strenuous exercise. Thus, at the very core of Faulkner's religious idea is the notion of the response one makes to evil.

Paul Tillich, the ontologist and epistemologist, takes the firm position that man's sense of God is made possible only because man's being is grounded in God's. Thus the presupposition of man's search for God is his always ambiguous possession of and by Him. (See Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) This dialectical intimacy of God and man is at the centre of Tillich's theological methodology, which he calls the method of correlation and which he understands as the basis for this theology as an "answering theology." (*Systematic Theology* I, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, p.6) It presupposes man's ambivalent experience of a simultaneous unity with and separation from his divine ground. The very dynamic of this experience both draws man back to his source and yet convinces him that he cannot reach wholeness unless it be given. Tillich captures the movements of this dynamic succinctly when he writes, "Man is the question he asks about himself before any question has been formulated." (*Ibid.*, 62) Thus man, by the very nature of his existential situation, asks after God. Tillich believes that the experienced answer to this question is the substance of the Christian revelation and the meaning of Christ. In the light of this understanding of the human situation, the task of the theologian is to analyse the ongoing and culturally variable expressions of the human plight and quest, and to address the resources of the Christian message to it. That is quite similar to Faulkner's believing task of a writer.

In my understanding both Tillich and Faulkner see man's precarious triumph consists in his courage to be, which includes the courage to face anxiety and eventual non-being in time and the Christ figure as the concrete absolute is the paradigm for this courage, and I understand that both perceive the answer to the man's existential plight lies in his courage to transform evil first in himself and then his world at the cost of oneself. (See John P. Dourley C. G. *Jung and Paul Tillich*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1981)

- 2) *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner 1926-1962*, ed. by James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 245-6.

should notice that Benjy's idiocy is at least human enough because he does have affections for Caddy. In his memory Benjy embraces Caddy, the only person that loves him, in the center of his world. The three things Benjy loves most, the pasture, the fire, and sleep are associated with her. Benjy never wants Caddy to change, and he begins to cry when he finds she no longer smells like trees. She has to wash off her perfume in order to reassure him. All Benjy knows is that he is happy when Caddy smells the way she always does. She must remain intact with the smell of trees throughout Benjy's section, as Benjy keeps saying, "She smelled like trees. She smelled like trees" (*SF* 55). However Benjy most expects of Caddy the one thing she cannot give him, for his expectation is based on his complete ignorance of time. Truly as Faulkner comments, "that this idiot had no sense of time. That what happened to him ten years ago was yesterday" (*FU* 94). Hence, in Benjy's section the simultaneity of time is noticeable, and it is extremely difficult to rearrange it into chronological order. He stands at the gate waiting for Caddy in 1928, because he has been standing there and waiting for her since 1902. The many years that he has waited in vain are not existent to him at all. To him, time is not a continuation. It is an instant. There was no yesterday and no tomorrow, for it all is now to him. He cannot distinguish between what was and what will be.

This section is in April 7, 1928, which is Holy Saturday before Easter Sunday. It is also Benjy's thirty-third birthday. All of these facts have a certain symbolic meaning. April is a month of life and growth. In this month of rebirth, Benjy is conscious only of death, since many of the things he remembers are connected with funerals and deaths. It is the month that the thirty-three year old Christ was crucified, and the Saturday between the Friday of his crucifixion and the Sunday of his resurrection is considered to be the darkest day in history. Thus as there is no time concept for Benjy, in Benjy's section which occurred on Saturday, April 7, when Christ is buried, Time as Christ is nullified.

The entire section of Part II is told by Quentin, from his view-point on the day he commits suicide. In contrast to Benjy, who is oblivious of time, Quentin is obsessed with it, as is indicated at the beginning of his section: "When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o'clock and then I was in time again" (*SF* 64). His obsession with time is suggested by his sense of being a ghost and his identification with young men of the past. Quentin is living in a twilight world: "twilight . . . that quality of light as if time really had stopped for a while" (*SF* 145). In the long stream of consciousness his obsession with time comes out in many ways. By tearing off the hands of his watch, Quentin hopes to transcend time. But he cannot remove himself from time. He constantly hears his own watch ticking even though it has no hands. And in the midst of all these connections with time, Quentin is constantly remembering various comments that his father made about life:

Father said a man is the sum of his misfortunes. One day you'd think misfortune would get tired, but then time is your misfortune Father said. A gull on an invisible wire attached through space dragged. You carry the symbol of your frustration into eternity. Then the wings are bigger Father said only who can play a harp. (*SF* 88-89)

Man the sum of his climatic experiences Father said. Man the sum of what have you. A problem in impure properties carried tediously to an unvarying nil: stalemate of dust and desire. (*SF* 105)

Father was teaching us that all men are just accumulations dolls stuffed with sawdust swept up from the trash heaps where all previous dolls have been thrown away the sawdust flowing from what wound in what side that not for me died not. (*SF* 150)

It is apparent that Quentin has been brought up under Mr. Compson's influence. Mr. Compson sees things quite clearly. However he has lost his ideals because he would not accept the guilt of the South. The South was deprived any ideal for the reason of self-righteousness. He believes that no significant values exist in life and that time cures all things by annihilating them. Life is a gamble with the dark diceman, in which "no battle is ever won . . . The field only reveals to man his won folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers

and fools" (SF 64). Against such nihilism, Quentin desperately searches for a substantial sin, because it will prove the reality of virtue. He imagined himself and Caddy in hell "amid the pointing and the horror beyond the clean flame" (SF 99) and his plunge into the river represents hell and death. He wished if he could only be in hell with his sister (SF 88). Though he tries to convince Caddy that they did commit a terrible crime, he cannot even convince himself. He knows that he will never be successful:

*we did how can you know it if you'll just wait I'll tell you how it was it was a crime we did a terrible crime it cannot be hid you think it can but wait Poor Quentin you've never done that have you and I'll tell you how it was I'll tell Father then it'll have to be because you love Father then we'll have to go away amid the pointing and the horror the clean flame I'll make you say we did I'm stronger than you I'll make you know we did you thought it was them but it was me listen I fooled you all the time it was me you thought I was in the house where that damn honeysuckle trying not to think the swing the cedars the secret surges the breathing locked drinking the wild breath the yes Yes Yes yes . . . (SF 127)*

Quentin, who prefers abstraction to reality, makes his ideal Caddy the center of his world. With Caddy's promiscuity, the ideal collapses in the conflict with reality, and Quentin is left with the chaos. Quentin is at Harvard, but his mind, like Benjy's, wanders in memory around the Compson place. It is undeniable that throughout the section Quentin's chief concern is over Caddy's sins and her loss of virginity. However as Faulkner comments Quentin "loved not the idea of the incest which he would not commit, but some presbyterian concept of its eternal punishment; he not God, could by that means cast himself and his sister both into hell . . ." (PF 710). What he is concerned with is not the fact of sins and virginity, but with the idea of them. Thus rather than being involved in action, his search is turned deeply inward. And when Mr. Compson reduced virginity to just words (SF 98), Quentin is left with no final word to sustain his being in the midst of "the reducto absurdum of human experience" (SF 72).

Quentin's suicide, then, is resulted from despair at the ultimate meaninglessness and the emptiness of being in time. According to Tillich, anxiety of meaninglessness is, "anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern." And the source of the anxieties of meaninglessness and emptiness comes from the sense of devoidness, loss of the meaninglessness of existence, as Tillich concludes:

The anxiety of meaninglessness is anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern, of a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings. This anxiety is aroused by the loss of a spiritual center, of an answer, however symbolic and indirect, to the question of the meaning of existence. (CT 47)

Because of the absence of any certainty in evaluating of his life, Quentin is left to conceive his future in fantasy. As he avoids time, he never faces Christ in person. Consequently, as Christ for Quentin is no more real to him than time is, he is unable to believe in the fact of sin, unable to find any act that is particularly terrible or worthy of the name of sin and damnation. Without judgment his future is thus forever suspended. Quentin wishes, "If things just finished themselves" (SF 67). But things do not finish themselves. Thus Quentin is being at a loss at a tangent with no determinant place of departure or return, left being distracted in need of condemnation.

In Section III, the world of Jason is entirely materialistic, and he views himself as a victim of circumstances that have betrayed his anticipations. He blames Caddy for his remaining only a store clerk, since Jason missed his opportunity of getting the job he had been promised when Caddy was pregnant by another man and she was thrown away by her husband. Thus Jason thinks nothing of taking for himself the two hundred dollars a month that Caddy sends for Miss Quentin's support, and at the same time he lets his mother believe that he burns the two hundred dollars and they accept nothing from Caddy at all. He deliberately blackmails his sister, robs his niece, and deceives his mother. Once Jason takes one hundred dollars to arrange for Caddy to get a glimpse of her daughter, and when she sends Quentin fifty dollars to spend for herself, Jason has let Quentin get only ten dollars of it.

However all of Jason's efforts are ultimately fruitless. It is in the fourth section of the novel that Jason finds out that Quentin has broken into his room and taken the money sent by Caddy for her support that he has been stealing for the past fifteen years. Furthermore, discovering Quentin's theft, he cannot report the true amount that has been stolen to the sheriff because that would reveal his own theft. We can say he is betrayed by his dishonesty.

Being such a person, Jason finds time is substantial so that every second counts to benefit him. No italicized parts to indicate time shifts can be found in his section because in his own mind he is not at all confused about the past, the present, or the future. For Jason, time is a linear progression of yesterday and today and tomorrow. By insisting on seeing time only with regard to money it obtains, he is always preparing to live, not living and resting in the present. He is so committed to preparation for the future though he is almost as enslaved as his brothers are. This is a man wholly unable to deal with the present as is seen in his dealings with Miss Quentin. He exaggerates the tiniest matter into seeming tragedies. Jason's time is spent in his present, using past and future for his own advantage. His world is in the immediate present and he exists there only for his own selfish aims. Thinking nothing whatever God one way or the other (*PF* 716), Jason excluded Christ completely from his world. Thus in Jason's section which occurred on Good Friday, the day Christ was crucified, time is totally deprived of its value.

Without Christ, all of the Compson brothers find the world "full of sound and fury," and so all the three attempts to create some sort of order in vain; all lack the absolutely stable centers of their respective universes. We have seen in fact each of them is concerned with the same problem, namely Caddy and her loss of virginity. They make Caddy their center. Even Jason can no more free himself from his obsession with Caddy than Quentin and Benjy. As we have seen Jason bears a grudge against Caddy and his hatred is vented on her daughter Quentin. However, Jason's obstinate chase after Quentin might be his desperate quest for love which can only be shown in hatred. Since he has never known what love is, his search for love always becomes a search for money which Jason has replaced love with. Thus his obsession with Caddy is quite different from Quentin's, but it is still very strong.

What does Caddy represent? Surely Faulkner repeatedly remarks that the whole story is the story of Caddy. *The Sound and the Fury* "began with 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); "I was just trying to tell a story of Caddy, the little girl who had muddied her drawers and climbing up to look in the window where her grandmother lay dead" (*FU* 17).

What Caddy sees in that tree is death. As Faulkner says of her in the appendix, she was "doomed and knew it, accepted the doom without either seeking it or fleeing" (*PF* 710). Faulkner means death by doom as every man's doom. Here we have to point out that the life of Caddy is chronologically ordered in the novel. The first section depicts Caddy's childhood. Next comes Caddy's adolescence and the loss of innocence, which is Quentin's ever-present concern. The third section depicts Caddy's adulthood because Jason is concerned only about Caddy's financial affairs. They think they take Caddy, but at the moment they think they take Caddy, she is not there anymore. Thus their center is missing and as a consequence, their life is left in turmoil. Caddy, who "doesn't want to be saved hasn't anything any more worth being saved for nothing worth being lost that she can lose" (*PF* 716) is a symbol of our human finitude which is controlled and limited by chronological time.

On human finitude Paul Tillich explains it is, in the last analysis, nonbeing (*CT* 158). The threat of nonbeing to man's ontic self-affirmation is absolute in the threat of death and related to the threat of fate. At any moment anxiety of nonbeing takes hold of us. Nonbeing threatens man as a whole, and therefore threatens his spiritual as well as his ontic self-affirmation (*CT* 46) which is experienced as the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness as is experienced by Quentin. The decisive question is whether one can hold his courage to be, a courage to affirm oneself in spite of the threat against man's ontic self-affirmation:

The threat of nonbeing to man's ontic self-affirmation is absolute in the threat of death, relative in the threat of fate. But the relative threat is a threat only because in its background stands the absolute threat. . . . And death stands behind fate and its contingencies not only in the last moment

within existence. Nonbeing is omnipresent and produces anxiety even where an immediate threat of death is absent. It stands behind the experience that we are driven, together with everything else, from the past toward the future without a moment of time which does not vanish immediately. It stands behind the insecurity and homelessness of our social and individual existence. It stands behind the attacks on our power of being in body and soul by weakness, disease, and accidents. In all these forms fate actualizes itself, and through them the anxiety of nonbeing takes hold of us. We try to transform the anxiety into fear and to meet courageously the objects in which the threat is embodied. We succeed partly, but somehow we are aware of the fact that it is not these objects with which we struggle that produce the anxiety but the human situation as such. Out of this the question arises: Is there a courage to be, a courage to affirm oneself in spite of the threat against man's ontic self-affirmation? (CT 45)

Here courage is the self-affirmation of being in spite of the fact of nonbeing which must be rooted in the power of being that is greater than the power of oneself:

Courage always includes a risk, it is always threatened by nonbeing, whether the risk of losing oneself and becoming a thing within the whole of things or of losing one's world in an empty self-relatedness. Courage needs the power of being, a power transcending the non-being which is experienced in the anxiety of fate and death, which is present in the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, which is effective in the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. The courage which takes this threefold anxiety into itself must be rooted in the power of being that is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world. (CT 155)

It is faith that makes the basis of the courage to be:

Faith is not an opinion but a state. It is the state of being grasped by the power of being which transcends everything that is and in which everything that is participates. He who is grasped by this power is able to affirm himself because he knows that he is affirmed by the power of being-itself. . . . faith is the basis of the courage to be. (CT 173)

Back to the novel, the three Compson brothers do not have the courage to accept Caddy, symbolic of human finitude, as she is. Their decisive fault lies in their not having of faith. Each of them is so preoccupied with his own concerns that he leaves no room for the others' needs in his mind. In other words they are not humble enough to admit the being that is greater than the power of his own self. Though Quentin calls the name of Jesus "Yes Jesus O good man Jesus O that good man" (SF 146), for him "God would be canaille too in Boston in Massachusetts" (SF 95). Jason "thinking nothing whatever of God one way or the other" (PF 716) never thinks of God in any sense whatever.

It is in Dilsey's section, whose setting is on Easter Sunday, that time regains its meaning. It is here that we enter into a proper notion of time as reality. With her inner serenity, her faith, and her understanding, Dilsey has an undistorted view of reality. And of all the characters she alone can perceive and respond to the needs of others. It is she that exemplifies a realistic living in the face of everyday futile events. She toils heavily up and down the stairs in responding to Mrs. Compson's unceasing demands and takes care of the children devotedly. One hears her saying "Give him [Benjy] a flower to hold. . . . That what he wanting" (SF 7); "I'm coming just as fast as I can" (SF 25); "Don't you bother your head about her [Miss Quentin] . . . I raised all of them and I reckon I can raise one more. Hush now. Les him get to sleep if he will" (SF 25); "All right, here I is. I'll fill hit soon ez I git some hot water" (SF 230); "Gwine git Benjy dressed en bring him down to de kitchen, what he won't wake Jason en Quentin" (SF 233); "I'll tend to dat too," "I can't do but one thing at a time" (SF 233); "All right. Only you keep him away fum de house. I done stood all I kin" (SF 246); "Hush, now . . . Hush. Dilsey got you" (SF 273); "You's de Lawd's chile, anyway. En I be His'n too, fo long, praise Jesus. Here" (SF 274).

With these phrases of love and concern, she is directly involved in the daily needs of the Compsons which stand in striking contrast to Mrs. Compson's self-pitying remark: "Look at me, I suffer too" (SF 171). Since Jason counts every egg, Dilsey buys a cake with her own money for Benjy's birthday. Mrs. Compson interprets Dilsey's kindness as ignorant laziness: "Do you want to poison him with that cheap store cake" (SF 50). To the new baby, Miss Quentin, Dilsey responds with "Who else gwine raise her cep me?" (SF 170) while Mrs. Compson who is incapable of giving love to her own children would thank God if Miss Quentin could grow up "never to know that she had a mother" (SF 171).

Furthermore Dilsey is the only person that points out to Jason his own ruthlessness: "You leave her [Miss Quentin] alone now, Jason . . . She gits up fear breakfast ev'y week mawnin, en Cahline lets her stay in bed ev'y Sunday. You knows dat" (SF 239). "I hear you . . . All I been hearin, when you in de house. Ef hit ain't Quentin er yo maw, hit's Luster en Benjy. Whut you let him go on dat way fer, Miss Cahline?" (SF 239) and "Tain't no sense in him being so bad tempered he got to make Quentin git up jes to suit him . . ." (SF 239).

The solid presence of Dilsey with "her myriad and sunken face," "as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts, and above that the collapsed face that gave the impression of the bones themselves being outside the flesh, lifted into the driving day with an expression at once fatalistic and of a child's astonished disappointment" (SF 228), presents the moral center of the novel. In the midst of the turmoil of the Compsons; Benjy bellows, Mrs. Compson whines, Jason complains, Quentin commits suicide, Caddy becomes a whore, Miss Quentin runs off with a bigamous pitchman, and the nihilistic Mr. Compson drinks himself to death, Dilsey never loses her fortitude:

*My name been Dilsey since fore I could remember and it be Dilsey when they's long forgot me.  
How will they know it's Dilsey, when it's long forgot, Dilsey,  
Caddy said.  
It'll be in the Book, honey, Dilsey said. Writ out.  
Can you read it, Caddy said.  
Won't have to, Dilsey said. They'll read it for me. All got to do is say Ise here. (SF 49)*

She made the same response to each event, a response of love, self-sacrifice, compassion, and pity. Dilsey is humble enough to know her limitation: "I does de bes I kin . . . Lawd knows dat" (SF 274). If we borrow the words of Isaac McCaslin in Faulkner's *Go Down Moses*, Dilsey embodies "the heart's truth," by which she knows, "the men who wrote his Book for Him were writing about truth and there is only one truth and it covers all things that touch the heart." Dilsey fulfills all the fee He [God] asked: "pity and humility and sufferance and endurance and the sweat of his face for bread" (GM 257). Furthermore, Dilsey does not make a fuss over a clock that is three hours late, and still she arrives to church on time. Her ability to make sense of the clock is simply one aspect of her ability to make sense of past, present, and future.

In the New Testament the most noteworthy term for time is *kairos*. Tillich explains *kairos* "the moment at which history, in terms of a concrete situation, had matured to the point of being able to receive the breakthrough of the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God," "the fulfilment of time" (STIII 369), as opposed to chronological time which is Quentin's time concept, for he thinks of time as something to be measured by a clock:

Its [*kairos*] original meaning—the right time, the time in which something can be done—must be contrasted with *chronos*, measured time or clock time. The former is qualitative, the latter quantitative. In the English word "timing," something of the qualitative character of time is expressed, and if one would speak of God's "timing" in his providential activity, this term would come near to the meaning of *kairos*. . . . In the New Testament it is the translation of a word used by Jesus when he speaks of his time which has not yet come—the time of his suffering and death. (STIII 369)

We witness that the Easter morning of 1929 brings to Dilsey this vision of Christ's suffering and death that makes *kairos* by her direct encounter with God in the divine-human. Sitting "bolt upright" and with tears sliding "down her fallen cheeks" (*SF* 256), Dilsey listens to the moving sermon which describes the crucifixion of Jesus and the sorrow of the women, but ends with the promise of resurrection and of ultimate glory. Christ is depicted as a Lamb slain, as John says: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1 : 29). Thus Christ's redemption by means of his blood is presented most vividly to the congregation:

'I see hit, breddren! I see hit! Sees de blastin, blindin sight! I sees Calvary, wid de sacred trees, sees de thief en de murderer en de least of dese; I hears de boastin en de braggin: Ef you be Jesus, lif up yo tree en walk! I hears de wailin of women en de evenin lamentations; I hears de weepin en de crying en de turnt-away face of God: dey done kilt Jesus; dey done kilt my Son!' (*SF* 255-256)

'... 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 hears de golden horns shoutin down de glory, en de arisen dead whut got de blood en de ricklickshun of de Lamb!' (*SF* 256)

It is the vision of Christ's redemption that gives Dilsey the meaning of time. Dilsey keeps weeping on her way. Dilsey in her own vision does not care what people think and repeatedly expresses her conviction: "I've seed de first en de last," "I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin" (*SF* 256-7). She saw that the time was created and that time will be no more when Jesus comes. She does really know what Tillich calls the divine eternity:

The traditional theological formula since Augustine has been that time was created with the world... The divine eternity includes temporality, but it is not subject to it. The divine eternity includes time and transcends it. The time of the divine life is determined not by the negative element of creaturely time but by the present, not by the "no longer" and the "not yet" of our time. (*STI* 257)

Dilsey recognizes that the eternal in the NT is not an uncharacterized duration: as Tillich explains it is a 'filled' magnitude, Christ, the Alpha and Omega filled:

The revelatory event is Jesus as the Christ. He is the miracle of the final revelation, and his reception is the ecstasy of the final revelation. His appearance is the decisive constellation of historical (and by participation, natural) forces. It is the ecstatic moment of human history and therefore, its center, giving meaning to all possible and actual history. The *Kairos* which was fulfilled in him is the constellation of final revelation. (*STI* 136)

And here we can note the relevance of Mr. Compson's remark that time is Christ. Tillich explains marvelously that the substance of time is Christ:

The riddle of the present is the deepest of all the riddles of time. Again there is no answer except from that which comprises all time and lies beyond it—the eternal. Whenever we say "now" or "today," we stop the flux of time for us. We accept the present and do not care that it is gone in the moment that we accept it. We live in it and it is renewed for us in every new "present." This is possible because every moment of time reaches into the eternal. It is the eternal that stops the flux of time for us. It is the eternal "now" which provides for us a temporal "now". We live so long as "it is still today"—in the words of the letter to the Hebrews. Not everybody, and nobody all the time, is aware of this "eternal now" in the temporal "now." But sometimes it breaks powerfully into our consciousness and gives us the certainty of the eternal, of a dimension of time which cuts into time and gives us our time.



People who are never aware of this dimension lose the possibility of resting in the present. As the letter to the Hebrews describes it, they never enter into the divine rest. They are held by the past and cannot separate themselves from it, or they escape towards the future, unable to rest in the present. They have not entered the eternal rest which stops the flux of time and gives us the blessing of the present. Perhaps this is the most conspicuous characteristic of our period, especially in the western world and particularly in this country. It lacks the courage to accept "presence" because it has lost the dimension of the eternal.

"I am the beginning and the end." This is said to us who live in the bondage of time, who have to face the end, who cannot escape the past, who need a present to stand upon. Each of the modes of time has its peculiar mystery, each of them carries its peculiar anxiety. Each of them drives us to an ultimate question. There is *one* answer to these questions—the eternal. There is *one* power that surpasses the all-consuming power of time—the eternal: He Who was and is and is to come, the beginning and the end. He gives us forgiveness for what has passed. He gives us courage for what is to come. He gives us rest in His eternal Presence.<sup>3)</sup>

Accordingly we could say time represented to Dilsey is *kairos*, a divine, redemptive present grounded by eternity. Tillich explains awareness of *kairos* is a matter of vision. It is not an object of analysis and calculation such as could be given in psychological or sociological terms. It is not a matter of detached observation but of involved experience (STIII 370–1). While time represented to Caddy is *chronos* which is passing to death, proving human finitude. None of the Compson brothers accepts human finitude, chronological time as it is. They measured time by their own selfishness and never seize the opportunity of Christ's time. The anxiety of having to die reveals the ontological character of time so potentially present in every moment. This anxiety concerning temporal existence is possible only because it is balanced by a courage which affirms temporality. Without this courage man would surrender to the annihilating character of time. We are aware of the fact that it is not the objects with which the Compson brothers struggle that produce the anxiety, but the human situation as such. In contrast, Dilsey's singing, "repetitive, mournful and plaintive, austere" (SF 232), is symbolic of the realistic courage which allows her to find "de power en de glory" (SF 256) in the midst of the most depressing evidences of meaninglessness, to experience life at once realistically and meaningfully. The name of her realistic courage is faith.

Again as Tillich clarifies that faith is the experience of the self-affirmation of being in spite of nonbeing: by the encounter of God and man in the divine-human Savior:

Faith is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself. The courage to be is an expression of faith and what "faith" means must be understood through the courage to be. We have defined courage as the self-affirmation of being in spite of non-being. The power of this self-affirmation is the power of being which is effective in every act of courage. Faith is the experience of this power.

But it is an experience which has a paradoxical character, the character of accepting acceptance. Being-itself transcends every finite being infinitely; God in the divine-human encounter transcends

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3) Paul Tillich *The Eternal Now*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1963), pp. 130–2.

Also Tillich explains the eternal present is a symbol of eternity:

And eternity is not the endless of time. . . . "What is the relation of eternity to the modes of time?" An answer demands use of the only analogy to eternity found in human experience, that is, the unity of remembered past and anticipated future in an experienced present. Such an analogy implies a symbolic approach to the meaning of eternity. In accord with the predominance of the present in temporal experience, eternity must first be symbolized as an eternal present. But this *nunc eternum* is not simultaneity or the negation of an independent meaning of past and future. The eternal present is moving from past to future but without ceasing to be present. The future is genuine only if it is open, if the new can happen and if it can be anticipated. (STI 275)

man unconditionally. Faith bridges this infinite gap by accepting the fact that in spite of it the power of being is present, that he who is separated is accepted. Faith accepts “in spite of”; and out of the “in spite of” of faith the “in spite of” of courage is born. (CT 172)

And it is in the encounter with God that is the fundamental experience of all who dare to hold the courage to be:

The courage to be in this respect is the courage to accept the forgiveness of sins, not as an abstract assertion but as the fundamental experience in the encounter with God. Self-affirmation in spite of the anxiety of guilt and condemnation presupposes participation in something which transcends the self. (CT 165)

As Dilsey testifies it is sure that “the faith in the Resurrection of the Christ . . . can give certainty only to the victory of the Christ over the ultimate consequence of the existential estrangement to which he [man] subjected himself” (STII, 155).

In conclusion, as we have seen, time is Christ and since Christ is nullified in their world, time is nullified there in the novel. It is the death of God and our God-forsaken misery that prevails at the beginning of the novel. There follows Quentin’s section which resounds with the chilling confession, “That Christ was not crucified: he was worn away by the minute clicking of little wheels” (SF 65). Quentin is justified himself. He denies that he is crucifying Jesus by justifying the South. There Christ is reduced to canaille and no redeeming value is recognized. And it is in Jason’s section that the value of time is used for his personal profit. What is required is a reevaluation of time through a revaluation of Christ’s death. This comes through Dilsey’s Easter celebration. The correlation of three days of April in the novel with the days of the Easter sequence is realized in this way. The sections of Benjy and Jason with the final chapter present the events that take place on 6, 7, and 8 April 1928 (Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday). Quentin’s section takes place on 2 June 1910, the day of his suicide. The tale full of sound and fury reaches its climax on Easter, when Dilsey gets the vision of Christ’s redemption. What is the significance of this calendar of events? As Christ was crucified on April 6, the Good Friday, by Jason Compson’s mindless exploitation, time was killed violently: it is dead and buried in Benjy’s “tale/Told by an idiot,” for it seemingly signifies nothing, on April 7, Holy Saturday when Christ is buried in his tomb; and time was resurrected on Sunday, April 8th, the Easter as Christ is resurrected from death when Dilsey has the vision of Christ’s redemption through his death.

Although Faulkner himself attempts to deny the value of his invention,<sup>4)</sup> *The Sound and the Fury* of 1929 makes a celebration of time’s victory. In fact it is Faulkner’s demonstration that man can live a meaningful life in the midst of anxieties of nonbeing. As Christ who fills time is resurrected from death, time regains its meaning. And it is faith that reveals to us the utmost vision of Christ’s redemption through his death as a symbol of liberation from the human plight of voidness, which gives us courage to be.

#### Notes

N. B. —The following abbreviations have been used below:

PE: *The Portable Faulkner*. Ed., with an introduction and notes, by Malcom Cowley. N. Y.: The Viking Press. 1946.

FU: *Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia 1957–1958*. Ed. by Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner. Charlottesville, Va.: univ. of Virginia Press. 1959.

SF: *The Sound and the Fury*. William Faulkner. London. Everyman’s Library. 1992 (1929)

CT: *The Courage to Be*. Paul Tillich. New Haven: Yale University Press. New Haven. 1952.

4) When Faulkner was asked what symbolic significance he attached to the dates in *The Sound and the Fury*, he answered with embarrassment: “Now there’s a matter of hunting around in the carpenter’s shop to find a tool that will make a better chicken-house. And probably—I’m sure it was quite instinctive that I picked out Easter, that wasn’t writing any symbolism of the Passion Week at all. I just—that was a tool that was good for the particular corner I was going to turn in my chicken-house and so I used it” (FU 68).

*GM: Go Down to Moses*. William Faulkner. New York. Vintage Books. 1973.

*STI, II, III—Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956–1964.

### ABSTRACT

*The Sound and the Fury* presents the world of the South where existence is nullified because the people would not accept the guilt of the South. With the declaration “Time is Jesus” Faulkner is trying to revalue time and its function to establish man’s existence, and the aim of this paper is to clarify his process by referring to Paul Tillich.

**Key words** : Time, Christ, Faith