

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

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

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

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

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

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

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