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Lost in Time: The Concept of Temporality in Works of the US Lost Generation

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Time is an interdisciplinary and multifaceted phenomenon. Due to the rapid transformation of humanity at the turn of the twentieth century, time has become one of the major topics discussed by intellectuals worldwide. The rise of such disciplines as psychology and psychoanalysis created a background for discussing time as seen through the prism of human consciousness. After the publication of Einstein's theory of relativity time ceased to be an absolute category. The subjectivity of time perception became a prominent topic among intellectual circles and inspired writers to reconsider their own understanding of time to further utilize it in their works. Conventional historical time was viewed as an artificial construct. They had to find new ways of representation that would allow them to capture the phenomenon of subjective time. Some of them negated the conventional representation of time and offered new ways of comprehending it. To a certain extent, objective time was seen as in conflict with subjective time that was deeply psychological and empirical. It became a hidden character that actively participated in the shaping of the narrative form.

This thesis does not aim to provide a comprehensive definition of what time is as it is simply impossible. Rather, it attempts to portray the versatility and complexity of the concept of time as was understood in the late 19th and the early 20th century, both in philosophy and modernist literature, with the focus being on the US Lost Generation. This group of writers and their understanding of time is of particular interest. Time in their works is depicted through the microcosm of characters who struggle to overcome deep psychological traumas. Those traumas deprived them of the future and anchored them in the past. As Leigh Anne Duck observes, "modernists saw a world in which various bodies "carr[ied] earlier things with them," either as lingering ways of life, belligerent attachments to fading cultural forms, or attributes projected

onto them by others who wished to visualize an alternate temporality."[1] The burden of the past plays a significant role in the build-up of the narratives that are to be examined in this thesis. The interconnectedness between the past and the present, and the importance of memory and trauma in the shaping of the novels are to be analyzed in great detail to prove that the experience of time as portrayed in the literary works reflects the general tendencies observed in philosophical works that scrutinize the concept of time. The artists of the Lost Generation were highly influenced by WWI and what its aftermath brought into the world. As the Holocaust survivor Edith Eger mentions in her memoir: "the uncertainty makes the moments stretch."[2] It is this stretching of time, particularly the past, that is palpable in the body of works to be presented. The feeling of anxiety, disillusionment, and powerlessness towards the inability to resolve the conflict between subjective and objective time is a fundamental part of the discussed works. Those are *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, and *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner.

The following chapter represents the core ideas about the concept of time as found in the philosophical works of Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Walter Benjamin. While each of the philosophers had their own interpretation of the nature of time, there are striking parallels between their viewpoints. There are several key issues that they stress. Firstly, they distinguish between qualitative (subjective) and quantitative (objective, spatial) time. Whenever qualitative time is mentioned within this work, it refers to time as experienced by human beings, the so-called inner clock. Quantitative time, on the other hand, is the understanding of time as a means for measuring the external physical world. At the turn of the 20th century, as progress speeded up all the processes via the use of modern technology,

[1] Leigh Anne Duck, "Chronic Modernism" in *A Companion to the Modern American Novel*, ed. John T. Matthews (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009), 210.
[2] Edith Eger, *The Choice* (London: Rider, 2018), 43.

the contrast between those two notions of time became stark and could not remain unnoticed. Secondly, with the shift of focus towards subjectivity, time became understood as an inevitable part of being/consciousness. Thus, philosophers oftentimes refer to subjective time as being a product of the operations of the mind. It is the mind that has the power to distinguish between various dimensions of time. Without the ability of a conscious being to memorize, reflect, and project its ideas, there would be no distinction between the past, present, and future. This leads to another idea that the philosophers share. Qualitative time is a unity. As opposed to mechanical objective time, subjective time is not a succession but a single continuity. The philosophy of time that is presented in the chapter can be summarized by a quote from Wolfgang Iser who defines time as:

> a process of continual almost kaleidoscopic change, with an unending series of pasts taking shape through each individual present […] it is only through subjectivity itself that time takes on its form of past, present, and future; the self is not the passive object of this process, but actually conditions it.[3]

The continuous flow of time becomes a succession only when consciousness reflects on it, utilizing various cognitive processes (i.e., memory and imagination). Time is just there within the conscious mind. If there were no being there would be no time.

The third chapter then provides the historical, political, and cultural background for a better understanding of society at the turn of the twentieth century, to present major events that had a great impact on the way in which modernist thinkers and artists perceived the global transformation and reflected it in their work. The profound change in society required finding new ways of artistic representation and expression that would adequately reflect the newly emerging reality. The rupture, alienation, and fragmentation of society that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century climaxed in the outbreak of WWI. The war has become a central event that led to irreversible consequences due to its almost apocalyptic nature and the immense

[3] Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 144-145.

number of victims it brought. As a result, the old system of values collapsed and the new one was to be established. As Malcolm Bradbury observes:

> modernist works frequently tend to be ordered, then, not on the sequence of historical time or the evolving sequence of characters, from history or story, as in realism and naturalism; they tend to work spatially or through layers of consciousness, working towards a logic of metaphor or form.[4]

Those transformative processes are discussed in the chapter to portray how the change in society affected the understanding of temporality and permeated into the world of art.

The following three chapters then discover the above-mentioned tendencies by close examination of literary works. While each of the authors utilizes a distinctive way of narrative style, the principles on which time operates within their works share some similar characteristics. What can be observed is that the characters of the novels battle with the flow of objective time that is in conflict with their inner feeling about the passage of time. It makes them struggle with their present as it flips by. External time thus becomes a violent enemy that cannot be beaten. It is often represented either by the repetitive natural cycles or clocks that keep moving forward. The characters of the novels attempt to escape temporality by alternating their mental state with the use of alcohol or, as Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury* does, by committing suicide. What becomes apparent is their feeling of entrapment in time. Their past seems too distant and unattainable, their future is uncertain and turns out tragically. The authors oftentimes use metaphors to allude to the puzzling essence of time with which the characters struggle. The multi-layered, fluid nature of time and its transformative power becomes an underlying theme. The past keeps them hostages through the traumatized minds. Unwillingly, they keep reliving their traumas and projecting their reminiscences on their perception of reality. As a result, they struggle with their present and have no future. Being mentally desynchronized with the outer world, they are all lost in time.

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[4] Malcolm Bradbury & James McFarlane (eds.), *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 50.

The final chapter will summarize the main point of this thesis that aims at portraying the problematic and diverse essence of temporality as represented in the works of the US Lost Generation, making parallels between the philosophy of time as discussed in the second chapter, and the representation of the concept of time in the literary works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner to claim that their depiction of time reflects the shift towards subjectivity as their works abandon historicity and represent time as an inevitable part of human experience rather than a phenomenon that belongs exclusively to the outward reality.

2. The Philosophy of Time

The first half of the twentieth century was a period that shook the whole of humanity. It was a period of profound change and transformation that was caused by the breakout of destructive World War I and World War II; various ground-breaking discoveries in science; rapid technological progress; the foundation of analytical psychology and psychiatry; rapid economic growth and devastating economic crisis, etc. Those striking events influenced the way people perceived reality and their place within it. Artists and philosophers immediately reflected on the happenings that occurred within the world community. This period changed not only the way they perceived human existence, but also their understanding of the concept of time. There is no better way of introducing the philosophy of time than by the quote from T. S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" which was published in 1936:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.
> What might have been is an abstraction
> Remaining a perpetual possibility
> Only in a world of speculation.
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.[5]

The opening lines of the poem encompass some of the core ideas about the concept of time that emerged at the end of the 19th and were expanded on in the course of the 20th century. Eliot represents time as a unity that contains all the three dimensions of time that exist simultaneously. The past, the present, and the future are not independently existing temporal structures, but they rather emerge from each other and move freely between one another. The poem in this way ruins the traditional portrayal of time as being a succession and establishes a new image of it, that of entirety. As the past and the future are implicated in the present, it is

[5] T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton" in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. Nina Baym (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 1397.

possible to have control solely over the present moment. It is only within the human mind that any alternative temporalities, or phantasies, can come into being. As phantasies, as well as thoughts, are operations of the brain, they are always produced in the present moment.

The above-presented lines of Eliot's poem introduce ideas that correspond with the philosophical works that will be presented below. When time is perceived as part of human existence it acquires new meaning that is different from the traditional way of presenting time as a phenomenon that measures reality in minutes, hours, days, etc. Time as a philosophical concept becomes one of the integral parts of the self. It is the self that gives rise to the existence of time once it enters the physical world. The conflict between the organization of the objective outer world and that of the subjective self is what makes a dual nature of time possible. While parameters of the physical world are established with the help of multiple systems of measurement (objective time is one of them), the subjective world as a product of human consciousness cannot be measured physically, but rather requires a different system of classification that would be in agreement with the inner organization of the self.

2.1 Henri Bergson

Henri Bergson in his work *Time and Free Will* comes up with a concept of pure duration. The philosopher suggests that time in its traditional meaning as "a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space."[6] This definition of time perceives it as a number through which categorization of reality can be effectuated. In this way, time becomes one of the objects of external reality. This notion of time dramatically differs from the concept of pure duration that defines time as one of the characteristics of consciousness. Bergson claims that multiple states of consciousness can pervade each other freely creating a unique entity. Juxtaposed to this notion of pure duration, time becomes "the ghost of space haunting the

[6] Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, trans. by F.L.Pogson (New York: Dover Publications, 2001), 91.

reflective consciousness."[7] The emphasis is put on the spatiality of time when it is viewed solely as a measure. Wyndham Lewis comments on this, claiming that Bergson thus "put the hyphen between Space and Time […] It is out the Bergsonian 'durée' that the hyphenated 'space-time' in philosophy was born."[8] Indeed, when opposed to pure duration, time acquires its spatial semblance. It is defined as "the relation between two durations, for a certain number of units of time, in short, for a certain number of *simultaneities*."[9] From this definition certain aspects can be deduced. Firstly, if time consists of simultaneities, then a simultaneity is considered the smallest unit of time. Secondly, the primary function of time consists in measuring distance between durations as time is external to duration. Bergson claims that measurement becomes possible because of the ability of individuals to endure. Thus, when they contemplate the clock, they perceive time as a succession because of their ability to keep its past movements in mind.[10] Without this remembrance there would be no perception of time as a succession.

As opposed to mechanical, spatial, real time, pure duration cannot be measured. Being one of the attributes of consciousness it is rooted in psychic states and is consequentially influenced by them. It is described as a form of living that does not tend to separate its present state form its former states. This represents pure duration as a unity. Bergson defines it as "a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number: it would be pure heterogeneity."[11] Pure duration is dynamic and unpredictable and encompasses all time dimensions at once. It's qualitative in its essence as opposed to quantitative time. As durée is associated with psychic states it allows it to erase the

[7] Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* 99.
[8] Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 419.
[9] Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* 193.
[10] Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* 108-109.
[11] Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* 104.

borderlines between foreseeing, seeing, and acting.[12] As a result, the future can be as real as the present. The intermingling of time dimensions within pure duration blurs strict causal relationship between the structural elements. To establish a form of succession between those structural elements, they must be put in contrast with each other. As Lewis observes, "all 'succession' is arrived at by a comparison of past and present. Concrete consciousness lives these intervals: but, on the other hand, outside us nothing lives."[13] The comparison can take place solely within consciousness.

The objective external world is deprived of the possibility of comparison as only pure consciousness is capable of performing such operations. Thus, it exists outside the realm of pure duration that simultaneously contains the past, the present, and the future. Within which temporal dimension does the external world then exist? How can its reality be defined or measured? Bergson poses this question to provide an unequivocal answer: "what duration is there existing outside us? The present only, or […] simultaneity [..] we observe outside us at a given moment a whole system of simultaneous positions; of the simultaneities which preceded them nothing remains."[14] The above presented definition assumes that the outer world exists as a present reflection of pure consciousness. It is one of the simultaneities, or units of time, that comes into being when perceived by consciousness. Consequently, it cannot have a past or future of its own, as it will be the past or future of a particular conscious being that at a given moment reflects on the world. It is by the power of memory that individuals can live the past simultaneities once again to compare them with the present representation of the world, in this way registering changes that have taken place. Without this retrospective reflection the world remains fixed in an instance. This idea originates in Bergson's analysis of the essence of real time. He suggests that "the successive moments of real time are not bound up with one another,

[12] Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* 198.
[13] Lewis, *Time and Western Man,* 423.
[14] Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* 227.

and no effort of logic will succeed in proving that what has been will be or will continue to be."[15] This explains his description of the outer world as consisting of independent simultaneities. Simply put, as objects do not possess consciousness, they cannot travel between different time dimensions. To perceive a change in the outer world a spectator is required. It is through the impressions and experiences of this spectator that the changes in objects become visible.

Bergson's concept of time differentiates between real, spatial time and psychological time, or pure duration (durée). The former concerns the world out of human consciousness. It has a quantitative character and functions as a means of measuring the physical world. This points to the spatial nature of mechanical time that finds its embodiment in clocks, calendars, diaries, etc. In opposition to it, the Bergsonian concept of pure duration is introduced. Being a product of the human mind, it is subjective and has a qualitative rather than quantitative character. Durée is a privilege of conscious beings. Within the human mind, it operates in the same way as emotions and sensations. As it is hard to distinguish the borderlines between different states of mind, it is hard to separate simultaneities once they are lived through. Pure duration represents time as a monolithic unit within which consciousness is allowed to move forwards and backwards with no limitations. Each of the time dimensions can easily permeate another one. Thus, pure duration becomes one of the forms of living as time in this form is not spatialized, but it is experienced. Once it is experienced, it becomes organized within consciousness.

2.2 Martin Heidegger

The Heideggerian concept of time represented in his *Being and Time* discusses temporality in relation to Dasein, which is his term for identifying an entity that is conscious

[15] Bergson, *Time and Free Will,* 208.

of its own existence, a human being. According to Martin Heidegger, only Dasein is capable of anticipation and is generally futural,[16] as after being born, the self is anticipating its own inevitable death. The self is constantly evolving as after being thrown into the world it has to discover its authentic self, the one that fully understands its mortality and does not try to flee from this reality. Being aware of its mortality, the self thus recognizes its position as being between two points in time: its birth and death. Thus, the idea of time stems from the temporality of the self and "reveals itself as the historicity of Dasein."[17] According to Heidegger, time must be viewed as "a pure succession of nows, without beginning and without end."[18] From this standpoint, time is a continuous flow that is always there. It is within this current that everything comes into being and then passes away. This is the authentic understanding of time. The past arises from the future in the same way that the future in the process of becoming the past releases the present. Heidegger suggests that "this unified phenomenon of the future that makes present in the process of having-been is what we call temporality."[19] Temporality is a unified entity that consists of elements that arise from each other. This notion of temporality is in stark contrast with the traditional understanding of time that defines it as consisting of separated future, past, and present.

The genuine definition of time does not consist in the succession of events. The future does not occur later than the past, nor the past is preceding the present. According to Heidegger, "temporality temporalizes itself as a future that makes present, in the process of having-been."[20] All three dimensions of time are concurrently present within the self. Temporality is seen as a horizontal scheme on which Dasein exists after coming into the world, its "potentiality-of being is always projected in the horizon of the future, "already being" is disclosed in the horizon of

[16] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 345.
[17] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 353.
[18] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 349.
[19] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 347.
[20] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 370.

the having-been, and what is taken care of is discovered in the horizon of the present."[21] All the three modes of being freely coexist within the self. This is how inner temporality of Dasein can be succinctly categorized. As the self does not live in isolation but has to communicate with other selves and the outer world, it enters another reality of time. This time comes into being after individuals attempt to position themselves within the external world. Living in the world that is within time, the self "needs and uses the calendar and the clock […] What occurs "with it," it experiences as occurring "in time." In the same way, the processes of nature, whether living or lifeless, are encountered "in time." They are within-time."[22] This awareness of existing within the world pushes individuals to understand their being objectively. Such use of time which differs from the notion of temporality is presented by Heidegger as historicity. Historicity is connected to the temporality of Dasein as is stems from it. It is with the help of historicity that the self understands its position within the external world.

Positioning of the self within the outer world is subjective and occurs in accordance with individual perception of time. Without the help of external objects, such as calendars, clocks, metronomes etc., individuals date particular moments differently. Heidegger points out that "several people can say "now" together, and each can date the "now" in a different way: now that this or that happens."[23] This points to Dasein's temporality that interprets time as a continuous flow, thus every "now" appears within this current of events that none of the surrounding individuals would be able to precisely identify without the help of mechanical time. Public time was created so that humans could understand themselves in respect to the surrounding world. Public time "turns out to be the time "in which" innerworldly things at hand and objectively present are encountered."[24] It allows humans to precisely determine the "then-when" relationship. When it undergoes such metamorphosis, time becomes "datable, spanned,

[21] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 384.
[22] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 396.
[23] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 430.
[24] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 431.

and public and, as having this structure, it belongs to the world itself."[25] This is the way in which world time comes into being. It is both objective and subjective in its essence. It is objective because it gets objectified when it enters the physical world and is interpreted through the prism of its physicality. It is at the same time subjective, as it makes possible the existence of the self and becomes one of its fundamental parts. This makes time ""prior" to every subjectivity and objectivity because it presents the condition of the very possibility of this "prior.""[26] Indeed, it is thanks to the existence of time that the idea of succession is possible.

Martin Heidegger explores time and temporality through the viewpoint of a conscious being that reflects on its own existence, which he refers to as Dasein. This entity contains in itself its own notion of temporality that is unified and closely connected with the way in which Dasein experiences itself. Within this indivisible temporality no such terms as past, present and future exist. Each of the three structural elements that form this temporal unity is inextricably linked with the two other ones. Temporality, as opposed to time, is a never-ending process of transformation. Time, on the other hand, makes any succession possible and itself is a succession of separated moments that does not have a beginning or end. Individuals' tendency to interpret themselves as parts of the objective world causes them to place themselves within time. As objects exist within time, after encountering them, conscious beings coexist with them in the same time span. To explain its position within this temporal reality, Dasein has to use world time, the time that has a structure, can be dated and expressed with the help of physical objects. Heideggerian concept of time in this way distinguishes between two notions of time: one of them is subjective and is one of the properties of the self, the other one is neither subjective nor objective and gives rise to any form of temporality. What unites both of those phenomena is the fact that they exist due to the existence of Dasein.

[25] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 434.
[26] Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 438.

2.3 Jean-Paul Sartre

Part Two of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* discusses being-for-itself. It is within this chapter that the concept of temporality is introduced. Being for-itself is a conscious being as opposed to being in-itself which defines an unconscious being. The fact that the concept of temporality is presented as one of the parameters that characterizes the for-itself points to the fact that it is a phenomenon representative of exclusively conscious beings. Sartre claims that temporality should be approached as a totality "which dominates its secondary structures and which confers to them on their meaning."[27] The notion of temporal totality thus becomes a key standpoint from which time is perceived. It subverts the traditional approach towards time that views it as consisting of three independent elements put into chronological order. The past, the present, and the future are subordinates of temporal totality. Within being those three elements are co-dependent and penetrate each other creating unity. Thus, they cannot be viewed separately and acquire their meaning only when viewed as integrity. To prove the existence of temporal totality, Sartre individually examines each of the three elements to make the connections between them apparent. The analysis starts with the representation of the past.

The past as well as any other time dimension is the product of consciousness. It is within the consciousness of being that temporal totality can be created and thus the past gains its meaning as being past in relation to the present and future. The past can be established from the standpoint of a conscious being that entered the world.[28] It will be the individual past of that being. The ontological past is a product of memory and is inextricably linked to the present. It becomes "a product of a present modification of being."[29] Memory is the faculty of the mind. It processes events, ciphers them so they can be safely stored and retrieve them when its needed.

[27] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1978), 107.
[28] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 139.
[29] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 108.

Thus, any recollection simultaneously coexists in both the present and the past as memories keep on living in one's mind. Remembrances are produced in the present, by the present body and become an impression of the past that is created by the mind. In this way, the past "is continually organized with the present."[30]. From this point of view, the past arises from the present and is contained within it. Sartre points out that particular pasts give rise to the existence of a universal past and not vice versa.[31] The former is fundamental for the existence of the latter.

One might pose a question: "what is the correlation between the past and the future?". Indeed, while the interrelatedness between the past and the present is to a certain extent evident, the connection between the past and the future is not as apparent. Sartre suggests that the meaning of the past can be interpreted as "an ex-present which *has had a future*."[32] The possibility of there being a future does not disappear when the present shifts into the past. Future possibilities remain existing as a former future. In a sense, a particular state of conscious being at a particular moment becomes preserved in its totality in the past without the possibility of changing. This leads to another salient point made by the philosopher: the past can be seen as a process of objectification of a conscious being.[33] When an event becomes past it loses the potential for transformation. It becomes permanent and exists at a particular point of eternity. In this way, when it becomes a mere fact, it acquires the qualities of a substance which a conscious being consists of.

The present is opposed to the past. While the past dwells in the memory, the present is seen as the presence of a conscious being to objects in the external world.[34] It is a conscious being that allows the present to exist. Every surrounding object gains its presence as existing

[30] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 109.
[31] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 112.
[32] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 116.
[33] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 119.
[34] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 121.

in a copresence with a conscious self. This interrelationship is reciprocal as to realize its state of presence, an individual perceives reality in relation to the surrounding world. This becomes a key point upon which Sartre later forms his definition of the present:

> The For-itself is present to being in the form of flight; the Present is a perpetual flight in the face of being. Thus we have precisely defined the fundamental meaning of the Present: the Present is not.[35]

A conscious being recognizes itself through realizing what it is not: it is not a being-in-itself (an object). The definition presented above ends with a statement that the present is also not an object, meaning that it has a potential to change. It is represented as a 'flight' to signify its ability to move from one time dimension to the other. The present thus can be defined as a movement towards future.

The future, as well as the past, exist only for a conscious being. As Sartre puts it, "it is only by human reality that the Future arrives in the world."[36] The self is always future oriented because of its incompleteness thus it remains in a state of constant metamorphosis. In opposition to objects in the surrounding world that are static, a conscious being is dynamic. Its essence can be described as "an always future hollow."[37] As a result, even when it reaches a certain point in the future, it's potential will never be completely realized. It is only the future projection of a conscious being that finds its realization. This idea leads to Sartre's definition of the future that claims that "the future is the continual possibilization of possibles […] the future thus defined does not correspond to a homogeneous and chronologically ordered succession of moments to come."[38] As opposed to the past, the future is as dynamic as the present.

After closer examination of the three time dimensions, it becomes possible to look at Sartre's observations on temporality. The philosopher identifies two notions of temporality.

[35] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 123.
[36] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 124.
[37] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 128.
[38] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 129.

One of them is called static temporal. The concept of static temporal can be regarded as identical to the order of time. This pattern follows the traditional representation of time. In contrast to it, another notion of temporality is presented, that of dynamic temporal. The dynamic temporal is equivalent to the course of time. While the former can be viewed as a formal way of categorizing the time flow, the latter corresponds with the way in which a conscious being experiences time. It is within this discussion that Sartre mentions novelist's tendency to refer to the idea of the dynamic temporal in which every "now" is destined to become a "formerly.""[39] Such depiction of time is typical for a narrative style of stream of consciousness that was widely used by modernists as it mimics a non-linear way of representing time and allows characters to freely move between different time dimensions. Apart from finding its use in literary narrative techniques, time is also used as a measure of distance, work, age, etc. This use of time corresponds with static temporal as in this case time is not perceived as a process but is rather spatialized. It goes against the nature of temporal totality as temporality is directly associated with change. When time is used as a measure it is deprived of the capability of change. As a result, it is far removed from the concept of temporal totality.

Something can be before or after only when it is perceived as an internal relation. As Sartre puts it: "it is there in the after that the before causes itself to be determined as before and conversely."[40] This points to the inseparability of structural elements of temporality as the act of separating them results in their unintelligibility. Another temporal phenomenon that is presented in Sartre's work is that of psychic duration which is compared to Bergson's durée. It is defined as a composition of ""nows" which have been, which remain at the place which has been assigned to them, but which influence each other at a distance in their totality"[41] Within

[39] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 130.
[40] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 136.
[41] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* 170.

this temporal structure none of the temporal dimensions is superior to others as they are all subservient to the temporal unity and thus can freely penetrate each other. It becomes one of the temporal categories typical exclusively for a conscious being.

Sartre's analysis of time in *Being and Nothingness* presents it as one of the integral parts of a conscious being. Time is bound to the existence, and it comes into the world as one of its constituents. Without consciousness, time would not exist. This notion of time is put into stark contrast with universal time. It is time that is used for categorizing reality but has nothing to do with the way in which a conscious being experiences time. In a sense, it can be seen as a synthetic entity created by humans that helps to understand reality in terms of space. That is why static temporal was created. All temporal dimensions coexist within one being and only in their totality they can gain their meaning. The past cannot become past in its isolation, it becomes past when it's related to the present and the future and vice versa. The course of time is a complex process that is always future-oriented. It gains its dynamism from being that is in a state of perpetual development because of its incompleteness.

2.4 Walter Benjamin

Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" presents a specific form of relationship between history and time. In the second thesis, Benjamin claims that "there is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth."[42] By making this statement, the philosopher establishes a fixed interdependence between the past and the present which subverts the usual representation of time. The present and the future are in this way predetermined by the past because of history's repetitive nature. Once the pattern is deciphered, modifications of future historical events can be predicted. Within this formula of time perception, the past acquires dynamic qualities of the present. Its

[42] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 254.

true image flits by. "The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again."[43] This idea contradicts the common view of the past which is traditionally seen as a solid structure that exists in its totality. Instead, the past, as well as the present, consists of numerous microelements that need to be registered in the present so that they do not disappear into the abyss of history.

In his discussion of the concept of history, Benjamin opposes two notions of time: homogenous, empty time and time "filled by the presence of the now."[44] History is made up of a chain of events, of time experienced. This is how the now gets preserved and enters heterogenous time. The main impetus for change is progress that always heads towards the future. It closely correlates with Benjamin's representation of the angel of history who is moved by the storm that "irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."[45] The heterogeneity of time finds its representation within the above-presented quote. The storm of progress is the ever-evolving present that immediately transforms into the past. Events that occur instantly transform into the pile of past occurrences. Time is thus separated into different components and there is a clear distinction between past, present, and future. Historians are always past-oriented, but they reconstruct historical events from the perspective of the now, which is at the same time the future from the perspective of the past. Benjamin comments on the ways in which time can be measured. According to his viewpoint, clocks and calendars measure time differently. Calendars are "monuments of historical consciousness."[46] While clocks measure empty mechanical time that does not capture any experiences or events, calendars are permeated with lists of nows. It is in calendars that holidays, events, everyday duties, etc. are recorded. A calendar can be seen in this way as a space within which the three

[43] Benjamin, *Illuminations,* 255.
[44] Benjamin, *Illuminations,* 261.
[45] Benjamin, *Illuminations,* 258.
[46] Benjamin, *Illuminations,* 262.

dimensions of time intersect. Calendars are capable of representing the continuum of happening while clocks are not. When a particular future event is added to a calendar it exists in the realm of future. At a certain point in time, it transforms into the present which later becomes the past. By going through the calendar, not only can one revive the past, but they can also reproduce the continuum.

3. Historical and cultural context of modernism

Time is a measure of change, and modernism is a time of great change. Thus, *change* is a central term upon which the discussion of both time and modernism revolves. Dean Buonomano, in his work on the neuroscience and physics of time, defines clock time as a "local measure of change, neither absolute nor universal."[47] When seen from this standpoint, time can be viewed as one of the numerous characteristics that help human beings interpret the processes occurring in the external world. This form of time constitutes the phenomenon of objective clock time, which is an artificial construct in its essence. Its counterpart, subjective time, presents itself as a radically different understanding of time that is projected onto the inner self rather than the outside world. Buonomano claims that a "subjective sense of time is a mental construct."[48] It allows humans to experience time in the same way they experience emotions. While clock time is a means of measuring objects of physical reality, subjective time is an inevitable part of the unique human experience deeply rooted in consciousness. This implies that the operations of our inner clock are highly influenced by the processes that occur in the brain at a given moment. It was during the modernist period that those contradictions in time perception were widely discussed. At the turn of the twentieth century, understanding of time and temporality underwent dramatic transformations in disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, and physics. The new revolutionary way of thinking about time subsequently affected the way in which artists utilized it as one of the tools for creating their artworks.

No matter the art form, it had been affected to a greater or lesser extent by the tendency to experiment in order to find new ways of artistic representation. In other words, "art of the period seemed to be intent on stretching the mind beyond the very limits of human understanding."[49] There was a rapid development of technology and science that required the

[47] Dean Buonomano, *Your Brain Is a Time Machine* (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2017), 29. Kindle.
[48] Buonomano, *Your Brain Is a Time Machine,* 30.
[49] Bradbury & McFarlane*, Modernism,* 72.

establishment of a new artistic tradition that would adequately reflect the change. There is no wonder that such intention gradually crystallized among artists. However, this statement is not applicable to all modernist works. There were writers, composers, and visual artists who remained conservative in their style, utilizing and developing traditional forms and techniques, thus preserving cultural continuity. Still, artists who followed the innovative path outnumbered those who decided to stick to the conventional way of representation. As experimentation prevailed, modernist culture was often referred to as going against conventions, as being "an abrupt break with all tradition."[50] To better understand the *why* of artists' craving for novelty and the way in which it is tied to the concept of time, it is crucial to examine the way in which global change affected the world of art.

The breakup with convention in art can be viewed as an inevitable outcome of the larger world's transformation. "The keynote of modernism is liberation, an ironic distrust of all absolutes, including those of temporal or spatial form."[51] One of the major scientific breakthroughs of that period was the introduction of Einstein's work titled *The Special Theory of Relativity* which "argued that space and time, instead of being the discrete and distinct dimensions they had always taken to be, were in crucial and extreme circumstances actually functions of each other."[52] This established a new relationship between time and space that declared their unity and formed a new dimension called spacetime. In a sense, any occurring event can be viewed as a form of spacetime. Einstein also "derived a set of equations that describe how time dilates (and space contracts) as a function of velocity."[53] This observation disproved the idea that time and space are absolute as they change in alternated conditions.

As is pointed out by Raymond M. Vince, "from the Age of Reason until well into the nineteenth century, the classical physics of Sir Isaac Newton had been the controlling

[50] Bradbury & McFarlane, *Modernism*, 20.
[51] Bradbury & McFarlane, *Modernism,* 432.
[52] Bradbury & McFarlane, *Modernism,* 85.
[53] Buonomano, *Your Brain Is a Time Machine,* 251.

paradigm, a mechanical and scientific framework that could be incapsulated in the phrase the clockwork universe"[54] In this way, Newton's concept of universal time was no longer valid as Einstein's theory declared that time was relative. Thus, Einstein's discoveries marked a turning point in physics as they presented a progressive way of thinking that went far beyond the conventional way of categorizing the universe. They also alternated the way in which the human experience of reality was understood, highlighting the difference between the functions of the outside physical world and the world as experienced by humans. Shortly put, by abolishing universal time, Einstein "returned us to our own personal clocks."[55]

Another crucial event that initiated the domino effect of change was the Second Industrial Revolution which started in the second half of the nineteenth century and lasted till the outbreak of the First World War. It significantly transformed the Western world and its philosophy. According to Ronald Schleifer, it can be viewed as a breaking point from which the modernist way of thinking emerged. He claims that modernism was conditioned by "the confrontation of different orders of political organization, different versions of labor and class, different comprehensions of the uses of commodities […] different understandings of the relationship between subjectivity and temporality."[56] At the turn of the twentieth century, the world's population was in a state of flux caused by various social, economic, and political events that occurred worldwide. On the European political scene, the Austria-Hungary, German, and Russian Empires were on the verge of collapse, and the power of the British Empire started to diminish. The advance of the Second Industrial Revolution intensified the already existing tensions and presented society with new challenges. Innovations and revolutionary discoveries in various fields were gradually implemented into daily life and

[54] Raymond M. Vince, "*The Great Gatsby* and the Transformations of Space-Time: Fitzgerald's Modernist Narrative and the New Physics of Einstein", *The F. Scott. Fitzgerald Review* 5, (2006): 88. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41583114> 5 Jul 2023.
[55] Vince, "*The Great Gatsby* and the Transformations of Space-Time", 90.
[56] Ronald Schleifer, *Modernism and Time: The Logic of Abundance in Literature, Science, and Culture, 1880-1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 112.

gradually "modernity was bringing about a world of synchronized clocks and standard time zones."[57] The growing number of factories caused rapid urbanization; the introduction of electricity into the domestic environment altered daily routine as people became independent from the natural light; the invention of cars and other types of vehicles as well as the expansion of railway connections increased mobility and speeded up long-distance traveling and logistics. All of those elements fastened the usual life tempo.

This may be the reason why modernist time resisted the process of total mechanization and attempted to find ways of escaping the confinement of clock time that was so far removed from subjective experience. With the advancement of the Second Industrial Revolution, the lives of people became adjusted to clock time rather than sunlight. While rural lifestyle was predominantly governed by natural cycles (i.e., change of seasons, natural daylight, etc.), urban life, on the contrary, became heavily dependent on mechanical clocks. There is no wonder that such drastic change evoked great awareness of the distinction between the inner (subjective) and outer (objective) flow of time. The more the world of technology progressed the more the gap widened. In contrast to this, modernist time was "a reaction against the increasing impact of the standardized time of factories, offices, and train schedules."[58] The realm of art became a medium that allowed people to escape this ever-accelerating dynamo of mechanical time.

The variety of products the Second Industrial Revolution introduced to the market greatly outnumbered the demand thus resulting in an abundance of goods. In this way, it dramatically differs from the first Industrial Revolution which mostly aimed at covering basic human needs. Therefore, the Second Industrial Revolution shifted the focus from need to desire. The society became driven by the logic of abundance. As Robert Schleifer comments, this logic "disrupts the staid relationship between […] production and consumption […] It

[57] Vince, "*The Great Gatsby* and the Transformations of Space-Time", 88.
[58] Rita Barnard, "Modern American Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism*, ed. Walter Kalaidjan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 53.

disrupts the staid linear relationship between past, present, future."[59] Overproduction and overconsumption created a new living standard and transformed the market. Companies merged together to create larger conglomerates to increase their profit and meet the increasing demand. Schleifer suggests that the temporal linearity got disrupted as a result of overconsumption as "it destroys the future by destroying the assumption that the present and the future are of one piece."[60] For the newly emerging consumer culture experience and entertainment were of the greatest value. As they lay at the basis of comprehending the world the society got anchored in the present, neglecting possible future repercussions of such lifestyle.

William James, himself a radical empiricist,[61] observed this growing tendency to prioritize experience. As Rita Barnard suggests, he "gave certain philosophical weight to the notion of living for the moment: one of the key ideas of the emergent culture of abundance."[62] The publication of one of his major manuscripts titled *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890 demonstrated James' interest in human consciousness and the way it constructs and alternates the reality of an individual. Some of his observations closely correspond with ideas introduced in Bergson's work *Time and Free Will* published a year earlier in France. As can be observed, the phenomenon of subjective reality was at the center of attention among the intellectual circles on both the European and the American continents. As Leigh Wilson observes, "the fluidity of perception was also being systematically explored by philosophers […] thinkers such as […] Henri Bergson, and Sigmund Freud […] all stressed the self as in flux rather than as rigidly fixed."[63]

[59] Schleifer, *Modernism and Time,* 134.
[60] Schleifer, *Modernism and Time,* 115.
[61] David E. Leary, *The Routledge Guidebook to James's Principles of Psychology* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 86.
[62] Barnard, "Modern American Fiction", 54.
[63] Leigh Wilson, *Modernism* (Hampshire: Ashford Colour Press Ltd, 2007), 77.

William James is considered one of the originators of psychology. His understanding of human consciousness reflects Bergson's idea of durée. For James, human consciousness "is not the result of a combination of elements [..] consciousness is simply THERE at and as the beginning,"[64] it is a place where innumerable concurrent possibilities are "all conjoined and fringed with feelings, tendencies, and associations, ready for the discrimination and comparison of some of those possibilities through the selective activity of the individual mind."[65] There is only one mediator between consciousness and objective reality – the human body. It decides which tools to use to eventually construct one's perception and interpretation of the surrounding world. In this way, the reality of an individual consists of the impulses that come from both inner and outer stimuli. The brain purposefully synthesises this data to create a subjective experience. In this way, experience is not about passive perception but rather active creation. That is why James suggested that human consciousness "attends one's experiences and actions"[66] as it is one of the constituents of experienced reality that modifies it to a great extent. Thus, it is impossible to withdraw consciousness from any form of subjective experience as the two form an integrity.

The brain interprets the surrounding world based on the principle of selection. William James "repeatedly insisted that the experience of consciousness comes to us as a unified "stream of thought" from which we can subsequently discriminate […] a wide array of perceptions, conceptions, feelings, and the like."[67] It is no wonder that James' focus on the nature of human consciousness and the way individuals experience reality inspired modernist writers to invent a new literary technique – the stream of consciousness. Rita Bernard suggests that "James's concern is not to atomize time, but to "thicken" our sense of the present moment: to imagine a sustained or "specious present," imbued with a "halo" of past experience and

[64] Leary, *The Routledge Guidebook to James's Principles of Psychology,* 86.
[65] Leary, *The Routledge Guidebook to James's Principles of Psychology,* 205.
[66] Leary, *The Routledge Guidebook to James's Principles of Psychology,* 177.
[67] Leary, *The Routledge Guidebook to James's Principles of Psychology,* 85-86.

future anticipation."[68] As a literary method, the stream of consciousness represents this continuous flow of thoughts that occurs within the minds of fictional characters. It is this technique that allows the reader to perceive time as experienced. John Priestley in his observations on the effects of the stream of consciousness comments that when encountering this kind of narrative, the reader experiences a different form of time, time "that is not only moving very slowly but is also small-scale and very private, far removed from public events and history […] it is a revolt against the tyranny of passing time."[69] In other words, time as experienced.

According to James, consciousness can be seen "as the means of reinforcing "favorable possibilities" and repressing "the unfavorable or indifferent ones."[70] Sensual perception of the world is filtered through consciousness which, in turn, is responsible for the selection of mental events that subsequently construct subjective reality. Experience can be equalled to interpretation as it is guided by the principle of selection. As consciousness functions as a canvass for subjective experience, it also has a huge impact on one's perception of temporality. One of William James' observations claims that:

> a time filled with varied and interesting experiences seems short in passing, but long as we look back. On the other hand, a tract of time empty of experiences seems long in passing, but in retrospect short. A week of travel and sight-seeing may subtend an angle more like three weeks in the memory; and a month of sickness hardly yields more memories than a day.[71]

Two significant aspects can be noticed here. First, there is a direct connection between the quality and intensity of experience and time perception. The combination of perceptions, thoughts, and emotions occurring at a given moment impact one's feeling of time flow. The more pleasant the experience, the faster the passage of time and vice versa. Second, this relation gets reversed when those experiences become memories.

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[68] Barnard, "Modern American Fiction", 54.
[69] J. B. Priestley, *Man and Time* (London: Bloomsbury Books, 1964), 115.
[70] Leary, *The Routledge Guidebook to James's Principles of Psychology,* 179.
[71] Buonomano, *Your Brain Is a Time Machine,* 97.

When events transition from the present into the past, they are alternated by the memorizing process. As a result, reminiscences of the past become fictional and unreliable. Also, memories are inextricably linked to the present as the process of recalling the past is always a product of the present action. This implies that memories are not mere replications of the present events that shifted into the past, they are rather the brain's *interpretations* of what occurred at a particular moment. While it may seem that memory is past-oriented, biologically the opposite is true. From the perspective of neuroscience, "the sole evolutionary function of memory is to allow animals to predict what will happen, when it will happen, and how to best respond when it does happen."[72] Quite paradoxically, memory anticipates the future. It is a protective mechanism that increases the chances of survival. This nuance is pivotal in the discussion of the effects of psychological trauma on one's perception of time. A severe mental trauma can destroy one's vision of the future, making them imprisoned in the past and disabling them to fully experience the present. It is crucial to keep this idea in mind, as the First World War shattered the globe, becoming the main political event of the early twentieth century that radically changed society. As Leigh Wilson points out, "the trauma of loss is *the* legacy of war."[73] The devastating consequences of the war caused the psychological trauma of warfare. The scales of destruction were unprecedented as well as the methods and, most importantly, means of warfare.

The First World War with its almost apocalyptic nature became a point of no return. It was during the war that the products of technological progress caused mass destruction and chaos. Tanks, submarines, poison gas, and warplanes proved to be efficient, and their use led to the massacre of both combatants and civilians. The speed of the process of ruination was extreme. As James Nagel mentioned, death was all over the place: "over eight million men had

[72] Buonomano, *Your Brain Is a Time Machine,* 21.
[73] Wilson, *Modernism*, 40.

died in the trenches, countless others had been mutilated, and the consequences of the destruction were everywhere apparent. Young men, especially, bore the physical and psychological legacy of that experience.[74]" Wounded veterans and civilians with mutilated bodies had to learn how to live in a new way. No matter how much people tried to distance themselves from the reality of war they could not succeed at it as its repercussions could be encountered everywhere. As Milton R. Stern observed:

> the war […] brought about fundamental change in governmental structures and social foundations. In its aftermath of enveloping cynicism and profoundly anarchic disillusion, it gave enormous impetus to everything anti-establishmentarian, socially and politically, and to everything existential, personally and culturally.[75]

Fragmentation occurred on both macrocosmic and microcosmic levels. On the microcosmic level, there were millions of people who lost their family members, and a great number of children became orphans. Cities and villages were highly damaged, some even ceased to exist. On the macrocosmic level, the world saw the fall of Austria-Hungary, Russian, Ottoman, and German empires out of which new nation-states emerged.

When death is around the corner, one perceives temporality in a different way than in peacetime. War suspends the passage of time and blurs the boundaries between the three time dimensions. As Mary L. Dudziak suggests, "during "wartime", regular, normal time is thought to be suspended. Wartime is when time is out of order."[76] All events merge into a single experience that is called war. Wartime becomes an endless continuity that has no beginning and no end. What once seemed to be an apocalypse transforms into a form of mundanity. Abnormalities transform into a form of ordinariness and only the end of war puts this insanity to an end. In a sense, war disrupts the continuity between past, present, and future. It isolates

[74] James Nagel, "Brett and the other women in *The Sun Also Rises*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Ernest Hemingway*, ed. Scott Donaldson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 91.
[75] Milton R. Stern, "*Tender Is the Night* and American History" in *The Cambridge Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Ruth Prigozy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 103.
[76] Mary L. Dudziak, "Law, War, and the History of Time", *California Law Review* 98. 5 (October 2010): 1669-1670. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25799950> 15 Nov 2023.

the present experience from the usual flow of time. The lived moment becomes extremely intense because of its brutality and violence. This weakens any sense of continuity and tradition.[77] A peaceful past becomes a dream that is too far removed from the realities of war. Any form of future happiness seems unattainable because of the trauma of loss. That is why the First World War can be perceived as "the determinant of change"[78] in the modernist era. As Milton R. Stern commented, "the upheaval of the war was such a wrench from the past that it dissolved the very structures of beliefs and values that had been the shibboleths by which vast populations had regulated their lives."[79] While the system of beliefs of the pre-war world fell apart, the new system was yet to be established.

Within this cultural, political, and social turmoil, artists had to find new ways of expression that would allow them to create works of art that would reflect the above-presented transformation and fragmentation. This is the reason why during the modernist era art turned "from realism and humanistic representation towards style, technique and spatial form in pursuit of a deeper penetration of life."[80] This diversity can be perceived as a natural reaction to the larger profound transformation of society. As Leigh Anne Duck points out, "modernists became particularly concerned with how to situate spaces, bodies, and cultural forms in time."[81] In their pursuit of an accurate presentation of reality as experienced, modernist writers rebelled against objective time. The stress they put "on the distinct rhythms of the psyche could seem an empowering form of resistance to the constraining conformity often considered characteristic of modernizing societies."[82]

[77] Barnard, "Modern American Fiction", 57.
[78] Wilson, *Modernism*, 5.
[79] Stern, "*Tender Is the Night* and American History," 104.
[80] Bradbury & McFarlane, *Modernism*, 25.
[81] Duck, "Chronic Modernism," 204.
[82] Duck, "Chronic Modernism," 211.

4. F. Scott Fitzgerald

Days of economic prosperity, an abundance of various commodities, and obsession with the idea of the American Dream construct a solid background for both Fitzgerald's novels *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night* that will be presented in this chapter. On the flip side of this lavish lifestyle, there is a great trauma and disillusionment caused by WWI. As Raymond M. Vince comments in his analysis of *The Great Gatsby*, the novel "powerfully evokes a new reality, a reality shaped by the traumas of the Great War and the intellectual and social transformations that mark our modern world."[83] This idea is also prominent in *Tender Is the Night*. Both works represent a society in the aftermath of war, a society in a state of transition haunted by the feeling of anxiety about their future. Mental instability and detachment trouble the characters represented in the novels. In their willingness to reconnect with reality, they lead fancy lifestyles to compensate for the trauma of war. In this way, they try to search for a new system of values to substitute for the past they lost.

When the affluence of the Roaring Twenties is juxtaposed with the destructive reality of WWI, time becomes one of the key players in the narrative. The drastic contrast that the juxtaposition of the two realities creates brings the complexity of experiencing time to the forefront. The psychological effect of such a traumatic experience as war was so profound that it deprived the characters of the possibility of truly experiencing the present as it seemed to be robbed of meaning. There also appeared to be no perspective of there being a bright future. As Ronald Berman claims, "many of Fitzgerald's references to time imply both the need for continuity and its impossibility."[84] The characters were either entrapped in their memories of pre-war life or tried to escape the confusing reality of the present driven by consumerism by

[83] Vince, "*The Great Gatsby* and the Transformations of Space-Time," 98.
[84] Ronald Berman, "Fitzgerald: Time, Continuity, Relativity," *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* 2, (2003): 35. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41583050> 5 Jul 2023.

finding multiple ways of killing time. The complexity of the characters' relationship with time resembles a broken watch mechanism that cannot be repaired. This problematic essence of their relationship to time is embroidered in *The Great Gatsby*.

The Bergsonian idea of durée can be observed already in the opening chapter of the book where the narrator describes his visiting Daisy. When rambling on multiple things she mentions her anticipation of the first summer day: "in two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year […] Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it."[85] In this passage, time is represented as an ever-moving succession of events that transform into one another. What used to be an anticipation of the future becomes a present-day reality and subsequently transitions into the past. No matter how long a particular event lasts there is no mechanism that would prevent it from slipping away. Even though the longest day of the year provides her with the most time, it nevertheless passes away as any other day. Later on, Nick comments: "they knew that presently dinner would be over and a little later the evening, too, would be over and casually put away."[86] Nick's observation closely resonates with the way in which Mrs. Ramsey's awareness of time flow is described in Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*: "with her foot on the threshold she waited for a moment longer in a scene which was vanishing even as she looked […] it had become […] already the past."[87] As Alexander Fobes observes, "in both *Gatsby* and *To the Lighthouse*, time is the thieving, unavoidable enemy."[88] The inability to stop the transformation of the present into the past, to resolve the conflict between objective and subjective time makes Daisy focused on the present.

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[85] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), 13.
[86] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 13.
[87] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 116. Kindle
[88] Alexander S. Fobes, "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Virginia Woolf, and the Watch for Spots of Time," *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* 11.1 (2013): 94. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/fscotfitzrevi.11.1.0080> 5 Jul 2023.

However, Daisy's present is deprived of meaning. For her, reality is a cycle of boredom that will last till the moment of her death. She attempts to find ways of entertaining herself to kill time. As a result, she fails to experience the authenticity of life. This becomes evident in her conversation with Jordan:

> "What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon?" cried Daisy, "and the day after that, and the next thirty years?"
> "Don't be morbid," Jordan said. "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."[89]

In this passage, two distinct ideas of time are juxtaposed. Daisy's time is a linear progression that is infinite in its nature. Jordan, on the contrary, understands time as a cyclical structure. She views fall as a time for change. It is a season of renewal for her. This metaphor is rather unusual as traditionally spring in literature is associated with a new beginning. The idea of fall representing a fresh start has certain temporal implications. It describes the process of letting go of the past in order to build a new future. Nick's idea of a new start in life is also bound to seasonal representation, however in his view, "life was beginning over again with the summer."[90] This illustrates the relativity of the perception of time. Nick's idea of temporal succession reflects his own perspective within the novel as he is the one who lives next to Gatsby. His experience of reality is highly influenced by the proximity of the center of events, which is Gatsby's residence. The cycle of Gatsby's mansion becomes a clock by which Nick can measure the passage of time from his perspective. As summer is the season when the parties come back to life, for Nick this denotes the starting point of a "new life". It is also a new beginning for Gatsby, as it is by throwing parties and displaying his wealth that he hopes to get Daisy back.

Gatsby is temporarily located in the past and his actions are driven by his wish to make Daisy love him once again. The moment of their reunion becomes illustrative of the collision

[89] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 116.
[90] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 4.

of two distinct realities where time passes at a different speed. When Daisy says that they haven't met each other for "many years", Gatsby specifies that it will be "five years next November."[91] For Daisy, the moment of their separation was another event that slipped away unnoticed. This is the reason why she is not able to recall how much time exactly passed. She made a decision to move on and her life changed dramatically from that moment. Not giving any psychological significance to that event, she let herself be carried away by the stream of life. For Gatsby, on the other hand, it marked the beginning of his journey of getting her back. The narrative here shows how relative time is when filtered through operations of human consciousness. Experiencing the trauma of separation from Daisy, Gatsby was counting the days anticipating the time when he could be reunited with her. As a result, his future was already predetermined by his past. Even though within the realm of objective time he was moving forward, psychologically he aspired to travel back in time.

While Daisy perceives time as a chain of events that transition between different time dimensions, Gatsby fails "to acknowledge the succession of events, the continuous flow of time that has brought changes to Daisy's life."[92] He lives in the vacuum of his traumatized consciousness and is not willing to accept the reality of his present situation. At a certain point in the narrative, Gatsby openly confesses to Nick that he plans to reclaim the past:

> "You can't repeat the past."
> "Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!"
> […]
> "I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before."[93]

The dialogue displays Gatsby's unrealistic desire to reverse time. Being corrupted by his naïve dreams, he becomes concerned with "recapturing a specific moment in the past and the order he believes his life had at that point in his relationship with Daisy"[94] and as a result lives in a

[91] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 88.
[92] Fobes, "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Virginia Woolf, and the Watch for Spots of Time," 91.
[93] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 111.
[94] Fobes, "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Virginia Woolf, and the Watch for Spots of Time," 90.

state of disillusionment. His obsession with the past and inability to accept the superiority of objective time becomes his greatest tragedy. Gatsby refuses to admit that his relationship with Daisy will never be the same. He constantly filters his present through the lenses of their past experiences: "he stayed there a week, walking the streets where their footsteps had clicked together through the November night and revisiting the out-of-the-way places to which they had driven in her white car."[95] Gatsby resides in his memories, his character thus presents "a realm of *distorted space-time*, a sort of waking dream."[96] The discordance between the temporal dimension that he is located in physically and the one he lives through psychologically makes him a mere observer of the present. He is not actively participating in it. Malcolm Bradbury describes Jay Gatsby as "a dandy of desire […] that has been redirected from its human or material object into a fantasy, a dream of retaining a past moment in an endless instant of contemplation."[97] The present is non-existent for Gatsby as he is caught up in his dreams. His past is both his present and his future.

In the closing chapter of the novel, it becomes clear that Gatsby's dream-like vision of the future was rooted deeply in his past:

> Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther … And then one fine morning –
> So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.[98]

The passage demonstrates the complexity of his experience of time, or to be more precise, his craving for winning the battle against time that was destined to fail. Thus, instead of moving forward towards the future, Gatsby moved farther away from it. With every year his past became more distant. This made him imprisoned between an unattainable past and a fictional future he created in his mind. The symbolical green light, the dream of Daisy, becomes a bridge

[95] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 153.
[96] Vince, "*The Great Gatsby* and the Transformations of Space-Time," 93.
[97] Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 87.
[98] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 182.

between his past and future. This rendered Gatsby live in an empty present. The inner vacancy is reflected in the hollowness of his identity which is a mere construct of people around him. No matter how much effort he put into achieving his unrealistic goal, the current of time kept mercilessly moving forward. It can be observed that the novel describes the story of a man who "spends his life struggling against time, and time, like an acid, eats away at man, eats him away from himself and prevents him from fulfilling his human character."[99] The novel is "permeated by this struggle against time."[100] Gatsby's reality was shaped by the memory of their romantic relationship with Daisy. It made him believe that he could reverse the flow of time and hence rewrite his personal history.

The character of Jay Gatsby becomes the epitome of a person who suffers from an unresolvable inner conflict. The root of his misfortune lies in his inability to perceive time as being in flux. For Gatsby, time is non-linear and rather disrupted in its nature. His illusionary idea of the future made him blind to the reality of the present. He was convinced that the present was another commodity that could be used as a tool for fulfilling his desires. His attempts at utilizing time in this way led to the upsetting of his expectations and can be seen as the main cause of his downfall. Malcolm Bradbury claims that *The Great Gatsby* managed to portray "two interlocking worlds – the world of modern history invested with a timeless myth […] and the world of history disinvested, reduced to fragments without manifest order, a modern waste land."[101] Gatsby both participates in the construction of this timeless myth and represents the wasteland of hopes and dreams that were smashed to pieces after facing the reality of the modern world.

The multiplicity of time in *The Great Gatsby* is represented on both macro- and microcosmic level. On the macrocosmic level, there is the external time of progress. The novel

[99] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays,* trans. by Annette Michelson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 92.
[100] Vince, "*The Great Gatsby* and the Transformations of Space-Time," 97.
[101] Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel,* 89.

breathes with modernity by portraying the lavish lifestyle of the characters and their use of modern technologies such as cars and phones, for example. This external clock is future-oriented and moves at a high speed. It can be viewed as the storm of progress as defined by Walter Benjamin. Its constant movement produced a large number of past events and speeded up the feeling of time. On the microcosmic level, the incessant progression of external time created a vacuum between Gatsby's inner clock and the present he faced. For Gatsby, both the present and the future were already located in the past as he was preoccupied with the idea of reliving the dream deeply anchored in his memory. Thus, Gatsby's character can be viewed through the prism of Sartrean philosophy which views the past as an ex-present that used to have a future. When Gatsby's past is comprehended in those terms, his temporality acquires new qualities. His perception of reality is temporarily shifted. Thus, he deprived himself of the possibility of viewing his life from the perspective of the present moment. This created a temporal conflict between him and the surrounding world. From Sartrean perspective, the past becomes the past when viewed from the position of other temporal dimensions (i.e., the present and the future). Mentally Gatsby lived in the past and his past became both his present and future.

Fitzgerald's novel *Tender Is the Night* portrays the disrupted world of trauma and madness. Even though the story represented in the novel does not occur during the war, its spirit permeates the whole narrative. For Dick Diver, "the war is the defining event of his generation."[102] The reality of the characters represented in the novel is temporarily disconnected from the pre-war past. The continuity between the two worlds is reconstructed with the use of memory. Memories from the past emerge throughout the whole narrative and provide a background for a better understanding of the feeling of discontinuity created by the

[102] David Rennie, "The world only exists through your apprehension": World War I in This Side of Paradise and Tender Is the Night," *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* 14.1 (2016): 183. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/fscotfitzrevi.14.1.0181> 5 Jul 2023.

war. In contrast to *The Great Gatsby,* which is set in the US, the majority of events described in *Tender is The Night* take place on the European continent. The post-war Europe that is described in the book is both a mass graveyard of soldiers killed during World War I and a terrain full of beauty and awe. The novel uses the setting as a mechanism for displaying the stark contrast between the destructive past of wartime and the post-war present.

One of the leitmotivs that permeates the whole novel is the idea of an unrecoverable generational gap that appeared in the outcome of WWI. Whilst Rosemary and her peers lived carelessly and were building plans for the future, the generation of Dick Diver was coming to terms with the devastating effects of the war that created an incurable sense of discontinuity between the past and the present. The narrator uses contrasting images to portray this paradox:

> "This land here cost twenty lives a foot that summer," he said to Rosemary. She looked out obediently at the rather bare green plain with its low trees of six year's growth […] "See that little stream – we could walk to it in two minutes. It took the British a month to walk to it – a whole empire walking very slowly, dying in front and pushing forward behind."[103]

The passage juxtaposes two conflicting images to portray the paradoxical nature of post-war reality. On the one hand, there is Dick Diver for whom the war remains an integral part of his reality. While he did not participate in it himself, it becomes apparent that it left him deeply traumatized. The trauma impacts his interpretation of the present. Dick measures distance in the lives of dead soldiers to emphasize the immensely and absurdly high number of casualties of war. The scene thus describes the relativity of time perception, particularly the way war affects the passage of time. What can be done during peacetime in a matter of minutes, may take days or even months during wartime. The time during the war stands still. On the other hand, there is Rosemary who contemplates a piece of land where Dick Diver sees a mass burial. Not having the background knowledge of the battles that happened in that location, she is

[103] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night* (New York: Scribner, 2003), 56.

completely detached from the past Dick describes. Her character in this scene represents the transience of life. The dualism of reality represented in the passage reflects the problematic nature of a generational gap that occurred in the aftermath of war.

The generational conflict is reflected in another scene that occurs next to the war grave. When Dick and Rosemary accidentally meet a girl who fails to find her brother's grave, Rosemary does not know how to respond to the situation adequately. Although she cries, she cannot relate to the situation:

> Rosemary shed tears again when she heard of the mishap […] but she felt that she had learned something, though exactly what it was she did not know. Later she remembered all the hours of the afternoon as happy—one of those uneventful times that seem at the moment only a link between past and future pleasure but turn out to have been the pleasure itself.[104]

Rosemary reacts in a way that would be expected from her in such a situation. Her inability to sympathize with the appalling personal tragedy of the girl becomes apparent as the reader discovers that she fails to learn anything from the experience. She cannot empathize with the trauma of the other characters involved in the scene as she lacks the memory of the war they share. Instead, quite paradoxically, her remembrance of this "uneventful" moment is imbued with a halo of happiness. Rosemary, in contrast to Dick and the girl, did not suffer from the psychological trauma caused by the war. For them, going to the graveyard meant reviving the past. For her, the event was just one of life experiences anchored solely in the present. As David Rennie suggests, "the impression of generational discontinuity in the aftermath of World War I is conveyed by more than the pronouncements of the main character."[105] This scene is one of the examples of this gap. It can be observed that the lack of shared war experience between Rosemary and the other characters resulted in her alienation and inability to fully comprehend the complexity of post-war reality in Europe.

[104] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 59.
[105] Rennie, "The world only exists through your apprehension,"185.

It is the function of memory that helps to produce the feeling of succession of any kind. The idea of time being a sequence is one of those mental constructs. This principle is reflected in one of the descriptions of Rosemary: "intermittently she caught the gist of his sentences and supplied the rest from her subconscious, as one picks up the striking of a clock in the middle with only the rhythm of the first uncounted strokes lingering in the mind."[106] The parallel drawn by the narrator describes the complex interrelationship between subjective and objective time. The flow of Rosemary's thoughts gets disrupted sporadically by the stimulus coming from the external world - Dick's speech. Her present consists of two cooccurring realities – internal and external. From the outside, she is one of the interlocutors in the conversation that takes place at a particular point on the time axis. From the inside, Rosemary dwells in her thoughts being ignorant of the external world, thus she at times loses track of the conversation. When this happens, her subconscious unceasingly keeps a record of it. In the same way, subjective and objective time run parallel with each other. Whilst internal subjective time can freely fluctuate, external objective time keeps moving in a single direction. Another instance when objective mechanical time is represented as a phenomenon of external reality is described through Dick's eyes: "he stayed in the big room a long time listening to the buzz of the electric clock, listening to time."[107] As well as Rosemary had to redirect the focus of her attention onto the conversation to reconnect with the present, Dick had to redirect his attention onto the clock sound to be able to experience objective time.

The novel highlights the enigmatic essence of the passage of subjective time. While clock time is consistent and linear, subjective time is flexible and unpredictable. The reader is reminded that the feeling of time is dependent on the perspective of the viewer. To portray this phenomenon, the narrative uses the juxtaposition of contrasting images:

[106] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 32.
[107] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 171.

> For him time stood still and then every few years accelerated in a rush, like the quick re-wind of a film, but for Nicole the years slipped away by clock and calendar and birthday, with the added poignance of her perishable beauty.[108]

Dick's perception of time is drastically different from Nicole's. For her, the passage of time is marked by external factors, such as clocks, calendars, and changes in her appearance. As Ronald Berman observes, "sequential time in Fitzgerald is referred to by the actual measurement of minutes, hours, days, seasons, and years, and also by its artifacts."[109] Nicole's understanding of time at first glance appears to reflect the above-mentioned sequential time. Even though it may seem that she experiences time in a conventional way, her dependence on using external tools for measuring the passage of time is deeply rooted in her illness. Nicole's mental disorder made it impossible for her to feel time. To avoid falling into the trap of alternated time perception caused by schizophrenia, she needs to utilize various tools to help her stay in tune with the real world. As is emphasized in the passage, the main factor that helps her realize that time has passed is the change in her appearance. Nicole's beauty is one of the major factors that constitutes her personality. It helps her to hide her trauma as well as her mental disease. Her beauty is the main value that helps her survive in society and provides her with power over both men and women. It is her beauty that everybody around admires. No wonder seeing it fading makes her feel insecure and realize that her main source of power is being taken away from her as time passes.

Later in the text, a vivid image that discusses the concept of time can be observed. The reader is presented with a metaphor that helps them capture the complexity of interrelatedness between different time dimensions. The past, present and future collide with each other and construct a single unit:

> On the long-roofed steamship piers one is in a country that is no longer here and not yet there […] One hurries through, even though there's time; the past, the continent, is behind;

[108] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 180.
[109] Berman, "Fitzgerald: Time, Continuity, Relativity," 39.

> the future is the glowing mouth in the side of the ship; the dim, turbulent alley is too confusedly the present.[110]

The piers metaphor alludes to the idea of the true essence of time. Crowds of people hurrying and shouting in combination with the rumble of machinery symbolize the chaotic nature of the present. It is positioned between the two "countries", or time dimensions, being connected with each of them. Thus, all three time dimensions intersect with each other to a certain extent. The quote supposes that it is impossible to possess or tame time. Individuals exist within the realm of time that is simply there, an immovable force that rules over human existence. In their attempt to reach a promising future, people feel an urgent need to speed up the passage of time. The metaphor implies that the present fluctuates between the past and the future. It cannot be captured or fixed. It is rather a journey that one has to fully embrace. The challenges and confusion that it brings are unavoidable. The present is nonsensical and mysterious in contrast to the solid and unalterable past. Even though the future is glowing with all the possibilities it may open it is still as uncertain and equivocal as the present.

The above-presented passage concludes the novel's exploration of the concept of time and memory, as well as the complexity and paradox of the post-war reality. Milton Stern claims that *Tender Is the Night* is a novel "about a world in transition, when established values crumble, when human society's ideas of goodness, stability, and moral purpose are lost in corruption, and when the emerging society has not yet discovered a reason or a way to regain them."[111] The novel describes a society in flux that struggles to find its place in a world that abandoned the traditional system of norms and values. It is a society that is "no longer here and not yet there." The reality of loss, disillusionment and trauma is the solid continent that constitutes the past of the characters. Like a quicksand, it absorbs their thoughts and entraps

[110] Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 205.
[111] Stern, "*Tender Is the Night* and American History," 116.

them in its depth. The prominence of the past affects their future, lingering in the air and thus depriving them of the possibility to escape the void the war left. Stern points out that *Tender is the Night* "is not generally thought of as a war novel because it is not set in the war. But no novel written in the so-called "lost generation" more deeply or centrally probes the significance of the war's legacy."[112]

The central figure within the novel, Dick Diver, is deeply affected by the war. He displays signs of a shell-shocked person, even though he himself wasn't a war combatant. As well as Jay Gatsby, Dick is trapped in the past. The psychological trauma of the war altered his experience of temporality to a great extent and made him disillusioned with the world around him. This made it impossible for him to synchronize with Rosemary and her inner clock, who represents a new generation within the novel, the one that was not affected by WWI. Dick's understanding of time is profoundly subjective and fluid. His consciousness continuously fluctuates between the past, present, and future. There is no feeling of succession from his point of view, Dick's sense of time is rather distorted and fragmented. This idea gets reflected in the overall structure of the narrative that uses non-linear representation to enforce the feeling of non-linearity of subjective time. Dick Diver exists in a temporal unity that can be characterized as Bergson's durée which supposes that there is no distinction between the past, present, and future. Through the function of memory, consciousness gets access to experiences of the past which are thus re-enacted within the present moment. The character of Dick Diver epitomizes this idea, he is haunted by the past and his temporality is ruled by his fluid consciousness within which all temporal dimensions are interwoven into a single unity.

Both of the above-discussed novels examine the controversy and challenges of the post-war reality. The psychological trauma and disillusionment caused by WWI permeated the lives of the characters influencing their perception of the present. They attempted to escape the

[112] Stern, "*Tender Is the Night* and American History," 103.

traumatic past by leading hedonistic lifestyles, but their efforts proved futile. By opposing contrasting images and exploring the difficulty and impossibility of healing inner scars left by the war, Fitzgerald portrays the scale of its psychological damage. In his analysis of *Tender Is the Night*, Milton Stern represents it as "a great American novel about history, a chronicle of post-war loss of the kinds of identities associated with stable societies, social altruism, and personal responsibility. The story of Dick Diver is a microcosm of that history."[113] This idea can also be applied to *The Great Gatsby*. The novel explores a society that struggles to find a new system of beliefs and values that was shaken by the war. Both Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver experience inner detachment from post-war reality that displays characteristics of a moral wasteland.

[113] Stern, "*Tender Is the Night* and American History," 99-100.

5. Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway's novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* explore the importance of loss and the way it reshapes one's understanding of temporality. The trauma alternates the characters' perception of time, making them incarcerated in their reminiscences about the inescapable nature of time. As David Tomkins observes, "Hemingway shows that it is the absent or lost "thing" that matters, maintains the greatest value, and defines rather than undermines every generation."[114] Immense losses caused by WWI faced the characters with the challenge of making sense of their past and present in a world shaken by the war. The wounds were not only physical, but they were also profoundly psychological. In his works, Hemingway manages to portray the power of psychological trauma. Traumatic memories played a significant role in dictating the behavioral patterns of his characters. They were caught up in a loop of their past, reliving the trauma in their attempt to reconcile the past with the present. This idea is reflected in the way in which the novels challenge the conventional concept of time.

Even before the novel begins, time is discovered to be one of the major aspects of *The Sun Also Rises.* The epigraph introducing the narrative serves as a critical lens that can be utilized in the process of scrutinizing the role time plays in the text. The first part of the epigraph is a quote from a conversation with Gertrude Stein: "you are all a lost generation." Stein's famous statement is complemented by a quote from *Ecclesiastes* that constitutes the second part of the epigraph:

> One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever… The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose… The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to its circuits… All the rivers run into

[114] David Tomkins, "The Lost Generation and the Generation of Loss: Ernest Hemingway's Materiality of Absence and *The Sun Also Rises*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 54.4 (winter 2008): 746. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26287441> 5 Jul 2023.

> the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come thither they return again.

The biblical passage contrasts the minuteness of human life with the eternity of natural cycles. They move at their own pace, neglecting the difficulties people struggle with. It is impossible to control, subjugate, stop, or alternate the operations of the natural metronome. Nature lives beyond the realm of human time. That's why no matter how bitter the life of the 'lost generation' described in the book is, it will subsequently come to an end, while nature will continue to function and thrive. The universe, then, is ambivalent in its essence as, on the one hand, it can evoke the feeling of awe and hope and, on the other hand, mercilessly indicate the passage of time. The epigraph in this way serves both as a sign of hope for a better future and as a reminder that every generation will eventually cease to exist.

The novel portrays only a segment of life of a very limited number of people, mostly operating through dialogues that are enriched with extended observations of the narrator. In this way, time in the narrative is rather subjective as "it is mediated through clusters of personalities."[115] This allows the reader to closely explore time as experienced. Experience permeates the narrative, modifying and affecting the lives of the characters and their perception of time. Even though the whole novel is narrated in the past tense, as Rita Barnard suggests, "it provides none of the cognitive advantages of retrospect. The effect is one of extreme immediacy, of what Pound would call "a rain of factual atoms," reproduced in all their confusing singularity."[116] The characters attempted to enrich their everyday lives by attending various events and meetings. In this way, the narrative evokes the feeling of active present as the reader follows them in those activities. It is this active present that functions as a form of escaping from the traumatic wartime past and distancing the uncertain future. This becomes

[115] Justin Quinn, et al, *Lectures on American Literature* (Prague: Karolinum, 2016), 190.
[116] Barnard, "Modern American Fiction," 57.

evident from the behavioral patterns that the characters of the novel display. No matter how hard they try to anchor themselves in the present, their attempts lead to failure, as they are haunted by the past and worried about the dramatic prospects of the future.

Within the opening chapters of the novel, it becomes apparent that the characters can feel the purposelessness of their lives. While physically they attend multiple events, mentally they are detached from the reality they experience. Robert Cohn in his conversation with Jake shares his qualms about his way of living:

> "Don't you ever get the feeling that all your life is going by and you're not taking advantage of it? Do you realize you've lived nearly half the time you have to live already?"
> "Yes, every once in a while."
> "Do you know that in about thirty-five years more we'll be dead?"[117]

Even though external time is not explicitly referred to in this passage, it is indirectly mentioned by Cohn when he claims that his life is slipping away from him. This passage corresponds with the epigraph presented above. Here, natural time is juxtaposed with human time. The conflict between the external and internal clock is a source of frustration for all the characters represented in the novel. In their attempts to find a way of 'taking advantage' of time, they got involved in a number of experiences that deepened their sense of aloofness. Driven by the fear of death more than anything else, they got obsessed with the idea of prolonging their present, of escaping the flow of time. Desperately trying to anchor themselves in the present, the characters of the novel also aimed at distancing themselves from their painful past. Being war veterans (with the exception of Cohn), they could not find a way of living in peacetime conditions.

Memories of past events permeate the whole narrative. There is the ever-present spirit of World War I that the characters feel uncomfortable to talk about. They tend to avoid and

[117] Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York: Collier Books, 1986), 11.

suppress those traumatic experiences, but their presence is still palpable throughout the whole novel. One of the examples is Jake's conversation with Georgette that gets abruptly interrupted:

> "What's the matter with you, anyway?"
> "I got hurt in the war," I said.
> "Oh, that dirty war."
> We would probably have gone on and discussed the war and agreed it was in reality a calamity for civilization, and perhaps would have been better avoided. I was bored enough. Just then from the other room some one called: "Barnes!"[118]

This passage demonstrates the characters' approach towards war-related issues. They both tend to talk about atrocities caused by the war in an alleviating manner as if trying to escape the unpleasant memories that are still so fresh. Georgette's response is rather inadequate, pointing to her unwillingness to ruin the newly created present by bringing back memories of the war. While Georgette can deceive herself into thinking that her present is detached from the painful past, Jake's physical wound does not allow him to have a fresh start. His present and his future are already predetermined by his past. Realizing this, Jake finds any discussion of the tragedy of wartime pointless as it makes him relive the trauma once again but cannot bring back his normal life.

Memories are closely connected with the story's present. Whenever a present event reminds one of the occurrences from the past, it works as an impetus for reviving it in a character's mind. In this way, present situations and events become intermingled with the past merging into a unified temporal continuum. The atmosphere of the dinner in Pamplona brings Jake back to one of the dinners he remembers from the war: "There was much wine, an ignored tension, and a feeling of things coming that you could not prevent happening. Under the wine I lost the disgusted feeling and was happy. It seemed they were all such nice people."[119] This passage demonstrates the cyclical pattern of life in which the characters of the novel are caught.

[118] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises,* 17.
[119] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 146.

The war formed the way in which they led their lives and interacted with reality. Drinking alcohol was a way of reaching a state of delusive happiness, at least for a short period of time. As the present was deprived of meaning, the future was uncertain, and the past was distressful, the only way of escaping this suffering was by alternating the operations of consciousness and perceptions. However, when the effects of nicotine and alcohol ceased to work, the lifelessness and bleakness of reality were back again.

Seeing bullfights was one of the ways of bringing back the adrenaline that the characters experienced during the war, thus intensifying their feeling of reality. Jake Barnes believed that bullfighters were the only people who lived "their life all the way up."[120] A bullfight can be compared to a war battle where life is at stake, and it is impossible to predict whether the finale will be lethal for either of the participants. This becomes apparent in the conversation that occurs between Brett and Romero:

> "The bulls are my best friends."
> I translated to Brett.
> "You kill your friends?" she asked.
> "Always," he said in English, and laughed. "So they don't kill me."[121]

Pity and compassion have no place in a war battle. Only violence gives one a chance to survive. The same applies to a bullfight. Life before death is rich in its nature as the proximity of the latter gives value to the former. In the same way, the time of the fiesta delineated in the novel strikes with its vividness. It seems to be the only time when the characters truly experience reality. As the end of the fiesta approaches, everything starts to drastically fall apart. The opening paragraph of Book III opens with: "in the morning it was all over. The fiesta was finished" and as well is concluded with "the fiesta was over."[122] The first words that Bill says to Jake within the next couple of sentences are: "it's all over."[123] As the warfare-like event

[120] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 10.
[121] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 186.
[122] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 227.
[123] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 228.

comes to an end, the lives of the characters become bleak again. The fact that the event has finished leaves the characters devasted. The adrenaline they crave to supply them with the feeling of attachment to the real world is no longer available.

The fiesta provided a feeling of connection with the real world and now that connection is lost. What used to be a crowded place just a day before, full of dancing, singing, and drinking, has now become an empty place: "The square was empty and there were no people on the streets."[124] As Malcolm Bradbury observes, Hemingway's external world is "a total metaphor for an inward and psychic condition, as the reader fills the empty spaces and they are of implied pain and hysteria."[125] A strong emphasis is put on the fact that the time of true life experience has slipped away again and has become a recollection of the past. In this way, physical emptiness reflects psychological blankness. At the end of the novel, Brett says to Jake: "Oh […] we could have had such a damned good time together." Jake replies with "Yes […] isn't it pretty to think so?"[126] In a broader context, the novel's concluding dialogue between Jake and Brett refers to the trauma of the post-war generation that was scarred both physically and psychologically by the horrors of war. This made them trapped in their past dreams that were unachievable in their new lives. As David Tomkins comments, "the futility of Brett's desire for a physical love affair with Jake underscores (and runs parallel to) the novel's preoccupation with traumatic loss and a subsequent longing for that which is unattainable."[127]

The novel presents a world that seems empty from the outside, but its richness is hidden in the emotional experiences of the characters and the way in which they desperately attempt to come to terms with the post-war reality. The reality of the novel thus resembles a tapestry that consists of the perspectives of multiple characters that provide the reader with a glimpse into their struggles with the brutalities of their uncertain present. The historical context from

[124] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 227.
[125] Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel,* 97.
[126] Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 257.
[127] Tomkins, "The Lost Generation and the Generation of Loss," 752.

which they emerged was deeply traumatizing which affected their perception of themselves and the surrounding reality. They tried to suppress painful memories with the use of addictive substances, partygoing, and chaotic relationships. As Malcolm Bradbury observes:

> this almost intolerable intrusion of violence into the self points to the modern exposure, the threat of death and annihilation, the vacancy of present history, the need for physical reality, which most of the major characters feel. It is the wound that leads on into a world of trauma, sleeplessness, loss, consciousness of *nada*, the void in the universe.[128]

The paradox of the lost generation described in the novel lies in their obsession with finding ways of reconnecting with the feeling of the present. Their attempts oftentimes lead to a fiasco, as they are not able to get rid of the burden of the past that lurks in the shadows of their minds. William Adair suggests that in *The Sun Also Rises*, "suppressed memories of the prestory past seem implied on almost every page of the novel."[129]

The way time operates within the novel can be linked to Walter Benjamin's idea of juxtaposing empty time vs. time filled with the presence of the now, or, in other words, the moment as experienced. The characters within the text are trapped in this recurring cycle of meaningless, empty moments. The fiesta becomes a central event that provides them with a sense of attachment to reality and truly experiencing the present. It becomes the time when "the now" is present in the narrative. However, once the fiesta is over, the emptiness of time comes back into being. Fiesta is one of the cycles that operates within the narrative. In a sense, it correlates with the epigraph that alludes to natural cycles. This links the narrative with the Heideggerian concept of thrownness and temporality. Natural cycles that are mentioned both in the epigraph and the title of the novel, represent the time of objects, which is structured and exists outside Dasein. The characters of the novel attempt to break free from this cycle, however, their attempts are unsuccessful. They are also trapped in their past, even though they try to avoid and escape it, their past traumas keep dragging them back into their memories.

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[128] Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel,* 99.
[129] William Adair, "The Sun Also Rises: A Memory of War," *Twentieth Century Literature* 47.1 (spring 2001): 85. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/827857> 5 Jul 2023.

This reflects the Heideggerian idea of the temporality of Dasein that exists in all temporal dimensions simultaneously, thus the being is shaped not only by its present but also by its past. The pastness of the characters is in conflict with the natural clock that frames the novel, making them detached from reality and overwhelmed with a feeling of time mercilessly passing by. All their attempts at anchoring themselves in the present moment are futile.

While events described in *The Sun Also Rises* occur after the war, *A Farewell to Arms* offers an inside into the life during the war. The context of the relationship that starts and evolves between Frederic and Catherine is full of insecurities, tragedy, and death. Under such circumstances, any perspective of a possible bright future becomes as unrealistic as the happiness of the pre-war life. As Michael Reynolds observes in his analysis of the novel, "into this sick world come Frederic and Catherine, whose desperate love is made in the face of death, made in the world of hospitals and doctors whose cures are temporary at best and deadly at worst."[130] Within the first chapters of the novel, during their first encounter, Catherine tells Frederic about her recent painful loss. Her fiancée, with whom she was engaged for 8 years, died a year ago in the battle of Somme. Her soliloquy reveals the depth of the psychological wound caused by his death:

> I wanted to do something for him. You see I didn't care about the other thing and he could have had it all. He could have had anything he wanted if I would have known. I would have married him or anything. I know all about it now. But then he wanted to go to war and I didn't know.[131]

Catherine expresses her deep regret for not giving her fiancée what he wanted. What is prominent in this passage is the interrelatedness between Catherine's inability to predict his death and the choices she made because of that ignorance. Being a young woman, she took life for granted and did not fully realize the finiteness and minuteness of it up to the moment when

[130] Michael Reynolds, "*A Farewell to Arms*: Doctors in the house of love" in *The Cambridge Companion to Ernest Hemingway*, ed. Scott Donaldson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 115.
[131] Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Collier Books, 1986), 19.

she had to face the sudden death of her beloved one. It was at that moment that she realized how valuable the relationship was to her. The root of her tragedy lay in her inability to comprehend the atrocities that were caused by the war. Only after having experienced the tragic loss, she is now aware of the fact that death may come at any given moment thus there is no point in waiting for better times as tomorrow may never come. The trauma she experienced will now predetermine her behavior. This allowed her to start a romantic relationship with Frederic in a relatively short period of time.

The novel presents two realities that run parallel to each other: the love story of Frederic and Catherine and the war. Wesley A. Kort claims that this creates a contrast that is "an important aspect of the structure of *A Farewell to Arms*. The two stories […] stand as a story within a story, with the war story closer to the context."[132] Those two realities are juxtaposed with each other pointing to the paradoxical nature of wartime: "I liked to watch her move. She went on down the hall. I went on home. It was a hot night and there was a good deal going on up in the mountains. I watched the flashes of San Gabriele."[133] What can be observed here is the stark contrast between the two realities that cooccur within a single timeframe. There is a sudden shift in focus that moves from Frederic's admiration for Catherine to the brutality of war that happens at the same time in the mountains. In this way, the novel portrays the multiplicity of wartime reality. Being only a few kilometers away from the frontline, Frederic was able to be involved in a relatively "normal" life while at the same time people were dying in the battle nearby. The narrative points to the relativity of the "now". There is no universal present as it is heavily dependent on the perspective of the viewer.

One of the instances when the relativity of time is referred to in the novel is during Frederic's escape from the army that takes place during the retreat. Once he is carried by the

[132] Wesley A. Kort, "Human Time in Hemingway's Fiction," *Modern Fiction Studies* 26.4 (winter 1980-81): 583. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26280603> 5 Jul 2023.
[133] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 32.

river, he comments on his experience of time flow: "you do not know how long you are in a river when the current moves swiftly. It seems a long time and it may be very short."[134] Here, the way in which the state of mind shapes an individual's experience of time can be observed. Being corrupted by the fear of death, Frederic lost track of time and was not able to recall how much time had passed. In this passage, time can be viewed as one of the products of a human's interpretation of reality which is greatly influenced by the psychological and emotional state of an individual. The above-presented passage can be also read metaphorically. The swiftly moving current of the cold river can be compared to life during the war. The events that occur during wartime are as unpredictable and life-threatening as the swift turns of the stream described. The immense psychological suffering, along with the impossibility of controlling it, affects people's experience of time rendering the experience of war endless. Frederic's getaway thus portrays not only his physical escape from the war but also his attempt to mentally free himself from the burden of the painful present.

Even though Frederic managed to survive and got a chance to start a new life undercover, psychologically he remained bound to his wartime past. To unchain himself from it he purposefully ignored anything that could remind him of that reality: "I had the paper but I did not read it because I did not want to read about the war. I was going to forget the war."[135] Even though the protagonist attempted to distance himself mentally from the war, it was impossible to completely detach himself from it as it was present everywhere in the outside world. It was the painful present in which he was living. Shortly after it becomes evident that his attempt was unsuccessful as the war was still at the back of his mind: "I had the feeling of a boy who thinks of what is happening at a certain hour at the schoolhouse from which he has played truant."[136] The same pattern as appeared earlier in the text can be observed in the

[134] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 226.
[135] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 243.
[136] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 245.

passage. The narrative demonstrates the multi-layered nature of the present. However, in this instance, the reader explores the psychological plurality of the present as experienced by the protagonist. By portraying those inner contradictions, "the novel chronicles an interpreting consciousness, a self, grappling with the intricacies of inwardness."[137] Even when physically not participating in the war, mentally Frederic is still experiencing it.

By running away from the war, the protagonist is attempting to enter a new reality, the one that would allow him to distance himself from the deaths he witnessed. At the same time, Frederic perceives his getaway as a chance to build a better future. Shortly after he succeeds in his escape, he starts to make plans for their future with Catherine: "I lay and thought where we would go. There were many places."[138] In his dreams, happy future is disconnected from his current place, but is tightly connected with Catherine. This is the reason why towards the end of the novel Frederic rejects the possibility of her death as it would destroy his future: "But what if she should die? She won't die. She's only having a bad time […] but what if she should die? She can't die."[139] It is after Catherine dies that his past and future, though being disrupted, get unified by the traumatic experience. In his discussion of the novel, Trevor Dodman observes that the loss of Catherine "becomes a destabilizing point of conversion between his past and present."[140] Through the trauma, Frederic's experience of time merges into a single unity. From this point, the flow of time will stop for him. Being emotionally devastated he is not even able to adequately react to the fact that his son was born dead. Instead, he alienates himself from the child: "I had no feeling for him. He did not seem to have anything to do with

[137] Mary Prescott, "A Farewell to Arms: Memory and the Perpetual Now," *College Literature* 17.1 (winter 1990): 47. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25111842> 5 Jul 2023.
[138] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 233.
[139] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 320.
[140] Trevor Dodman, "Going All to Pieces: A Farewell to Arms as Trauma Narrative", *Twentieth Century Literature* 52.3 (fall 2006): 263. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20479772> 5 Jul 2023.

me. I felt no feeling of fatherhood."[141] The detachment he experiences reflects the emptiness that the psychological wound imprinted on his mind.

Even though the protagonist managed to flee from the war, he did not manage to escape death. This made him change his perspective on it. Towards the end of the novel, Frederic perceives death as the only way of liberating himself from the burden of the painful present:

> I wish the hell I'd been chocked like that [..] Still there would not be all this dying to go through. Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo […] they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you.[142]

It becomes apparent within this interior monologue that the death of Catherine and their son is an epiphany for Frederic. It is through this painful experience that he realizes the senselessness and minuteness of life in the same way that Catherine did when her fiancée died in the war. He also recalls the killing of his comrade. Here, again, his war past permeates into his present. Mary Prescott observes that:

> the empirical experience of the war […] is not strictly part of his past, even though it belongs to his memory. That experience is also his present, the raw material and the product of the thinking, weaving consciousness, and is part of that consciousness in flux.[143]

Indeed, even though the passage starts with Fredric's attempt to come to terms with the loss of his family that is happening in the narrative present, suddenly the emotions he experiences evoke the memories of the war that intermingle with his interpretation of reality. Being deprived of his loved ones, the protagonist becomes deprived of the future. From now on, he will live in the expectance of death as it is the only certain end for him.

A Farewell to Arms proves itself to be a profoundly existential novel that raises questions about the human experience of time and the way it is related to existence. It portrays

[141] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 325.
[142] Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 327.
[143] Prescott, "A Farewell to Arms: Memory and the Perpetual Now," 44.

life in the face of death and how the close experience of death shapes one's feeling of time. For Catherine, the traumatic loss of her former lover worked as an impulse to cling to the present. Her realization of her own mortality and the fragility of life during wartime, quite paradoxically, made her fully present in the now. Her subjective time can be viewed as a continuous flow of nows, as defined by Heidegger. The same cannot be stated about Frederic, whose traumatic experiences mentally destroyed him, causing his psychological downfall that completely detached him from the real world. His character can be read through the lens of Sartrean philosophy. Jean-Paul Sartre highlighted the power of consciousness in the shaping of one's feeling of temporality. The feeling of temporal succession is one of the products of the mind and the interrelatedness between particular events depends on an individual's perspective. Frederic's deep psychological trauma distorts his perception of reality. His only hope for a better future was his relationship with Catherine, whose death deprived him of the possibility of there being a future. The novel in this way contrasts two opposite reactions towards trauma and the effect it has on one's experience of temporality.

Hemingway's novels presented above portray the complex interrelationship between the traumatized mind and the ever-changing reality it has to comply with. Being absorbed by the trauma of war, the novels' characters project their past onto the present, replaying and reliving traumatizing events within their minds. The use of the first-person narrative voice enables the representation of emotional experiences as seen through the eyes of Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* and Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*. In this way, the narrative provides the reader with "an interpreting consciousness, a self, grappling with the intricacies of inwardness."[144] It depicts the mind that battles with the complexities of psychological trauma and loss. The profound psychological impact of war is thus explored through the operations of human consciousness. The unbearable nature of the present is further intensified by the inner

[144] Prescott, "A Farewell to Arms: Memory and the Perpetual Now," 47.

conflicts that impact the way in which reality is interpreted. In this way, the past merges with the future through the operations of consciousness that struggles to overcome the painful reality of war.

6. William Faulkner

The enigmatic style of writing that William Faulkner crafted works as a labyrinth for the reader when they first encounter his works. One of the reasons why his novels are so puzzling is their use of a multi-layered narrative structure that represents the world through the lens of individual consciousnesses. Such narrative technique presupposes the abandonment of chronology. As Malcolm Bradbury comments, Faulkner's novels of the thirties "display a remarkable compendium of fictional strategies, structuring his work not through chronological or historical ordering but through alternative radical sequences challenging such orders."[145] In order to untangle the threads of individual timelines, it is crucial to dive into the operations of each of the minds represented, to experience the world as seen through the eyes of every character. Thus, the reading process becomes a challenging quest to reconstruct a single picture out of numerous pieces of information. In a sense, Faulkner's literary works remind one of Picassos' cubistic paintings. They both disrupt the viewer's/reader's perception of the whole, breaking the traditional concepts of order. By implementing their innovative techniques of distortion and grotesque imagery, they reflected the fragmented and transformative state of society in the modern world.

The distortion of chronological order is one of the prominent facets in Faulkner's novels *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. The absence of chronology and a central narrative voice makes the reader perplexed and oftentimes lost. The combination of a non-linear narrative and a kaleidoscope of multiple perspectives results in creating an impression of temporal disconnection balancing on the verge of atemporality. As was speculated by Jean-Paul Sartre, "if the technique Faulkner has adopted seems at first a negation of temporality, the reason is that we confuse temporality with chronology."[146] What Faulkner proposes in his

[145] Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel,* 116.
[146] Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, 88.

works is a new perspective on the meaning of temporality. Instead of conventional chronological order, his narratives provide the reader with time as a mental quality. The characters of his novels struggle to comprehend the meaning of their past, present, and future which has been greatly affected by their psychological trauma. To reveal the principles by which time in those novels operates, it is essential to dive deeply into the consciousness of each of the characters to re-establish connections between fragments of particular events. The opening chapter of *The Sound and the Fury* is a great example of a profoundly psychological representation of time.

Temporality in Benjy's section reflects his mental condition. To demonstrate the way in which a person's mental disorder affects their experience of reality, the narrative uses a specific pattern for describing reality as witnessed through the eyes of a retarded person. The narrative technique used has some similarities with the stream of consciousness but at the same time differs from it in a number of ways. The most important aspect that makes Benjy's section unique is the fact that his mental disorder deprives him of metacognition. This makes him unable to differentiate between reality and memories, the present and the past. His interior monologue becomes a camera eye representation of events. Any thought that appears in his mind at a particular moment is as palpable as reality itself. His narrative thus becomes a mixture of the perpetual present and his past recollections. As was observed by Wolfgang Iser, "Benjy is subjectivity reduced to the senses."[147] Indeed, Benjy's description of the world is purely sensual: "I liked to smell Versh's house"[148]; "the steam tickled into my mouth"[149]; "Caddy smelled like trees,"[150] etc. Benjy's reality is a mosaic that consists of a number of perceptions. Those sensations and experiences are bound to memories that "date vaguely from Benjy's early

[147] Iser, *The Implied Reader,* 151.
[148] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 32.
[149] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 29.
[150] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 49.

childhood, through his prolonged adolescence, up to his would-be adult life."[151] His memories are evoked and reshaped by his mind every time the sensual perception of the present intersects with similar experiences from the past. In this way, Benjy's present has the power of affecting his recollections from the past.

Benjy's section, as Marjorie Pryse observes, contains "more than 90 time shifts."[152] There is no wonder that such a swiftly moving narrative leaves the reader perplexed. What makes the process of comprehending the chapter problematic is the absence of temporal signposts that would help navigate the reader. Instead of using those, the narrative offers an alternative logic of organization, the one based on the principle of associative thinking. Within this chain of associations, any present experience that reminds Benjamin of one of his memories works as an impetus for reviving events that occurred in the past. Even though the narrative present of the chapter is indicated as "April Seventh, 1928", it is far removed from what the text subsequently portrays. For Benjy, any occurring thought is as tangible as the real world. It is the thought itself that determines his present, not vice versa. He exists within the realm of his own internal time that is fully disconnected from the external time flow. Simply put, there is no feeling of temporal succession within his retarded mind. Experience is the primary force by which the operations of his brain are driven. As a result, his character exists outside temporality and represents in itself a form of pure existence.

This creates a conflict between the reader's experience of time and that of Benjy. As any form of temporal succession gets disrupted, the reality represented in the chapter seems almost nonsensical from the point of view of the reader at first sight. In order to transform this temporal chaos into a comprehensive form of temporality, the reader has to suppress their

[151] Deland Anderson, "Through Days of Easter: Time and Narrative in *The Sound and the Fury*," *Literature and Theology* 4.3 (November 1990): 312. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23924830> 4 Aug 2023.
[152] Marjorie Pryse, "Textual Duration against Chronological Time: Graphing Memory in Faulkner's Benjy Section," *The Faulkner Journal* 25.1 (Fall 2009): 20. JSTOR<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24908366> 17 Aug 2023.

longing for a systematic representation of reality. As the story progresses it becomes clear that there is a specific pattern lying under the fragmented narrative that gives shape to the whole section. This pattern can be observed right at the beginning of the chapter. The narrative present, in which Benjy and Luster are looking for a quarter, merges together with Benjy's memories from the past: "cant you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail". *Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through*."[153] In most cases, the time shift is indicated by the change in a typeface. While there is an abrupt change in time, the transition that occurs is both subtle and striking at the same time. The feeling of causality between the changing scenes is achieved by the principle of cohesion. What becomes the main source of confusion on the reader's part is that the coherency of the text is disrupted.

To unravel the interconnectedness between the two seemingly unrelated events, it is essential to understand the principle of causality that ties them together. Though physically Benjamin is a 33-year-old man, mentally he is "three years old thirty years."[154] This aspect should be applied in the analysis of his section. As the operations of Benjy's consciousness are extremely limited due to his mental condition, he is not able to differentiate between reality and imagination. Benjy's memories from various stages of life are vividly re-enacted every time the "present" of his mind overlaps with his past experiences. In other words, his present is indicated by the moment in which his thoughts abide. It is not the outside reality that locates him temporarily. It is his consciousness that dictates his temporality. For him, the past is as real as the present. The chapter narrated by Benjy is as atemporal as his consciousness is. His intellectual disability makes him operate outside the realm of time as for him "everything exists on a single time level."[155] From his own point of view, Benjy exists in the eternal present.

[153] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 4.
[154] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 19.
[155] Iser, *The Implied Reader,* 138.

However, from the point of view of the reader Benjy is stuck in the past. As the narrative unfolds, it becomes evident that Benjamin's mind keeps retreating to the times when Caddy was present in his life. Any reminder of Caddy makes him agitated, be it the sound, smell, touch etc.:

> The man said "Caddie" up the hill. The boy got out of the water and went up the hill.
> "Now, just listen at you." Luster said. "Hush up."
> "What he moaning about now."
> "Lawd knows […] Cause it his birthday, I reckon."[156]

Several key aspects of the opening chapter can be observed in the passage presented above. As Deland Anderson points out, "Benjy is forever reminded of Caddy by the intermittent and only seemingly innocuous calls of the golfers in the neighboring field."[157] Benjamin's inability to express himself creates a conflict between his interpretation of reality and that of Luster and his friend. As a result, they are unable to empathize with Benjy as they have no clue about his emotional suffering. Benjy subconsciously dives into his memories of Caddy as a form of escaping the painful reality in which he is left without her. This process can be viewed as a protective mechanism that allows Benjy to reside in a place where he can be truly understood. Pryse notices that by using this technique, "Faulkner directly represents the logic of posttraumatic loss."[158] The loss of Caddy and the support she provided forever anchored Benjy in the past and thus mentally displaced him from the present and the future.

The following chapter narrated by Quentin is in stark contrast to Benjy's section. Compared to the timelessness of the first chapter of the novel, Quentin's narration is permeated by clock time. It is within this part of the novel that the concept of time is being scrutinized from various perspectives. It can be said that time is one of the central ideas that Quentin's narrative is built around. The chapter opens with the recollection of his father's comment on the nature of time:

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[156] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 18-19.
[157] Anderson, "Through Days of Easter," 312.
[158] Pryse, "Textual Duration against Chronological Time," 20.

> I was in time again, hearing the watch. It was Grandfather's and when Father gave it to me he said I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire […] I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said.[159]

Mr. Compson's idea of time represented in this passage points to the foolishness of human beings who futilely attempt to defeat time. As hope and desire are always located in the realm of the future, time has the power to destroy them as everything eventually vanishes in the void of time continuum. Instead of trying to win the battle against time, people should experience it. This idea is supported by another Mr. Compson's statement that appears later in the text: "time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life."[160] This idea examines the conflict between objective and subjective time. The mechanical time of clocks is one of the ways in which the outside world is categorized. Being one of the tools for measuring external reality, it is deprived of ontological meaning because human existence cannot be characterized in the same way as the objective world is. This is one of the reasons why there will always be a discrepancy between those two forms of time.

Being on the verge of committing suicide, Quentin is not able to ignore the ticking of numerous clocks/chiming of church bells that surround him. As Deland Anderson claims, "Quentin is ineluctably drawn toward his death."[161] This renders him become obsessed with the passage of time as the moment of his death approaches with every minute. His psychological state makes it impossible for him to dissolve in pure duration. Quentin's neuroticism completely corrupts his mind and makes him conscious of clock time, he is completely corrupted by it. Even after destroying his watch, he can still hear "the blank dial with little wheels clicking and clicking behind it."[162] Time with its destructive power has

[159] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 86.
[160] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 97.
[161] Anderson, "Through Days of Easter," 313.
[162] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 91.

become Quentin's main immortal enemy. His perception of time is pathological and illustrates his inability to accept the temporariness of his being. In Quentin's consciousness, only suicide has the power of liberating him from this trap: "a quarter hour yet. And then I'll not be. The peacefullest words […] I was. I am not."[163] For Quentin, death is a way of reaching inner peace as it is in death that he can forget time. Wolfgang Iser describes Quentin's character as "subjectivity reduced to its consciousness."[164] It is his neurotic consciousness that encapsulates him in mechanical time.

The final chapter of the novel strikes with the conventionality of its representation and is narrated by a third-person narrator. It focuses on Dilsey who is one of the servants of the Compson family. It is in this chapter that "a new order of time"[165] can be found and temporality in its traditional terms is restored. Within the novel, Dilsey functions as an anchor that keeps everything in order. She's been with the family for years and witnessed the decline of the household: "I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin."[166] Even when the whole family collapses, she is still there to perform her daily duties. She measures time by cooking meals regularly, thus her temporality is cyclical. The difference between her perception of mechanical time and Quentin's lies in her ability to accept the finitude of human life and find a way of complying with it. For her, death marks the beginning of a new life as she believes in resurrection. Dilsey's understanding of temporality is therefore highly affected by her faith. It allows her to fully accept the finite nature of her human form and truly experience her earthly life. She is always there in the present to help people around her and puts everything in order. Afterlife is the future she anticipates. This renders her time axis future oriented. She is the only character who is not corrupted by the past and does not attempt to conquer time.

[163] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 199.
[164] Iser, *The Implied Reader,* 151.
[165] Anderson, "Through Days of Easter," 318.
[166] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 344.

Within the novel, William Faulkner managed to portray several temporalities as seen through the prism of the narrative voice of each chapter. Benjy's section is atemporal as his retarded brain is incapable of distinguishing between reality and fantasy. For him, memories are as real as his present. When seen solely from the perspective of Benjy, his character is atemporal as he is deprived of metacognition. However, from the perspective of the reader who can view his character externally, Benjy's temporality can be seen through the lens of Bergsonian durée. Numerous simultaneities or events, in other words, coexist within his mind being mixed up together with his experience of the present. His time is not three-dimensional but rather represents a single unity. Quentin's section, on the other hand, resonates with the Heideggerian concept of time. For Quentin, being alive means being temporal, approaching death. He is obsessed with his mortality and is aware of the limited amount of time he has. This correlates with Heidegger's idea of Dasein that is thrown into the world. Dasein becomes temporal once it enters the world. It is only after death that Dasein liberates itself from time. Quentin finds his way of escaping temporality by committing suicide which frees him from the world of clocks. Dilsey's chapter represents the external clock. Her part is narrated in the third person as she is not a member of the family. Thus, her reality is represented from the external point of view and does not provide access to her subjective perception of reality.

The complexity of the concept of time as part of subjective reality is also represented in the novel *As I Lay Dying*. In contrast to *The Sound and the Fury* which provides the reader with at least some timeframe (7th, 6th, 8th of April 1928 and 2nd of June 1910), *As I Lay Dying* is completely unbound in terms of historical timeframe. In the discussion of the novel, Ildikó Csorba suggests that the ten days of the story "sunk into an even larger unit, that of infinity."[167] This dissolution in history reflects the nature of death that lies in the center of the novel. Death

[167] Ildikó Csorba, "Time-traps in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*" in *"What, Then, Is Time?"* ed. Tibor Fabiny (Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Catholic University, 2001), 147.

is the opposite of existence. While existence is bound to time, death is atemporal. Life is a journey of reaching this temporal nothingness. One of Addie's recollections supports this point of view: "I could just remember how my father used to say that the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time."[168] The juxtaposition of life and death presented in the passage points to the brevity of being compared to the vastness of nothingness. In a sense, every character that appears in the novel is dying, as by being born they already started their journey towards reaching infiniteness.

The title of the novel indicates "the border-line of present and past, life and death – the idea of dying."[169] The idea of death represented in the novel is not only physical but is also portrayed as being a mental process: "I believed death to be a phenomenon of the body; now I know it to be merely a function of the mind – and that of the minds of those who suffer the bereavement."[170] Peabody's observation works as a key for comprehending the complexity of the temporal framework of the novel as well as its title. While Addie's physical death is a central event upon which the narrative revolves, every other member of the family experiences a distinct form of death, a psychological one. Addie's demise causes the disintegration of the whole Bundren family as it disrupts the reproduction of everyday reality. This process is mirrored in the formal structure of the novel. In the same way that the death of a person distorts the reality of people around them, the novel disrupts chronological order and breaks fictional reality into 59 sections the narration of which is split between fifteen characters. Addie's death and her funeral work as links that keep the characters within the same spatial and temporal dimension.

Addie's death is both an event that works as an impetus for the family's subsequent decline and a unifying feature upon which characters' thoughts and actions are built. The

[168] William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (London: Vintage, 1996), 157.
[169] Csorba, "Time-traps in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying,*" 146.
[170] Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 38.

chaotic merging of individual streams of consciousness helps to portray the multi-layered nature of reality as experienced by human beings. As a result, the objective time of the external world gets excluded from the narrative. The world portrayed in the novel consists solely of subjective perception. Within this subjective perception chronology and succession are rather sporadic. Georg Lukács claims that "when time is isolated in this way, the artist's world disintegrates into a multiplicity of partial worlds."[171] Such disintegration creates a static view of the world from the perspective of the reader. This effect is achieved by portraying time as a form of duration within which every character exists. Thus, to comprehend the nature of this form of temporality, the reader has to abandon their conventional idea of time and rather perceive it as an integral part of human experience. Instead of operating with mechanical time of clocks and calendars, the narrative actively utilizes biological and natural time. The passage of time within the novel is measured with the use of various biological indicators such as Addie's decaying body, Cash's swelling leg, or Dewey Dell's pregnancy, as well as natural phenomena.

Dewey Dell's pregnancy makes her reflect on the idea of time from a new perspective: "*that's what they mean by the womb of time: the agony and the despair of spreading bones, the hard girdle in which lie the outraged entrails of events*."[172] The metaphor used in the passage refers to several characteristics of time. As the womb is an organ that operates within a cycle, the metaphor suggests that time is not linear but cyclical. Time has the power to create as well as the power to destroy. Life is contained within the time capsule that is limiting and oftentimes chaotic and violent. It is a series of events rather than a given number of hours, days, or years. To exist within time is to experience it. The "girdle" makes it impossible to escape the painful process of the passage of time. Within the overall context of the narrative, it suggests that by

[171] Georg Lukács, "From Realism in Our Time: Literature and the Class Struggle" in *Theory of the Novel*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 767.
[172] Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 107.

becoming a mother herself, Dewey Dell is getting to the next stage within the cycle of life, thus getting closer towards her own death.

This strategy points to the way in which the concept of time is defined in the novel. The narrative utilizes numerous forms of time that substitute the external time of the universe. Those temporalities closely correspond with the characters' experience of reality. As the novel uses the stream-of-consciousness technique for building the narrative, the distinctions between the past, present, and future get erased as within the human mind those three time dimensions can coexist simultaneously. This also renders possible the fusion of the real and the imagined, thus adding to the kaleidoscopic nature of the novel:

> It is as though the space between us were time: an irrevocable quality. It is as though time, no longer running straight before us in a diminishing line, now runs parallel between us like a looping string, the distance being the doubled accretion of the thread and not the interval between.[173]

The narrative highlights that time has a qualitative character. The implication that lies beneath this statement is that time cannot be measured. It can be only lived through. Once time is experienced it ceases to be linear. Instead, individuals exist in a shared time continuum, with their lives running parallel to each other. While people can be separated in terms of space, they still share the same time continuum. This may be one of the reasons why the moment of Addie's death is narrated by Darl who is physically absent from the scene. The bond between him and Addie was close: "it was between her and Darl that the understanding and the true love was."[174] This special connection allowed him to share the moment of her death with other characters. While being separated from his dying mother in terms of space, he was mentally present at the moment of her passing.

During the reading process, the reader becomes an active participant who has to look through the different patterns of time to construct their own image of the reality represented.

[173] Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 133-134.
[174] Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 20.

As the text itself is full of temporal gaps, with every reading of the novel a new interpretation becomes possible. The narrative technique allows the reader to discover the way in which the human mind decodes temporal patterns. It is through the functions of consciousness that temporal categorization of events takes place. As well as the characters of the novel, the reader has to actively participate in the reconstruction of various temporal relations in order to recover the events that happen in the novel. To fully experience the novel's temporality, one has to abandon the notion of objective time and become an active participant in a journey towards subjectivity.

As Deland Anderson suggests, "death and consciousness are ways in which human being temporizes."[175] Those two phenomena lie at the core of the novel's structure. Addie's physical death is the central event that affects the minds of people around her, the chain of reactions that subsequently leads to the decay of the whole family. Her death penetrates the minds of every character making them contemplate about their finiteness. It is also an engine that unfolds a series of events that end in Bundrens' destruction. However, the final lines of the novel suggest that the cycle may repeat itself as Anse brings home the new Mrs. Bundren to perform the role of his wife. Ildikó Csorba suggests that "the fact that the dead represent progress in an awkward way and the living are doomed to fail shows the nonsense of time."[176] Indeed, within the frame of the narrative, Addie's decaying body signifies the passage of time. The gradual decomposition of her body is a process that reflects the progressing crisis of the family. Following the nihilistic philosophy that Addie lived by, death helped her to exist beyond the temporal realm and escape the womb of time.

In contrast to *The Sound and the Fury* which reflects various forms of time, *As I Lay Dying* fully resonates with the Bergsonian idea of durée. It can be found both on the level of

[175] Anderson, "Through Days of Easter," 320.
[176] Csorba, "Time-traps in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying,*" 151.

narrative structure and the content of the sections themselves. Unlike *The Sound and the Fury* whose chapters are framed with particular dates, the novel does not mark a definitive date for when its events take place. Its sections represent 59 simultaneities that build up the present of the narrative. The external reality, the funeral procession, is an anchor that unites all the sections. The use of the stream of consciousness helps to represent the fluidity of the minds of the characters that can easily traverse between different time dimensions. However, in Addie's section, a notion of the Heideggerian concept of time can be found. Addie's father's view of life reflects Heideggerian philosophy: "my father used to say that the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time."[177] As in Quentin's section in *The Sound and the Fury*, the narrative points to the thrownness of Dasein that enters temporality by being born and exists in the world to subsequently die and free itself from time.

In the above-discussed novels, William Faulkner demonstrates his skilfulness in creating a literary technique that allowed him to represent "the flux and flow of time that endures rather than passes."[178] The technique proposes a new way of understanding time on a deeply psychological level. By not providing an external viewpoint on the events described, the narrative creates an unlimited space for experimenting with the fluidity of human perception. Time this way operates on a subjective level through multiple layers of human consciousness. The boundaries between different time dimensions get erased letting memories from the past actively intermingle with the reality of the present. The abandonment of conventional chronology is substituted with an alternative way of assembling events. It is highly affected by the processes occurring in the mind of a given character. Such a principle of arrangement presents itself as an enigma for the reader who encounters Faulkner's writing for the first time as numerous gaps in his narratives are left open for interpretation. In his central

[177] Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying,* 157.
[178] Jesse Matz, *Modernist Time Ecology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2018), 73.

novels “there is a recurrent structure of a continuous present behind which are stacked up different layers of time, validated in by a variety of justifications.”[179] To solve the puzzle of the temporal multilayeredness of his novels, the reader has to free themselves from time in its conventional sense and see it as one of the constructs of human consciousness.

[179] Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel,* 116.

7. Conclusion

Time and temporality play one of the major roles in the works of the US Lost Generation that were presented in this thesis. It is one of the numerous "losses" that characterize this group of modernist writers. The closer examination of the novels discussed in the previous chapters helped to identify the key principles the narratives use to portray the multi-layered nature of the concept of time. The fluctuating nature of time is reflected in the novels' abandonment of chronological order. As an alternative to conventional chronology, a new order of time is presented. That is the order of the mind. As Mark Currie aptly put it: "time is all in the mind, as part of the inner form of sense and meaning, but no less real than a tree for it."[180] The self and the thoughts that appear within the mind are major factors that predetermine and establish this order. What this principle does is that it brings significance to the engagement of consciousness in the process of interpreting outside reality. As a result of this, the narrative transforms into a multidimensional spacetime within which the experience of time is always dependent on the observer's frame of reference.

However, within this formula, there is a point of reference that is unalterable and common for all the viewers – external time. The flow of this objective time is always there in the background, reminding the characters of the limited number of simultaneities that they possess, or rather are still to experience. All the texts are unified by a single message – the battle against time cannot be won. No matter how much effort is put into the process of escaping the temporality of the being, the result will remain the same. The past cannot be regained, the present cannot be tamed, and the future is always non-existent and uncertain.

The novels display multiple similarities with the philosophical works represented in the second chapter in their portrayal of the essence of time. As well as Heidegger's Dasein, or Sartre's being-for-itself that is aware of its temporality by possessing consciousness, the

[180] Mark Currie, *About Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 83.

characters of the novels are fully aware of their finiteness and experience anxiety about the passage of external time. While their minds freely traverse through different temporal dimensions, their bodies succumb to the world time of objects, as defined by Heidegger. The only character who operated in a timeless space was Benjy, whose retarded mind did not allow him to access temporality. William Faulkner thus managed to create a unique model that allowed him to make the reader experience what it feels like to completely abandon the time continuum. Another recurring feature that can be found in all the works is their depiction of subjective time as a single unity. By providing access to the thoughts of the characters, be it through the shift in focalization as in Fitzgerld's works, the use of dialogues and retrospection as in Hemingway's works, or the stream-of-consciousness technique as in Faulkner's works, the narratives manage to depict the mind that operates in the perpetual now and with the help of memory and reflection then distinguishes between different time dimensions. As Bergson, Sartre, Heidegger, and Benjamin supposed, the past and the future are modifications of the "now." They come into existence due to the mind's ability to interpret and project. The notion of succession does not exist outside the being. What exists outside the being is universal (Heidegger), space (Bergson and Sartre), or empty (Benjamin) time that is there to synchronize numerous inner clocks that run at their own pace. The conflict between those two concepts of time is unresolvable and makes the characters struggle as they are aware of this violent unstoppable clock that keeps pulsing, mercilessly transforming the present into the past, and the future into the present in a matter of an instance.

Within the works of the US Lost Generation, this sense of constant transition, a feeling that objective time flies by extremely fast and leads to irreversible changes (quite often pretty tragic and unbearable psychologically), is embroidered within the body of the narrative. Their acute sensitivity toward this topic is a consequence of several factors: their awareness of the destructive nature of WWI made them fully realize the fragility and brevity of life; their

witnessing of a profound societal transformation that abandoned the old system of values; and their being influenced by the tendencies of modernism that were looking for new ways of representing time and space. The close contact with WWI is reflected in their tendency to depict a disrupted temporal space within which their disillusioned characters that are anchored deeply in the past operate. All their attempts to attain a promising future by fulfilling their dreams result in a fiasco, thus their future is lost. They are preoccupied with their past, not being able to free themselves from the trauma of the past. This existential paradox that permeates the novels can be characterized by the Sartrean idea of the absurdity of life: "man spends his life struggling against time, and time, like an acid, eats away at man […] and prevents him from fulfilling his human character."[181]

The novels effectively utilize both the philosophy of time and the psychological response to the world of trauma by putting human consciousness at the center of focus. To uncover the potentiality of time a reflective human mind is needed. It is the being that allows temporality to exist, and it is the mind that thereby effortlessly travels between different temporal realms and experiences time. Human consciousness thus becomes a major factor that unlocks the door for experimentation with temporality. As Monika Fludernik observes, "since humans are conscious thinking beings, (narrative) experientiality always implies, and sometimes emphatically foregrounds, the protagonist's consciousness."[182] When consciousness actively participates in the process of structuring the narrative, time ceases to be a number or measure; it rather becomes a form of experience that is dependent on various cognitive factors, such as emotions, feelings, and thoughts. As E. M. Forster observed:

> there seems something else in life besides time, something which may conveniently be called "value," **something which is measured not by minutes or hours, but by intensity**, so that when we look at our past it does not stretch back evenly but piles up into a few notable pinnacles, and when we look at the future it seems sometimes a wall, sometimes a cloud, sometimes a sun, but **never a chronological chart**.[183] (bold emphases added)

[181] Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, 92.
[182] Monika Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 22.
[183] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: A Harvest Book, 1955), 28.

What the novels analyzed in this thesis discovered is the idea of "something else," the alternative subjective time of the mind, or what Jean-Paul Sartre called "the order of the heart."[184] The breakup with chronology is a way of expressing this inner fragmentation and instability that was caused by the traumatic experiences of the characters presented in the works. The trauma gave prominence to the past that, in turn, exhausted any future possibilities.

The works of the Lost Generation can thus be also read in Deleuzean terms. To be more precise, through the lens of his idea of the exhausted. In his essay, Gilles Deleuze juxtaposes tiredness and exhaustion, explaining the difference between the two phenomena:

> Being exhausted is much more than being tired. […] The tired person no longer has any (subjective) possibility at his disposal; he therefore cannot realize the slightest (objective) possibility […] the tired person can no longer realize, but the exhausted person can no longer possibilize.[185]

The possible is futuristic in its essence as "when one realizes some of the possible, one does so according to certain goals, plans, and preferences"[186] The possible is thereby a projection of the now onto the future to a certain extent. It is a planned activity. Exhaustion, on the other hand, makes it impossible for one to access the realm of possibilities. Deleuze suggests that when one is exhausted, "one remains active, but for nothing. One was tired of something, but one is exhausted by nothing."[187] This idea closely correlates with the emptiness and nothingness of the present that the novels discussed in this thesis display. While it is impossible to claim that the narratives are static, their dynamism is passive in its essence. The reader encounters characters that act out of exhaustion. There is no feeling of real presence in their lives, but rather what is portrayed is their purposeless delusional existence.

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[184] Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, 90.
[185] Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical,* trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 152.
[186] Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical,* 152.
[187] Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical,* 153.

The breaking up with linearity, finding ways of representing the paradox of the fragmented reality of the post-war period, and the incurable effect of trauma that leads to the negation of the future, all denote the lost time of the Lost Generation. Each of the literary works represents a miniature of this macrocosm within which time is a tool for exploration, reflection, experimentation, and consolation. In his discussion of variations on time in fiction, Paul Ricoeur suggests that:

each fictive temporal experience unfolds its world, and each of these worlds is singular, incomparable, unique. Not just plots, but also **the worlds of experience** they unfold, are […] limitations belonging to a unique imaginary world. Fictive temporal experiences **cannot be totalized**.[188] (bold emphases added)

In this way, fictive temporal experiences can be compared to subjective experiences of time. However, while the subjective experience of time is unrestricted, the fictive temporal experience occurs within the limits defined by a writer. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapters of this thesis, the realm of the narrative allows writers to create a unique time capsule that can be revived every time a literary work is read. The imaginary world of fiction is a space that allows one to abandon the restrictions and limitations of the physical world, thus accessing the world in which objective time is not the ultimate ruler, but rather one of the characterizations within which the narrative unfolds. The impossibility of totalizing fictive temporal experiences points to their incompleteness and independence from the restraints of the real world. This opens up unlimited opportunities for exploring the phenomenon of time on a deeper level, making the reader create a new perspective on the nature of time.

The idea of new creation, or rethinking, in the process of reading (experiencing the work of art) leads to the question of what constitutes the fundamental functions of any artwork. Art is a medium for expression, reflection, communication, and informational exchange that eventually leads to the activation of critical thinking of its contemplator/listener/reader. Erik S.

[188] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, vol. 3*, trans. by Kathleen Bamley and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 128.

Roraback points out that "one function of the artwork is to provide a tabula rasa for rethinking and reconfiguring possible alternative worlds in the light of the construction of encounters between fiction and critical thinking."[189] To achieve this effect, a work of art has to propose alternative ways of thinking about reality. The more it deviates from the mimetic representation of reality, the more interactive and productive the process of engagement with a piece of art becomes. The literary works of the US Lost Generation provide their readers with the possibility to rethink and revalue their own understanding of what it means to exist in time. The novels subvert conventional ideas about time by emphasizing the importance of subjective interpretation in the human experience of reality and thereby temporality as such. Time ceases to be a means of measure and becomes an integral part of human experience. The strong connection between those two phenomena leads to the creation of a new order of time, one that is based on the principle of intensity rather than historicity. Time becomes deeply psychological and existential in its essence.

J. B. Priestley claimed that "a novel cannot be about Time but only about the people and things that appear to be in Time. Some novelists and dramatists may be unusually aware of Time, but they have to write about something else."[190] This is one of the reasons why it is challenging to discuss and analyze the concept of time in literary works as it is usually meticulously hidden under the cover of either innovative narrative techniques, extraordinary storylines, or at times even mentally unstable characters. Even when on the surface it may seem that a literary work does not allude to the idea of time, the opposite may be true. In his discussion of the role of time in the novel, Mark Currie observes that "time is both a matter of content and a matter of form: it is a theme of the novel and it is the logic of storytelling itself."[191] To unravel the full potential of the concept of time in a literary work it is crucial to comprehend

[189] Erik S. Roraback "On Capital and Class with Balzac, James, and Fitzgerald" in *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Class*, ed. Gloria McMillan (New York: Routledge, 2022), 399.
[190] Priestley, *Man and Time,* 122.
[191] Currie, *About Time,* 86.

it in its complexity. Time within the narrative is a thought/idea/emotion/experience as well as it is a building principle/logic/literary device. Having the ability to freely manipulate the temporal building blocks, the work of fiction has the power to alternate the reader's relationship to their own temporality, to reconceptualize their understanding of the concept of time.

As the essence of time is very subtle, this thesis utilized close reading as the main method for uncovering the way in which various ideas about time are incorporated into the novels. Both the philosophical works and the novels examined in this thesis find distinctive ways of understanding time and temporality. As history repeats itself and nowadays society struggles with strikingly similar challenges as during the modernist period, being in a state of transition on a geopolitical and societal level, it would be productive to examine the way in which writers represent time in contemporary American literature to look for possible similarities with the works of the first half of the twentieth century.

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Abstract

The main focus of this thesis is the concept of time and temporality as represented in the major works of the US Lost Generation. The authors and the writings examined within this thesis are F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*; Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*; William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. This thesis explores the way in which the understanding of the concept of time has undergone a dramatic change at the turn and the first half of the twentieth century, shifting its focus towards the subjectivity of human perception of time. The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter portrays the philosophy of influential thinkers of the period such as Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Walter Benjamin to create a background for further discussion and analysis of the novels. The following chapter provides the historical and cultural context of modernism to introduce major factors that shaped modernist thinking within which the Lost Generation appeared.

The next three chapters are dedicated to the detailed analysis of the novels, with each chapter focusing on one of the above-mentioned authors. Each of the novels is examined by close reading, paying attention to the way it incorporates various notions of time within the narrative. Based on this examination, parallels between the philosophy of time and the way it is represented in the texts are drawn to look for possible similarities in the comprehension of the notion of temporality in the concluding chapter.

Keywords: the US Lost Generation, Temporality, Narrative Time, American Modernism, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Francis Scott Fitzgerald.

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zaměřuje především na pojetí času a časovosti, jak je reprezentováno v hlavních literárních dílech americké Ztracené generace. Autory a díly zkoumanými v rámci této práce jsou: F. Scott Fitzgerald: *Velký Gatsby* a *Něžná je noc*; Ernest Hemingway: *I Slunce vychází (Fiesta)* a *Sbohem armádo*; William Faulkner: *Hluk a vřava* a *Když jsem umírala*. Tato práce zkoumá, jakým způsobem se na přelomu a v první polovině dvacátého století dramaticky změnilo chápání pojmu času, kdy velká pozornost byla věnována subjektivitě lidského vnímání času. Práce je rozdělena do pěti kapitol. První kapitola popisuje filozofii vlivných myslitelů tohoto období, jako byli Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre a Walter Benjamin, aby vytvořila pozadí pro další diskusi a analýzu románů. Následující kapitola poskytuje historický a kulturní kontext modernismu, aby představila hlavní faktory, které ovlivnily modernistické myšlení, v jehož rámci se Ztracená generace objevila.

Další tři kapitoly jsou věnovány podrobnému rozboru románů, každá kapitola se zaměřuje na jednoho z výše uvedených autorů. Každý z románů je zkoumán formou pozorného čtení, hlavní důraz je kladen na způsob, jakým jsou do vyprávění začleněna různá pojetí času. Na základě této analýzy jsou v závěrečné kapitole vyvozeny paralely mezi filozofií času a způsobem jeho reprezentace v textech, aby byly nalezené možné paralely v chápání pojmu časovosti.

Klíčová slova: americká ztracená generace, časovost, narativní čas, americký modernismus, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Francis Scott Fitzgerald.