NOTES ON TIME IN THE MODERN BRITISH NOVEL (I)

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TIME IN THE BRITISH NOVEL

In every age, time is a fundamental dimension of man's experience, and, within the limits of the contemporary imagination, men will develop different conceptions of its nature, workings, and transcendence. The variations in the individual concepts of time will depend largely upon the degree to which an official philosophy or religion dominates intellectual life. Admittedly, unless the society is either very small and simple, or regimented, on unified outlook will prevail. Nevertherless, the various contemporary schools of thought will usually display notable similarities. In the Renaissance, for instance, traditions as varied as Stoicism, Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Christianity co-existed in European culture. All these traditions, however, had one significant element in common—idealism—whether ethical, metaphysical, or religious. Thus the experience of mutability—the feeling of "the precarious and fugitive character of each lived moment"\(^1\) could be more or less successfully counteracted and transcended within any of these traditions. The Stoic could conquer time through virtual and voluntary death; the Platonist and the Aristotelian conceived of time as being, respectively, built into eternity and enclosed by timelessness; and the reformed Christian's existence became "the permanence of eternity impressing itself upon the discontinuity of human moments."\(^2\)
This cultural unity, however, seldom extends to the sciences, which follow their own independent development. Consequently, one should not assume as self-evident that the scientific concepts of time—and space as well—determine the conception of time in the arts. When a critic claims, for instance, that in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries there was no interest in the concrete experience of time and that "time as a whole was considered—but the configuration of instantaneous occurrences or the sum total of single moments: in a word, a line formed by the juxtaposition of points," he is assuming that the creation of modern mathematics—through the derived concepts of an instantaneous present—wielded a disproportionate influence on general thought. It is equally fallacious to reason that, as a result of Darwinism, "time—appears as the medium of change—of a change that means decline and destruction." Time as a medium of change, the "number of motion," is as old as Aristotle and in the guise of mutability played its role in European culture long before the advent of the French naturalists. It is advisable, therefore, to be wary of overplaying any particular provenience of time concepts. How, for example, can one explain Racinian, or Shakespearean, time on the above-mentioned assumption of a mathematical derivation? Though, undoubtedly, science affected the seventeenth-century mind, the classical and Christian traditions were still very much alive.

Certainly, the scientific thinking of an age is as often an effect as a cause of a general intellectual climate. In the production of such a climate, economics and religion frequently figure more prominently than pure speculation, scientific or otherwise. Thus, the emergence of Puritanism, with its concomitant economic and political upheaval, was in respect of cultural time perspectives a far more important event than the publication of Sir Isac Newton's Principia Mathematica (1686-87). One of the ideological consequences of the growth of Puritanic capitalism was greatly to reinforce the idea of progress in time. At its optimum development in the nineteenth century, this
idea caused experience in the Dickens novel to be designed into a "historically-emptied conjunction of the present and the future"; at the end of the novel, man was projected into an "imprecise but, nevertheless, happy future."6) Newton's theory is relevant here only insofar as his concept of an "absolute, true, and mathematical time, which of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without regard to anything external" does not contradict the rationale of a naive economic and cultural optimism.7)

In attempting to extricate the time concepts implicit in the substance and structure of the early English novel, one does well to maintain a broadly sociological orientation, insofar as, from its very beginning, the novel was geared to the taste and intellectual perspectives of the rising middle class. The typical novel of the eighteenth century was generally a work in which an action, originating in characters of an adventurous, i.e. forward-looking, cast, takes the shape of a straight chronological sequence, complicated at times by intercalated or distributed exposition.8) There are, admittedly, vast differences between the macroscopic world of manners in a novel like Tom Jones (1749) and the microscopic world of personal sentiment in Clarissa Harlowe (1748), the latter of which, according to Walter Allen, by its "direct rendering of the minds of—its characters in the very moment of thinking and feeling,—anticipated the appearance of Henry James,—James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf."9) Yet, the works of both Fielding and Richardson can justifiably be labelled "histories," whereas the modern novelists mentioned by Mr. Allen incorporated into their fictional world the orders of cosmic and existential time as well as that of pure "historical" succession. Existential time, it is true, is experienced in the moment, the locus of sensibility in the Richardson novel; but this moment either transcends historical succession altogether or fuses past, present and sometimes future into a timeless essence.

Laurence Sterne in Tristram Shandy (1760–67) comes closer to the moderns in this respect, and he has consequently been considered
a brilliant precursor of the stream-of-consciousness novelists in twentieth century fiction.\textsuperscript{10} To compare his technique with that of Virginia Woolf, however, and to state that the latter considered herself "a Bloomsbury equivalent of Laurence Sterne,\textsuperscript{11} falsifies the achievement of both, particularly that of Mrs. Woolf, who thereby would appear as the latest rara avis in English literature. It is true enough that Sterne introduced existential time into the novel, but he exploited it chiefly on the rather elementary level of its discrepancy with chronometrical time.\textsuperscript{12} Actually, Sterne was not seriously concerned with inner duration. Intrigued, for technical-rhetorical reasons on doubt, by Locke's concept that duration is a function of the succession of ideas in the mind, he used it as a means of justifying both the rejection of a regular chronology and the practice of an idiosyncratic association of ideas. This technique of association does not, as, for instance, with James Joyce, initiate the reader into the deeper, durational, selves of the characters: it is merely "Sterne's device for a dramatic rhetoric."\textsuperscript{13}

The time operating in Tristram Shandy, consequently, is actually that of the ubiquitous intellect; it is a time that knows no limitations, no division, and no development.

—there is no becoming in Tristram's being, he has no "being time." We are in the presence of a reincarnation of Erasmus' Folly (who, incidentally, is also a rhetorician) and not a Proustian Moi—or a Joycean hero either. Tristram can even be in three places at once, but he does not thereby call up the Proustian being of purely realized experience objectively recreated by present stimuli. Rather the consciousness of all moments, all occasions, all experiences enables Tristram to place any event in a context of dialectically crossed motives.\textsuperscript{14}

Accordingly, the device of time-shift, which is the chief technical invention in the book, serves a dialectical rather than a narrative-aesthetic purpose. Despite the fact, therefore, that after Sterne this innovation was available for the use of prospective novelists, these had to work it out practically for themselves—as did Conrad.
The nineteenth century, for various reasons, did not relish Sterne's experiment and followed after other, less mercurial, gods. Most novelists born in its first fifty years contributed little either to the range of temporal experience in the novel or to new narrative techniques. Noteworthy, however, are three writers who were also poets, Emily Bronté, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy. Miss Bronté's novel, Wuthering Heights, universally acclaimed a masterpiece, ushers the reader into a more intense world than everyday reality, a world transfigured by unearthly passion, whether of love or hate, relentless revenge or eternal truth. Professor Bruce McCullough has suggested that time is one of the important factors of the book, that "the laws operating in the novel do so on a time dimension. To see them at work to the best advantage, we need to be placed in a position where we can witness a complete cycle of change—It is only when we look back across the years that the force of time as a factor in our lives becomes fully apparent to us." But, surely, no world is more immune from time in this particular sense than that of Emily Bronté; the fact that her story embraces three generations does not mean that she intended it to be an Old Wive's Tale. Actually, cosmic time—in its biological aspect, for instance,—behaves rather paradoxically in the novel. On the one hand, the atmosphere, which is stormy and volcanic at the same time, speeds up the action of time; to corroborate this, one may note that the premature aging and deaths of most of the characters, including Heathcliff, who dies at the age of thirty-eight. This is not a time which imperceptibly grinds down youth and beauty to bitter dust, like the time operating in the fictional world of naturalists like Maupassant and Bennett. On the other hand, time on this scale seems strangely inoperative in the novel, a fact indicated by Mrs. Dean's account of Edgar Linton's funeral.

It was the same room into which he had been ushered, as a guest, eighteen years before: the same moon shone through the window; and the same autumn landscape lay outside—Heathcliff advanced to the hearth. Time had little altered his person either.
There was the same man: his dark face rather sallower, and more composed, his frame a stone or two heavier perhaps, and no other difference.\textsuperscript{17}

It is in a different time dimension altogether that the principal characters exist, as far as they do exist in time at all. Heathcliff is throughout most of his life haunted by his memories of Catherine, which, however, disillusion him because they are insubstantial. It is partly to materialized, vicariously, his own past in the present that he enforces the marriage between his son Linton and the second Catherine. Ironically, after Linton Heathcliff's death, Heathcliff sees his past resurrected, with a beneficient variation, in the developing relationship between Catherine and Hareton Earnshaw. "Five minutes ago," Heathcliff allegedly told Mrs. Dean.

'Hareton seemed a personification of my youth, not a human being: I felt to him in such a variety of ways, that it would have been impossible to have accosted him rationally. In the first place, his startling likeness to Catherine connected him fearfully with her. That, however, which you may suppose the most potent to arrest my imagination, is actually the least: for what is not connected with her to me? And what does not recall her?—The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! Well, Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal love; of my wild endeavors to hold my right; my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish."\textsuperscript{18}

Heathcliff, consequently, lives in a present on which the past impinges at every moment, to the extent that, toward the end, he is so detached from his surroundings that he has to remind himself to breathe. "Time stagnates here," says Mr. Lockwood,\textsuperscript{19} and one is inclined to agree with him. But this stagnation also has its counterpart of glory: it makes possible the transcendence of time in eternity.

It is the merit of Wuthering Heights, beyond those of most novels, that it contains, beneath the variegated surface of personal re-
lationships, a unified metaphysic. "We are surely shown the universe as the scene and expression of two opposed principles which, even though they seek to devour each other, yet ultimately compose a harmony. They are symbolized in the novel in the two houses and their occupants, Wuthering Heights on its bleak eminence,—and Thrush cross Park in the fat valley below." 20) This statement, however, fails to cover every aspect of the reality which Emily Bronté sees. Mr. Allen’s summary suggests a philosophy of immanence and temporalism, whereas to Miss Bronté, the mystic, the ultimately real is transcendent and eternal. Mrs. Dean, for instance, has this comment to make on death: "—I feel an assurance of the endless and shadowless hereafter—the Eternity they have entered—where life is boundless in its duration, and love in its sympathy, and joy in its fulness." 21) Actually this eternity becomes immanent, at least in the experience of the first Catherine and Heathcliff. The latter is in veritable torture throughout his life because he cannot attain union with Catherine after her death. Toward the end, however, he breaks the barrier of the flesh: "'Last night,'" he says to Mrs. Dean, "'I was on the threshold of hell. To-day, I am within sight of my heaven. I have my eyes on it: hardly three feet to sever me.,", 22) His death, Miss Bronté appears to suggest, enabled him to enter it.

It is in relation to these two basic elements of existential time, the brooding shadow of the past over the present and the ultimate transcendence of time through an eternal union of love, that we have to judge the technique of the novel. Professor McCullough has suggested that one of the advantages of Miss Bronté’s method, which by its intricate interlocked series of narrators anticipated the involved narrative technique of Joseph Conrad, is that "the story—gains in objectivity. The intrusive personality of the author, so characteristic of most Victorian novels, does not here stand between us and the figures of the drama." 23) Assuming, then, that we, as readers, identify our point of view with that of Mr. Lockwood and Mrs. Dean, their presence serves "not merely to heighten the drama, but to underline
its significance and its scope, for Lockwood and Nelly are essentially spectators. That is the role forced on us, the readers, and their comments, their function as chorus, become ours too.\textsuperscript{[24]} Our identification with the narrators enables us to experience simultaneously the past and the present of the principal characters. Shortly after having met Heathcliff at the beginning of the story, for instance, we are, through Mr. Lockwood’s reading of Catherine Earnshaw’s diary and the ensuing nightmare, immediately plunged into the haunting past of Heathcliff. To equate this beginning with the time-honored epic tradition of starting in medias res would be to disregard both the length and the formal characteristics of the standard exposition. In Wuthering Heights the story opens not quite a year before the end, whereas the retrospected events cover a period of about thirty years; furthermore, these events are dramatized in the narration. There is a fairly constant interplay between past and present, since both Mr. Lockwood and Mrs. Dean bring us back occasionally to contemplate Heathcliff at the present moment—a man perpetually reliving the events the narrators are gradually unveiling before us. And at the same time as the events are being brought to light, the veils are also falling from the eyes and soul of Heathcliff, who is finally relieved of the burden of his past and set free to join his immortal love.

Meredith and Hardy were not outstanding innovators in formal respects—unless one would consider a superb disregard of probability in plotting and an almost metaphysical belief in chance occurrences as significant innovations. What distinguishes Meredith more than anything else is his sense of the unpredictable and mysterious in human life. We may not wholly agree with the critic who has claimed that Meredith was a precursor of Henri Bergson;\textsuperscript{[25]} nevertheless, some of his intuitions are closely similar to Bergsonian ideas. Whereas in Wuthering Heights the sense of mystery derives from the interfusion of eternity and time, in the work of Meredith time itself is an enigmatic element. This is splendidly illustrated by
the author's first novel, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (1859), in which Sir Austin, Richard's father, applying a naively "scientific" concept of human growth, is frustrated by his inability to "see Time's full face." During the decisive hours of Richard's fate, "The system, wedded to Time, slept, and knew not how he had been outraged—anticipated by seven pregnant seasons." The mechanical assumptions of Sir Austin, according to Meredith, also underlie human institutions: Like "busy contractors who measure Time by inches," the persons in charge of Richard's and Lucy's wedding "knew little of the change of light decreed by Creation—"; and the wedding ritual is equally premised upon a "dead" time. But although the bridegroom may think that "this hour of the complacent Giant Time at least is his, and that he means to hold him bound through the Eternities,—Time at the slightest provocation ominously shakes his chains and—...a sound of mockery stings their ears." On this background of Meredith's ironical satire of man's slavery to mechanical time, one is not surprised to find that his view of comedy, expressed in "The Idea of Comedy," a lecture given in 1877, is strikingly similar to that formulated by Bergson in Le Rire (1900). According to both, the chief function of the comic spirit is "to bring back the individual into the great vital current."

The movement of this current is not uniform, but extremely variable. Accordingly, Meredith's hero in some moments—particularly when his whole being is engaged on a fateful issue—moves with such speed that, although chronometrically the crisis may have lasted only a few minutes, "the shores—he has relinquished shrink to an infinite remoteness—. He is veritably in another land, a moral Acheron divides... his life... His memories scarce seem his... own!" In this particular, Meredith holds a more dramatic and less libertarian conception of time than Bergson, whose philosophy implies that "every instant one acts, one creates his action, and together with it one creates oneself..." In Meredith, the creative moments, precipitated by the synchronism of a natural seasonal rhythm and the
spiritual impetus on an act of will, are rare; their consequences, on the other hand, are life-long, and not invariably creative.

Although infinitely more dramatic than Meredith's novels, Hardy's works achieve their effect not through explosive creativity, but by the slow interaction of chance, circumstance, and passion. All these factors are envisioned as the agents of the Immanent Will, which, like Fate in Sophoclean tragedy, blindly or ironically spins the destinies of men. The time that operates here is primarily cosmic; the pattern is that of cyclical change and recurrence. Because time on the cosmic level is only with difficulty separable from space—since it is determined and measured by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies in space—Hardy very often telescopes spatial and temporal distances into one overwhelming presence. Egdon Heath in The Return of the Native (1878) is such a presence; not merely a "vast tract of unenclosed wild," it is more truly an image of cosmic time itself: "—it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow." The catastrophic suggestion is significant: Hardy's universe is not eternal; even if no catastrophe occurs, it will nevertheless ultimately unwind, or unburn, itself. "For all the wonder of these everlasting stars, eternal spheres, and what not," says Swithin St. Cleeve in Two on a Tower (1882), "they are not eternal; they burn out like candles." This idea of the temporal finitude of the universe makes finite man less of a stranger to it; the stars, like the life of man himself, show "a pitifulness even in their glory."

The effects of contemplating the sublime expanses of the stellar universe differ, in Hardy's work, according to the temperament and character of the onlooker. Sturdy, unpretentious Gabriel Oak in Far From the Madding Crowd (1874), for example, feels the poetry of his, and the earth's, "stately progress through the stars," whereas the more intellectual and detached Swithin St. Cleeve, although aware of the equilibrating effects of studying astronomy, admits that
this science will "reduce one's troubles] in a singular way, by reducing the importance of everything."\textsuperscript{37} Hardy, however, does not usually project his characters against a cosmic background with the intention of reducing them to insignificance. In his perface to Two on a Tower, for instance, he says that he wished "to set the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe, and to impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the smaller might be the greater to them as men."\textsuperscript{38} And in Far From the Madding Crowd he expresses wonder at the power of the human mind to perceive planetary motion: It is hard to believe, he comments, "that the consciousness of such majestic speeding is derived from a tiny human frame."\textsuperscript{39}

Regardless, however, of Hardy's amazement at the powers of the human mind in spanning the immensities of cosmic space and time with its perception and thought, he sees human history and individual destiny as rigidly determined by cyclical patterns of recurrence similar to those that regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies. Mr. J. H. Raleigh has suggested, aptly I think, that "Hardy's sense of the past is, partially anyway, a metaphorical expression of cosmic time, whose essence is the endless recurrence of things."\textsuperscript{40} Most of the situations and incidents that occur are not presented as unique, as happening in this particular corner or Britain on this particular day, at such and such an hour. There are no original acts, only re-enactments of scenes that have been taking place recurrently for centuries. This aspect of Hardy's world manifests itself most typically in his description of the rich tradition of folklore which informs the life of the peasantry. Speaking about the bonfire celebrants in The Return of the Native, for instance, he says that "it was as if these men and boys had suddenly dived into past ages, and fetched therefrom an hour and deed which had before been familiar with this spot. The ashes of the original British pyre which blazed from that summit lay fresh and undisturbed in the barrow beneath their tread."

\textsuperscript{41} Whereas the nature of this particular recurrence is entirely innoc-
uous, nay, positively joyous, that of others, less connected with tradi-
tion than with individual lives, is more fateful. Jude Fawley in
Jude the Obscure (1895), on waking up from his dream of an acade-
mic career in Christminster, conjures up the deep layers of history
deposited on the crossroads where he is at the moment standing:

It was literally teeming, stratified, with the shades of human
groups, who had met there for tragedy, comedy, farce; real en-
actments of the intensest kind—. Here the two sexes had met for
loving, hating coupling, parting; had waited, had suffered, for
each other; had triumphed over each other; cursed each other in
jealousy, blessed each other in forgiveness.42

It is appropriate that Jude should end his enumeration of dra-
matic scenes with those precipitated by passion. Presenting charac-
ters who are universal as well as typical and uniquely individual,
Hardy is concerned with the workings of the basic, chiefly parental
and sexual, emotions. Most situations arising from these emotions
appear as archetypal. For instance, when the author relates how
Clym Yeobright in The Return of the Native falls in love with Eus-
tacia Vye and as a result arouses the jealousy of his mother, the title
of the chapter, "The First Act in a Time-worn Drama," sufficiently
indicates his intention.43 Hardy does not, however, content himself
with vague generalities; he even suggests specific roles, mythologi-
cal or historical, which his characters are re-enacting. It is from this
point of view that one has to judge Hardy's fondness, perhaps over-
fondness, for classical and Biblical allusion. With him, this is not a
mere eccentricity, but an intrinsic ingredient of his vision. In the
philosophy of eternal recurrence it matters little where and when a
tragedy took place, since, despite local variations, the actors, scenes,
and even the spectators are fundamentally the same. Jude Fawley
is both himself and Job, whose litany of self-annihilation he recites
at his life's end, the difference being that in Jude's case there is no
restitution of happiness; Michael Henchard in The Mayor of Caster-
bridge is a modern Saul and Cain combined,44 whereas Donald Far-
frae, his competitor and rival, is decidedly a David figure; and from a description of Gabriel Oak's hut as "a small Noah's Ark on a small Ararat," one may infer that Mr. Oak is Hardy's incarnation of the spiritual qualities requisite for pleasing the Immanent Will, Hardy's God. In accordance with tradition, the modern Noah survives the deluge of passion which, in the persons of Sergent Troy and Farmer Boldwood, for a while overwhelms his love, Bathsheba Everdene. Although Hardy does not always insist on identifications with individual historical and mythical characters, he does effect identifications with a type, an archetype. In this manner, he can be said to have been a precursor of younger authors like Thomas Mann and James Joyce.

The pattern of recurrence in Hardy's novels emerges not only in the history of universal man, but also in the lives of individuals. As man on the stage of history is, mostly unconsciously, re-enacting roles which were created at the dawn of civilization or even earlier, so individuals re-enact their past history in the present and the future, again very often without a clear awareness of the pattern. Hardy's characters lack the retrospective sensibility of the Jamesian hero, who tends to enjoy exploring not only his individual memories, but the deposits of history as well. Their relation to the past is usually one of immanence, a fact that may explain their helplessness with regard to it. This does not mean, of course, that Hardy's characters lack conscious memory. Naturally, they do remember their pasts and attempt to live in accordance with what experience has taught them. But however hard they may try, they are unable to escape the recurrent pattern. All of Hardy's greatest figures are subject to this pattern: Eustacia Vye, whose life ends in suicide and who is joined in death by Wildeve, her first lover; Michael Henchard, who, in spite of building a fortune and becoming the mayor of his town, is pursued by his youthful sin and is finally reduced to his original poverty and an utterly lonely death; Tess, the "pure woman," whose one act of indiscretion makes her life a series of misfortunes and her
death a public horror as well as a tragedy; and, finally, Jude and Sue, who, lovingly dreaming of a future religion of joy, grotesquely end their lives being remarried to their original incompatible partners.

The cyclical pattern is usually pointed up by striking similarities in the most minute circumstances attending the recurrent situations and actions. There is, of course, a difference, a very significant one--one or more catastrophes have occurred in the meantime or are involved in the final recurrence. The revolving cycles of time, on the cosmic, historical, as on the individual scale, descend in a spiral, like the circles in the Inferno. The figure of Father Time in Jude the Obscure suggests that the ultimate descent, or utter catastrophe, will result from the wearing down either of nature's creative and restorative energies or of man's spiritual hopes. For unlike Egdon Heath, which only seemed to "await—the final overthrow," Father Time perpetrates it. Following out his death-wish, he first destroys Jude's and Sue's children, the future of mankind, then, through his own suicide, symbolically effects the "final overthrow" of Time.

Of later novelists whose work introduced either new modes of time experience or new techniques for presenting it, one may mention Henry James, H.G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, E.M. Forster, and Dorothy Richardson. With regard to Henry James, Mr. Raleigh has claimed that, together with Hardy, he put an end to the reign of "simple historical time, built along the idea of progress," replacing it, for his part, by "a secular version of existential time." In any such structure of time experience, the past, whether personal or cultural, is an essential element. In contrast to Hardy's practice of considering the past either as an agent of fate or as the prototype of a universal pattern, James usually presents it in the guise of reverberations of tradition which become absorbed within the experienced moment. Sometimes the present—as in The Aspern Papers (1888), for instance, where it is incarnated in a "publishing scoundrel!"—is actively trying to achieve a sense of relatedness with the past: "—the sacred relics—made my life continuous, in a fashion, with the
illustrious life they had touched at the other end." More often, the past emerges without the application of much mental pressure; as in The Sense of the Past (1917), the only prerequisite is the "desire to remount the stream of time, really bathe in its upper and more natural waters—." In consequence of following out this desire, Ralph Pendrel acquires an "almost scared consciousness of the simultaneous and the many," a phrase which undoubtedly refers to the deep deposits of history that his ancestral house is disclosing to him. This situation has some surface similarities with that in Virginia Woolf's Orlando; James, however, had something much more dramatic in mind. Nevertheless, the dramatic possibilities of the "sense of the past" were far more naturally exploited in The Princess Casamassima (1886), in which the tragedy of Hyacinth Robinson hinges largely on his inability to harmonize political anarchism with a rich and sensuously appreciative awareness of the European cultural tradition.

James' particular, and peculiar, development of The Sense of the Past is possibly related to a couple of ideas, or themes, which appear frequently in his work. First, stories like The Altar of the Dead (1895) and, especially, The Beast in the Jungle (1903) convey a crushing sense of the pathetic void to which the personal past can be reduced. Both George Stransom and John Narcher have "buried" lives; the former anticipates, as well as compensates for, his personal annihilation by symbolically making a family for himself of his dead friends; the latter, existing in the presentiment of a transfiguring apocalypse, realizes at the end the vacuum of his life and the possibilities for experience which he has missed. Secondly, in several of James' greatest novels the main characters, setting out with a spontaneous desire to determine their future, are irretrievably caught in the tangle of consequences which their "free" actions have fabricated. Whether made by Daisy Miller, Isabel Archer, or Kate Croy and Merton Densher, attempts to institute an order of freedom invariably fail. These two ideas, the near vacuousness and the utter determinateness of the future become past, probably explain
why in his later years James was intrigued by the idea of what Poulet calls a "virtual" past.\textsuperscript{52} This is something quite different from Proustian recapture of lost time; it is the capture of time unlived or the exploration of possibilities for living never realized. More clearly, perhaps, than in any other work is this theme stated in The Jolly Corner (1909), where Spencer Brydon, returning to America from a European sojourn of several decades, attempts to catch his alter ego in his old ancestral home and to find "that mystical other world that might have flourished for him had he not, for weal or woe, abandoned it."\textsuperscript{53}

Although containing much social comedy and even more strained melodrama, The Sense of the Past is based on the same theme, extended, this time, in temporal range and duplicated in treatment. For whereas Spencer Brydon was chasing the shadows of his possible existence in the house of his immediate ancestors, Ralph Pendrel exchanges times with an ancestor who lived about one hundred years before his age, in return giving this ancestor the opportunity to visit the future toward which the latter so fervently yearned. Actually, then, when Mr. Pendrel unlocks the door to his mansion after having spoken to the ambassador,\textsuperscript{54} he is, like the narrator in The Time Machine by H.G. Wells, engaging on a bit of time travel, with the crucial difference, naturally, that James' traveler chose to go in the opposite direction. In both cases, the travelers become panicky for their native times; with James, unfortunately, we are not privileged to witness the outcome of the adventure. Using the notes appended to the unfinished book, the reader can, however, acquire a fairly adequate notion of what James' chief concerns were. Speaking of Ralph Pendrel, the author says: "It comes back to him, it comes over him, that he has freedom, and that his acting in independence, or at least acting with inevitability, has laid his trap for him—in that he has deviated, and of necessity, from what would have happened in the other fellow's place and time."\textsuperscript{55} In spite of the somewhat ambiguous wording, it is significant that freedom is the
crucial issue, freedom from the determinate pattern of the past.

(To be continued)

References


2) Poulet, op. cit., 12


4) Ibid., 325.

5) For a discussion of the Former, see Poulet; "Notes on Racinian Time," op. cit., 117-30


8) Intercalated exposition is a major narrative cutback to pick up the background to the action; in distributed exposition, this background is given in installments.


10) See E. M. Forster; Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.) 18-20


14) Ibid., 39

16) C. P. Sanger; The Struture of Wuthering Heights (London: The Hogarth Press, 1926), 12
17) Emily Bronté; Wuthering Heights (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1950), 308-09.
18) Ibid., 349-50.
19) Ibid., 27.
20) W. Allen, op. cit., 224.
21) Bronté, op. cit., 178.
22) Ibid., 355.
26) George Meredith; The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (New York: Random House), 265.
27) Ibid., 329.
28) Ibid., 326.
29) Ibid., 343.
30) Turquet-Milnes, op. cit., 117.
31) Meredith, op. cit., 330.
32) Poulet, op. cit., 35.
34) Ibid., 4.
35) (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1895), 34.
37) Town on a Tower, 35.
38) Ibid., 7.
39) p. 11.
40) Loc. cit.
41) P. 17.
42) T. Hardy ; Jude the Obscure, (New York: Random House, 1923), 140.
43) p. 213.
46) Far From the Madding Crowd, 10.
47) The Return of the Native, 4.
48) Loc. cit.
50) Henry James; The Sense of the Past (Glasgow: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1917), 47.
51) Ibid., 58.
52) Op., cit., 354.
54) The Sense of the Past, 292.
55) Ibid., 322.