On Faith in Conduct:

The Aesthetic of American Fiction of the 1930s

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Introduction

Art or Politics, Yes Please!

The myriad orientations will be tragically wasted, the genius of one of the world's most vigorous centuries will be allowed to go unused, unless we can adapt its very welter of interpretations as skeptical grounding for our own certainties.
---Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change*

When all provisional acceptances have lapsed, when the single references and their connections which may have led up to the final response are forgotten, we may still have an attitude and an emotion which has to introspection all the characters of a belief.
--- I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*

1. Conduct and Faith

Why take action? There are several motivations that proclaim themselves causes for action: hope, despair, memory, desire, interest, will, prospect, economic circumstance, social force, genes, language, ideology, information, and the list goes on. There may not be a single cause that presides over all others. It is possible to have several causes at once or to have conflicting causes at the same time. A certain cause of action may be an effect of a different cause, and thus there is the possibility of infinite regression in search of the primary cause. While an actor has some reasons to perform an action, the actor may not be conscious of all causes of action. We may wish other people to act as we want them to act, but we realize in some periphery of our mind that it is very difficult to cause them to do so.

Intellectual tendencies in the 1930s in the US hardly ignored the importance of developing a theoretical system to entangle the complexity of action. The economic depression in the 1930s demanded action, especially collective action, to direct society out of turmoil. There were many attempts to understand human motives and to provoke actions. Technological developments in mass communications allowed individuals to reach large numbers of people through images and words, and magnified the possibility for mass

movements. Propaganda was a word in fashion at the time. However, the basis of collective action was revealed to be less solid than researchers and theorists had anticipated. As we will see throughout this dissertation, discourses on action became more tangled and dialectical, none satisfactorily pointed to the primary cause of action. Faith came to be a prominent theme since it was deemed arrogant to consider one's own actions to be founded on truth, rationality, or morality. The boundaries separating rationality from irrationality, object from subject, reason from emotion were obscure. Despite this, many people, including the writers and activists of the era, thought that many individuals had faith in a political cause and acted according to that faith. It seemed as though people knew the reasons for their actions, but, in fact (blind) faith did not allow them to see that the reason was wrong.

A long introduction is necessary if we are to step out of the false choice between art and politics and to investigate why that choice is false and how it narrows down our discussion of the 1930s and even of our own time. There are two purposes for this introduction. One is to diachronically survey how the literary discourse of the 1930s was constructed and how historical research interpreted causes of past actions. Another is to disentangle the faith-disillusionment narrative and to emphasize the significance of the aesthetic in halting the cycle of faith and disillusionment. These two purposes are related to Kenneth Burke, who criticizes an inability to renounce the faith-disillusionment narrative in his retrospection of the first American Writers' Congress and implies a different approach to the 1930s in his discussion with Fredric Jameson. A closer look at René Wellek and I. A. Richards reveals that their "New Critical" awareness can be construed as far much polymorphic and viable when we suspend the crude identification of formalism with them. This discussion will make it clear that reappraisal of the aesthetic is crucial for our understanding of relationships between faith and conduct, and also that the 1930s was

especially rich with resources to enhance our aesthetic discourse.

2. An Age of Faith

Thinking back on the 1930s, Malcolm Cowley retrospectively defined the decade as "an age of faith." Against the argument that there were some authors who "did not share in the social interest of the time," Cowley, a prominent literary critic and an editor of *New Republic* during the 1930s, emphasizes the presence of "the spirit of the 1930s" among literary works of the decade ("What Books" 293). On the surface, he claims that each writer, whether committed or reactionary to "the spirit of the 1930s," was sensitive to social forces or "the same fears and aspiration for human society" (293). Even though proletarian literary and cultural movements did not dominate the whole spectrum of American culture,[1] the literary canon of the 1930s seemed to have obliged the accentuation of social perspectives and political stances of writers, critics, producers, and so forth. The canonization of the 1930s comes with the moral lesson that didacticism does not match up with genuine creativity in the arts. Alfred Kazin, one of the earliest literary historians to provide a foundation of post-war canonization of the 1930s, criticizes the literary trend of the 1930s: "[writing] was an expression of belief, a participation at once so urgent and so vague that unusual sensibility seemed almost immoral in a world where mediocrity could conceal itself by the assumption of a political faith that compensated for the lack of perceptions by decrying the need of them" (368). Kazin distinguishes social "belief" of mediocre writers from the "unusual sensibility" of literary genius to accuse political consciousness of breaking down the distinction. Furthermore, Kazin observes, "criticism became a totalitarianism in an age of totalitarianism" (401). Even though the two main contenders—sociological criticism of "leftist" Marxism and aesthetic criticism of "rightist" Formalism—had no contents in common, "the search for an

absolute that each represented brought them together in spirit" (402). Whatever ideological disagreements there might have been, the 1930s in the US seems to have had a peculiar atmosphere which encompassed and enchanted everyone there.

It is not too exaggerated to point out that the most prominent and haunting issue in literary and critical polemics of the 1930s was the futile but boisterous question of "Art or Propaganda." This opposition, which pertains to other dichotomies, such as the aesthetic and the cognitive, the personal and the social, and the cultural and the political, has been too controversial for reconciliation even though the notion of modernism works towards this. Not only did the literary discussion of the 1930s witness a formidable inquiry over "Art or Propaganda," but the interest in the "Propaganda" side of proletariat literary aims was exaggerated in the literary canonization of the 1930s during the 1940s and 1950s. The repetitive uses of the famous definition "art is a class weapon," which Max Eastman brought back from the Kharkov conference as the Communist party line's definition of art, have obscured its context and contributed to the negative impression of proletarian "realist" arts and of the 1930s in general. This sound-bite definition is combined with another sound bite, "proletarian literature is the literature of a party disguised as the literature of a class," from Philp Rahv whose trust in Marxism made him critical of the Stalinist "Popular Front" strategy. Ignoring Rahv's criticism of the Comintern for "put[ting] away its revolutionary aims and embark[ing] on national-reformist policies" (626), some critics interpret his criticism as another insider viewpoint of misgiving about the communist party's instrumentalization of art. These two sound bites have been passed down from Kazin's *On Native Grounds* (1942) to Irving Howe and Lewis Coser's *The American Communist Party* (1957) to contribute to the prevailing narrative of faith in and disillusionment with new literary movement.[2] Against the optimistic view of Maxwell Geismar's *Writers in Crisis* (1942)—one of the earliest criticisms

of the 1930s—Cowley argues that "the period of social fiction described by Mr. Geismar has ended already, and disastrously…[and] ended with Moscow trials and the Russo-German Pact" ("Success" 26).[3] On the premise that writers in the 1930s must be divided into "Art or Propaganda" to determine the relationship of art and society, post-World War II literary critics appear to be a non-political "center" whose enemies are "totalitarianism."[4]

While the anti-Communist atmosphere of the Cold War trivializes the complexity of the 1930s into temporary ideological intoxication with a bad hangover, the remnants of faith in radicalism are inserted into American tradition. Walter B. Rideout's *The Radical Novel in the Unites States, 1900-1954* (1956) and Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left* (1961) represent the two main efforts to cause the thirties to converge with the stream of American radical tradition. These are on what Alan Wald calls a "liberal paradigm" which "broke with red-baiting conspiracy theories of left-wing cultural influence" (19).[5] While their respective research revealed the negative side-effects of faith in anti-capitalist movements, their treatment of literary debates is more elaborate than those of Kazin and Geismar. Rideout, for example, makes strenuous efforts to detach American writers from the Soviet party line and to attach them to the realist "idol-smashing literature of the twenties": "the American proletarian writers were not appreciably influenced in their craft by the practice of Soviet novelists" (207) simply because they could not speak Russian. Aaron also claims that "the radical impulse before and after 1930 sprang from the motives that had prompted good men in all ages to denounce, in Hawthorne's words, 'the false and cruel principles on which human society has always been based'" (150). Because Aaron, who strived for objectivity in the aftermath of McCarthyism, utilizes plenty of citations and avoids his passing judgments on them, it is often hard to distinguish the opinions of the thirties from his evaluation of them. He often stresses the arbitrary nature of Communist appeal in the thirties by generalizing

human impulses in regard to the religious experience: “As in all periods of great revivals, whether religious or political, the majority of the converts lapsed into their old ways, unable to maintain the enthusiasm that momentarily overcame them” (160). In Aaron’s narrative, writers primarily desired to believe in something other than capitalistic society and secondarily accepted Communist doctrines, bringing them grave consequences.

As the cold war and McCarthyism exhume the thirties to drive a stake through Communist specters, self-censorships in the republication of works during the thirties reinforced to Aaron and other historians the image of a cycle of faith and disillusionment. Many novelists could not survive in literary circles of the forties. Even the Avon edition of *Jews without Money* (1930), the American representative of the proletarian novel by Michael Gold, had its last lines deleted in its republication in 1965.[6] Moreover, the famous literary critics, who were especially productive and influential during the thirties, carried out minor but necessary modification in their works in efforts to dodge redbaiting. Cowley’s *Exile’s Return* (1934, 1951), Edmund Wilson’s *The American Earthquakes* (1958), which includes articles collected in *The American Jitters* (1932), and Kenneth Burke’s *Permanence and Change* (1935, 1954) and *Attitudes toward History* (1937, 1959) are prominent examples of this. David R. Peck claimed in 1968 that “the canon of Thirties literature which we have established in the last ten years has been carefully constructed to suggest that social, political, and economic questions played no major role in the literature of the period” (377).[7] It is less likely that these excisions and revisions have initiated a distorted view toward the thirties than that they reinforce the faith and disillusionment narrative. The possibility is that the disillusionment narrative indirectly nourished a particular attitude in the sixties towards what was considered mistaken ideas of the thirties and created a lapse in the history of literary criticism. With a counter-cultural sensibility of the 1960s that tolerated radical visions in the

cultural domain, for example, Peck finds faults in the “formalist assumption that literature is in some way free of concerns of society” (381). Peck’s argument indicates both an effort to break free from biased views toward the Red decade and a gradual shift into what Wald names the “radical paradigm” of the eighties.

Anyone familiar with the literary theories, especially Marxist literary theories which were considerably refined through the seventies and eighties, should agree that history is not something fixed and permanent, but something which reciprocally situates us and is projected by us. How we talk about past events depends on the very position of our perspectives, which both construct and are constructed by past events to create expectation for the future. This curious complexity is most felt in examples from the 1930s. Alan Wald emphasizes,

> the liberal paradigm of the 1930s was based on selections of authors and issues that were intimately bound up in the ‘moment’ at which such scholarship appeared. It is thus obligatory that *we* not forget that our own selections of authors and issues are linked to the contradictory and complex location of intellectual and cultural workers in current national and international history. (26)

Even this theoretical admonition can be applied to those who were participants of the very events that are re-narrated as the past. Thus, even though participants actually claim that they felt enthusiastic about the new faith and disillusioned with its loss, we need to determine the context or framework of such claims in order to acknowledge the change in the emotional contents. In other words, it is not enough to admit that people are retrospectively recognized as blindly passionate about their politics. We need to go a step further than the cycle of faith and disillusionment. Otherwise, there would be no other choice than to observe political failures and maintaining a cynical distance toward them—the choice many critics hitherto took.

A careful analysis of Kenneth Burke can make a crack in the cycle of faith and disillusionment, which has muddled ex-comrades of the Popular Front. Since the revisions of his books and his influence on New Criticism made it difficult for academic critics to see his political stance during the thirties, Burke was considered a fellow traveler who attended The First American Writers' Congress in 1935 without much commitment to the Communist cause. In 1965, Cowley, Burke, Aaron, Granville Hicks, and William Phillips held a discussion about the literary movement of the thirties in general and the Congress of 1935 in particular.[8] This discussion has been considered a historical fact proving the behind-the-scenes details of reactions to Burke's speech, which initiates a strategic affiliation with "people" rather than "workers."[9] In the thirties, Burke's speech was problematic for some writers who thought it identical to the fascist rhetorical emphasis on "people" or *Volk*. In the 1965 discussion, Burke's tenacious and repetitive inquiries about the enemy or, in his words, "goat," demands other discussants to confront the insistence that they really had believed in Communism and indeed had lost faith. Cowley's explanation of his past experience is typical in its ambivalence: "Our emotions at that time were not cheap; they were deeply felt….So there was a great deal of almost religious feeling going on at the same time among people you would never suspect of having it" (500). For Cowley, it is evident that they used to be devotees of what turned out to be a sham. In the face of the outright apology for the past ignorance, Burke asks if the Popular Front and its aftermath had relied on "the opponent as a unifying force" (497). By this question, Burke reveals his implicit doubt that they really believed in the ideology of the Communist party line. Burke also indicates that there is similar structural antagonism in both social movements of the thirties and the sixties:

> Whether we have ideology or not, is it not a terrifying fact that you can never get

> people together except when they have a goat in common?....That's how they have to operate; they get congregation by segregation….they get together by having an enemy in common. This is to me a tremendously important thing because there is talk of having moved on, in relation to certain questions of ideology. But as for having moved on from the standpoint of the way to confront the word, are we just going to do these same things all over again, in some other form? (499)

Contrary to the New Left's presumption "that the Old Left might be characterized basically as a movement that got burned by the Communist party" (502), Burke observes continuity from the thirties and the sixties in the sense that political identity relied less on centripetal attraction of ideology as on the concept of "enemy." In other words, Burke urges the other discussants to go beyond a simple transition from falsity to truth, or from faith to disillusionment, and to confront the elements of enemy necessary for "a change of identity" (512). In short, Burke brings up the complexity of having and renouncing faith. His gesture to appreciate enemies by saying "I thank God for my enemies" (514, 516) implies that the narrative of disillusionment preserves the same political basis, which prolongs the supposition of "goats."

Discussions of the American Writers' Congress underline a legacy of the theoretical insights of the thirties rather than the historical facts of participants' hypocritical attitudes. Burke's questioning provokes us to ponder why the narrative of faith and disillusionment seemed like reasonable and acceptable means for the writers of the thirties to convey their experiences, or more generally how our structuring and renouncing of faith are related to our political identities and discourses. At the very least, the discussion propels Daniel Aaron to rethink his *Writers on the Left* and to acknowledge his difficulty in determining the true feelings of the writers. Looking back at his research methods and referring to a letter, which

Burke sent him and which was mentioned in the discussion, he reached the conclusion about the historian that "[d]epending upon people with fallible memories, trusting to the 'reconsidered passion' of his informants, his attempts to reconstruct the recent past can be at best only experiments in model building" (*Writers* 414). In his hesitation, we can glimpse a lessening confidence in historiographical objectivity. Yet we also should not ignore Burke's insights into cultural politics. The political is usually not a fundamental or autonomous motivation of human action, but something necessarily mingled with nonpolitical motives. In his letter to Aaron, he writes, "the merging [of political and nonpolitical strands] is so thorough, one would be hard put whether to say that it is or is not 'deeply or religiously felt'" (Aaron, *Writers* 412). This is not to say that everything is political. But the political cannot exist without its connection to personal motives for maintaining ordinary lives or creating literary works. It is crucial here that Burke suggests making obsolete an opposition of Art or Propaganda and growing out of the cycle of faith and disillusionment in political discourse. It is not about the beginning and the ending of a certain faith, but about asking how a shift in faith occurs, often with violent cries, and what makes faith manifest as (irrational and blind) faith. These kinds of questions are not only a new way to look at the 1930s, but the very set of inquiries in which many discursive practices intentionally or unintentionally neglect to engage themselves.

3. Art for Art's Sake: Old Criticism of New Criticism

In order to appreciate reconceptualization of faith without the art-or-propaganda dichotomy, we need to reexamine the theoretical consequences of the literary discussions which have developed in opposition to criticism of arts of the 1930s. It is necessary for us to avoid the temptation to repeat dichotomous divisions in criticism, such as "intrinsic" and

"extrinsic" or "Formalist" and "Sociologist." In a curious way, the legacy of literary criticism of the thirties was reconstructed and merged with the mainstream of contemporary literary discourses. Even though Rideout and Aaron's "liberal paradigm" initiates a wider reevaluation of art-works from the thirties, "most of dissertations written then and through the 1970s…were never published" (Wald 20). By contrast, the seventies witnessed an influx of "French theories" and "Western Marxism" into American literary discourses. Despite terminological and conceptual borrowings from other disciplines, including cultural criticism of the Frankfurt school, literary studies made an enormous effort to criticize and revise literary disciplines derived from New Criticism. Such borrowings have precedents in the interdisciplinary studies of the thirties. Yet, these tendencies of the 1930s, as a germinal stage of critical theory, have been thought unworthy of attention. Jonathan Culler, in his summary of historical development of literary theory in the US, makes a quick note of the fact that the "attempts [of borrowings from other disciplines in the 1930s] had often seemed reductionist, ignoring complexities of literary language and making the text, in effect, a symptom, whose true meaning lay elsewhere" (*Framing* 15). Culler implies here that interdisciplinary literary criticism attempted to identify "true" meaning of texts with social or psychological discourses, which would motivate the reader to change his/her value system and act on this change. From a different perspective, Michael Denning argues that American Studies has developed in opposition of Marxist cultural criticism:

> American Studies has become a 'substitute marxism' in the pleonastic sense, from the popular front claim that Communism was simply twentieth-century Americanism, to the New Left sense that there was an indigenous radical tradition that preempted marxism, and now to the covert, pragmatic appropriation and Americanization of marxist concepts without the baggage of the marxist tradition. (360)

Therefore, the legacy of the literary discussion of the thirties had been either abandoned or incorporated into American Studies and New Criticism, whose theoretical groundings were objects of revision during the 1970s.[10]

In the late seventies, cultural criticism of the thirties began an adjustment to literary studies within the process of revising, if not downgrading, formal-aesthetic perspectives of New Criticism (and historicist-critical approaches of American Studies). We might overlook the complexity of this revision if we denounce anything from the "new critical" perspective as old prejudices of a white-male-oriented view whose "intrinsic" criticism conceals a certain political interest and aspires for ahistorical and scientific objectivity toward the universal value of arts. It is not enough for literary theories to celebrate the historical and social dimensions of art-work and to criticize the aesthetic function for sugarcoating "false consciousness." This critical attitude of unmasking "false consciousness" still preserves the old art-or-propaganda argument. René Wellek, for example, tried to dispel misapprehension about New Criticism by translating it into French structuralism. Against criticism which accuses New Criticism of its disguise of disinterestedness and ahistoricity, Wellek claims,

> [t]he New Critics are overwhelmingly concerned with the meaning of a work of art, with the attitude, the tone, the feelings, and even with the ultimate implied world view conveyed. They are formalists only in the sense that they insist on the organization of a work of art which prevents its becoming a simple communication. (618)

What Wellek probably distinguishes from New Criticism here is the positivist conception of language, where individuals have little trouble exchanging thoughts through "simple communication." The New Critics' efforts were not an imitation of scientific positivism to observe literature as an object for rational and coherent analysis. Rather, they were desperate

attempts to avoid the positivist conception and to redeem literary significance from communicative imperfection. Despite Wellek's argument, Gerald Graff, who acknowledged the intention of New Criticism to fend off scientific rationalism, suggests that its presupposition of a difference between science and poetry ends up establishing an undesired façade of "art for art's sake." The New Critics were, according to Graff, "reluctant" formalists "driven to formalism against their own temperaments by their reaction against the mechanical "mimetic" rationality of industrialism and positivistic science" (*Literature* 146). The New Critics themselves as well as the critics of New Criticism, therefore, depended on the assumption that rationality is too rigid or reductive to capture the elusive dynamism of literary experiences. They "all combined to oppose rational objectivity to experience and doom themselves to the polarizations they aim to heal" (149). Similar to the cycle of faith and disillusionment mentioned above, the paradox in New Criticism seems to be a cycle of rationality and its inevitable excesses sensed in experiences. Both cyclical movements indicate a kind of restraint that draws critics back from approximating the truth by overcoming their opponents' counter-arguments.

One of the most profound endeavors to solve the theoretical problems inherited from the thirties is rehabilitating a conception of "form." In the same year that Wellek and Graff reexamined the gist of New Criticism, Frederic Jameson, who explored "Western Marxism" and "French structuralism" in his *Marxism and Form* (1971) and *The Prison-House of Language* (1972), recovered the richness of Kenneth Burke's theoretical acumen from amnesia. In his 1978 essay "The Symbolic Inference; Or, Kenneth Burke and Ideological Analysis," Jameson admires Burke as "the precursor of literary theory in this new, linguistics-oriented sense" and his "Freudo-Marxism" as "the sign of a different structural relationship to abstractions of technical philosophy than that of many of his contemporaries"

(507). For Jameson, who has grappled with the noble dream of fusing psychoanalysis and Marxism, Burke's emphasis on "symbolic action" performed "the function of restoring to the literary text its value as activity and its meaning as a gesture and a response to a determinate situation" (509). In other words, the literary works are social activities in the sense that meanings as products of "gesturing toward" and "reacting to" a social background require language, an audience, and a historical context. Jameson's intention in his essay "The Symbolic Inference" is to both praise and criticize Burke's discussion of the symbolic function to extend the range of ideological analysis to make it more open to social as well as historical dimensions. Thus, Jameson complains that Burke stops at the level of literary texts reconciling social contradictions "before [ideological analysis] can begin to draw in the social, historical, and philosophical parameters which are the ultimate horizon of every cultural artifact" (517). With the exception of this matter of extension, Jameson accepts sociality of literary forms emphasized by Burke's "symbolic action."

Despite a gap between Jameson's treatment of Burke and Burke's response to it, it is profitable here to engage our attention with their similarity. It would be an exaggeration to say that much of Burke's concerns flow into meaning shifts, or, more precisely, into internal contradictions of logical thoughts. In other words, he might have been curious about the plausibility of the faith-and-disillusionment narrative with which the veterans of social movements in the thirties identified themselves. Burke does not begin with an opposition between deceit and veracity in his consideration of faith. Generally speaking, we tend to think that people believe only if the object of belief is true, and people may be disillusioned because what they believe to be true is revealed to be mere deception. This logic can be found in the definition of ideology as "false consciousness" and in the discourse of "art or propaganda," which presuppose that an authorial intention or derivative effect to elicit "actual"

actions makes the art-work propaganda. Things are much more complex for Burke. He hesitates to use the word “ideology” because accusations of “ideology” or “false consciousness” usually rebound on the accusers.[11] Of course, Jameson does not intend to use the word “ideology” in terms of “false consciousness.” Yet, Burke’s point is the logic of exposing falsity or, in the terminology of the thirties, “debunking,” as self-defeating so that any idea can become the product of “ideology.” Therefore, Burke tries to determine not the cause of “illusion” or “mystification” but the structural point or linguistic function that enables individuals to affirm others’ illusions or mystifications. Referring to the case of the writers of the thirties, this is the structural point through which the writers retrospectively perceive themselves as illuded or mystified. Any value is not a simple, objective reflection of reality: the value of values lies in their ability to function as objective reflection of reality.

As Jameson restates the polemical entangle in his response to Burke’s article, there is a moment of “dialectical reversal in which we now read its ‘values’ and attitudes as sheer *function* or in other words as the conceptual expression of what is in reality the dynamic praxis of a given social group or class” (“Ideology” 419). Any value turns out to be the object of (false) belief when the valuable object is revealed to have a meaning other than what one thought it had. This sort of object nevertheless includes theoretical terms such as “ideology” and “symbolic action” or any cultural or literary theory. When Burke points out that Marx defines the term “ideology” “[a]n inverted genealogy of culture, that makes for ‘illusion’ and ‘mystification’ by treating ideas as *primary* where they should have been treated as *derivative*” (“Methodology” 404),[12] it is clear that this definition inevitably assimilates contradictory definitions since the definition paradoxically both reflects and structures objective reality. The value of “ideology” as a theoretical concept resides in its naming of the fact that an idea is secondary to a material condition. The definition also has what we would now call a

performative dimension in which any assertive statement of “value” has a function to provoke and maintain that value regardless of objective existence. I do not think that their insights are as remote from one another as their terminological differences and polemic tones suggest. It is fair to say with the terminology of Jameson that both “symbolic action” and “ideology” represent a “mediatory concept: that is, it is an imperative to re-invent a relationship between the linguistic or aesthetic or conceptual fact in question and its social ground” (510). In short, literary “form” is not limited to internal aspects of each individual work of art, but extended to larger issues with dialectical reversals and internal contradictions.

Since their discussion left a trace in Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* (1981), the critical writings of the thirties started to be incorporated into the theory-laden discourses and building their steps toward cultural criticism along with the importation of British Cultural Studies. Frank Lentricchia in his *Criticism and Social Change* (1983), for example, compared Burke with Antonio Gramsci whose hegemony theory has proven useful for a new way to think about social movements. Giles Gunn’s *The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture* (1987) revived arguments of the thirties to make them resonate with Gunn’s contemporary issues. As sociological emphasis on “literature” disputes the validity of canon formation in the preceding years, the literary “canon” came to be recognized as an object of polemics. In the revision of literary canon, the 1980s witnessed the recovery and the republication of forgotten works, and this paved the way for further discussion on cultural and literary values of the Depression era. Scholars such as Alan Wald, Cary Nelson, Barbara Foley, Paula Rabinowitz, James Bloom, and Michael Denning have shown awareness of theoretical debates on the significance of literature within culture. They have performed formal analyses of literary works through the lens of a historical context in which the Stalinist

party line was not assumed to be propagated and dominant. Foley argues that “most [Communist party] critics, while not guided by anything resembling a party ‘line’ on aesthetic matters, were in fact uneasy with the view of literature as weaponry and repudiated the notion that proletarian literature should be written as ‘propaganda’” (*Radical* 37). Foley claims that an anti-Stalinist aesthetic, which separates politics from aesthetics and obscures the connection between the fictional and the actual, developed under the Cold War atmosphere and was passed down to what she calls “postmodern textual radicalism” (32). Foley evaluates critical discourse and technical invention of the thirties with an approach similar to Jameson’s critique of “ideology of form.”

As the revival of the thirties has functioned not only to recover the forgotten past and renew the canonical texts but also to conflict with postmodern theories, underrating the thirties indirectly results in the preservation of the art and politics dichotomy that strangles both politics and art. It is problematic to consider aesthetics as a discourse which prolongs false consciousness in order to smooth over an otherwise incongruous society. The common line of argument of postmodernism is bulked up against “disinterestedness” or “objectivity” which endows knowledge with authority to control. The postmodern thoughts are radical in the narrow sense that any claim for truth is embedded in practical interests. Terry Eagleton points to the foremost priority of interest in postmodern thinking by saying that “a transcendentalism of truth is merely ousted by a *transcendentalism of interests*. Interests and desires are just ‘givens’, the baseline which our theorizing can never glimpse behind” (*Ideology* 172). This emphasis on interests indicates two important points about aesthetics. On the one hand, postmodern radicalism sees a political dimension of arts in the absence of “objective” beauty or universal taste. Thus, the arts are political in the sense that they privilege a certain set of aesthetic values and reproduce the power balance in a society. The

aesthetic is nothing but the effects of rhetoric, if not deceptive reasoning. On the other hand, postmodern thoughts smuggle intuitive sensation back to its theoretical foundation where all knowledge is considered a product of beliefs ranked at the same level. Interests are a "natural" or "objective" foundation that discerns preference or prejudice in every value. Although postmodernism does not discursively deepen the conception of interest in terms of aesthetics, there is a remnant of aesthetics bequeathed by the thirties.

The aesthetic discourse which has left a mark on postmodern thinking is centered around emotivism in the thirties. Emotivism denotes the impossibility of an absolute good that grounds moral judgments. In his discussion on ethics, Alasdair MacIntyre defines emotivism as "the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character" (12). Meanings produced by moral judgments are subordinated to the uses of those meanings, and the uses reflect the (un-)conscious preference of users. This concept induces the reduction of morality to personal preference or what is intuited. The separation of meaning and use foregrounds practical aspects of language while the cause of practical interests is derived from pleasure or a "sense" of goodness which is untranslatable to meanings. I. A. Richards himself contributed to the US literary debates on emotivism in the 1930s. His famous distinction between emotive and scientific uses of language has been inscribed in aesthetic discourses ranging from Communist party critics to Southern agrarians.[13] According to Richards, the scientific use of language involves "the reference, true or false, which [a statement] causes" while the emotive use of language aims at "the effects in emotion and attitude produced by the reference it occasions" (*Principles* 250). These two uses are often interpreted as oppositional and classified based on whether statements refer to the outside world. That is why critics have thought that Richards

maintained the “scientific” division between art and science and withdrew into formalistic analysis of art-work in a desperate effort to preserve the artistic domain.

However, Richards’ argument does not stop at two distinctive uses of language; rather, he admits pitfall in his argument where postmodernists would be comfortable. In his concluding chapter, Richards subverts the causality of scientific and emotive languages by giving temporal antecedence to emotive use: “there can be no doubt that originally all language was emotive; its scientific use is later development, and most language is still emotive” (256). This temporal causality, if pushed a little further, tips over to postmodern thinking which discerns emotive usage in every statement: all statements are meant to persuade others to accept the speaker’s interest. Yet, unlike postmodernism, Richards hangs on the difference between knowledge and belief and argues for the elusive character of belief, which conducts attitudes without referring to certain objects. He claims that “the intermingling of knowledge and belief is indeed a perversion, through which both activities suffer degradation” (265). In order to fend off the degradation which we are now confronting in the postmodern age, Richards avoids categorizing all thoughts as the same kind of “belief.” He asserts a difference in kind between scientific beliefs and emotive beliefs. While scientific beliefs are based on references to objects, an emotive belief is not a belief in some objects but a parasitic to reference to objects. Emotive beliefs are provisional; they are “entertained only in the special circumstances of the poetic experience. They are held as conditions for further effects, our attitudes and emotional responses, and not as we hold beliefs in laws of nature, which we expect to find verified on all occasions” (260-61). Emotive belief or whatever belief we have while appreciating a work of art, is an “objectless belief which is masquerading as a belief in this or that, which is ridiculous” (262).

It is probably a mistake to start from the presupposition that aesthetics refers to

nothing but the doctrine, “art for art’s sake,” whose concerns are formalistic, elitist, and ahistorical in the sense that it asserts a universal mode of human sensitivity. This presupposition has a twin doctrine: “art is a class weapon.” It is tempting to criticize that these presuppositions themselves have been decontextualized to the point that they have become a sham. They may appear dogmatic and reductive in the eyes of their opponents. However, we should not ignore that the old criticism of the art-or-propaganda dichotomy can carelessly devolve into a cycle of dichotomy if the critic is too complacent to look for their opponent’s beliefs, and, rather is faithful to the concept of either art or society. Surely, scientific discipline, which implicitly possesses its own theory of language, has been influential enough to expel aesthetics from the realm of the factual and the descriptive. Any effort to restore the validity of aesthetics through “empirical” description paradoxically falls into further criticism of “objectivity.” Instead we need to examine concentrated aesthetic attentions to “faith” in the thirties as Richards’ emphasis on “emotive belief” indicates.

4. The Aesthetic and Aesthetics

As suggested by Richards’ distinction between emotive and scientific uses of language, a shift in the concept of aesthetics has gradually prevailed in our modern sensibility. Critical opinions of the doctrine of “art for art’s sake” often imply that the doctrine has situated the purpose of “fine” arts in the trinity of Truth, Beauty, and Good. Although some art critics may use this Trinitarian class analogy to restore arts to their proper place in civilization, few critics can deny outright that what has sustained beauty was founded on very shaky ground. The thirties is an important period when aesthetics were distanced from substances of “beauty” to reconstruct a blueprint of perception for art and literary works. In terms borrowed from Thierry de Duve, it is a shifting period of aesthetic judgment from “this

is beautiful" to "this is art." Criticizing "the theory of art these last twenty years, especially Anglo-Saxon theory, that claims we are done with aesthetics...and has replaced it with a conceptual, pragmatic or institutional analysis" (15), de Duve argues that the word "art" in the modern sense does not involve criteria for determining aesthetic judgment. When I say, "this is art," it does not matter what criteria this judgment implies: I simply declare my opinion. The base of aesthetic judgment is either too individual to be shared with others or too naturalized through capitalist consumerism to keep its arbitrary nature in mind. This modern aesthetic judgment without criteria may avoid the classic aesthetics of the trinity and kick Beauty out from the throne of Truth. Yet, before renouncing criteria altogether, we should pay attention to the shifting period when the aesthetic split itself up into various discourses from art to science.

The thirties witnessed the revision of aesthetics through a focus on "social" dimensions in restructuring perception through language, images, and sound. In his discussion of New Deal aesthetics, Michal Szalay considers the importance of the audience in the formation of literary works even though he is more interested in awareness of the risk that audiences misunderstand authorial intentions. Walter Benjamin famously regards this shift from "beauty" to "social" dimensions as a loss of aura that has sustained in art-work a sense of distance from observers. With the loss of aura, every perceptual experience seems to be lined up in the "sense of the universal equality of things" (223). Even though aura may be illusory in the sense that it attaches secondary qualities to art-work, the loss of aura enforces the different perceptual attitudes of audiences. Obviously, technological development in mass reproduction and media has something to do with the changes in perception. But, it was not easy for art critics or scientists in the humanities to identify the cause of this change or to theorize the aesthetic. Thierry de Duve touches on these changes when he declares,

“[m]odernity, in art, begins when one no longer knows who is making the pact with whom” (24). The loss of the pact seems to coincide with the loss of aura since representational conventions did not meet the demands of modernity and preserve the autonomous field of art from the “degrading” influences of social practices.

Because concerns over aesthetic judgment have receded into the background of literary debates, it is necessary to consider anti-aesthetic criticism in our discussion before we can begin appropriate scrutiny. First of all, the discussion of aesthetics in this dissertation does not engage itself in the analysis of beauty alone. The term “aesthetics” designates any discourse related to perception in my argument. Beauty is no longer a single criterion to determine the value of art. Aesthetics, in the plural, are not limited to fine arts, visions, or intuitive pleasure for their theoretical growth: popular arts, linguistic texture, or disgusting displeasure, for example, are recognized as new elements in the aesthetic domain. I refer to this aesthetic domain as “the aesthetic” which aesthetics or aesthetic discourses endeavor to fix within a concept, scheme, metaphor or narrative. Imperfection of any aesthetic discourse might hint at the general idea of “the aesthetic” in conclusion. Still, it would be more valuable to understand why and how particular aesthetic discourses tackle the slippery and extensive domain of the aesthetic. The significance of aesthetics lies in the approach to the problem of “faith,” which both reproduces and derails conduct. Each aesthetic discourse implicitly gropes for understanding of the fundamental conditions for both spontaneous and mechanical actions whose motives seem to elude cognition.

Secondly, reclaiming aesthetics from denunciation of false consciousness does not necessarily revive the esoteric or enigmatic properties in concepts of art. While not every aesthetic judgment can be regarded as equivalent in value, this dissertation declines to promote a particular taste as a perfect instance of perception. This treatment of aesthetics

inevitably leads a critic to take a stance recommending a particular aesthetic discourse. Having said this, my research is an attempt to propose the possibility that in understanding a variety of aesthetic discourses, we can delineate “the aesthetic” through gaps and connections among those discourses. My usage of “the aesthetic” itself might indicate an idealist conception of aesthetic substance as something petrified in the ancient stratum without change. While it is not logically possible to affirm or deny such an idealist substance of perception completely, it is not my intention to preserve “the aesthetic” in an unreachable place that can only be excavated by academicians or monks. It is too hasty to assume that aesthetics is the elitist’s secular attempt to replace religion. Michèle Barrett, who noted the marginalization of aesthetics in Marxist criticism of the eighties, defends the viability of aesthetic analysis:

> Perhaps the most important theoretical-political danger of ignoring questions of aesthetic pleasure and value is that we give up ground to a mystificatory view of art….Paradoxically, it is through a consideration of skill, technique, and formal properties of art that we can escape mystical and mystificatory assumptions about art and move toward a more democratic understanding. (702)

Though Barrett only mentions aesthetics as virtuosity involving art-work, his point suggests that various approaches to the aesthetic may lead to the unveiling of the process of perception. Also, the emphasis on various approaches is effective in reifying categories of senses to construct an abstract entity called “humanity.” An aesthetic discourse can determine a minimum of constituents and then construct a system of perception. Or, an aesthetic discourse can dialectically connect different senses to express the dynamic flow of perception. Demonstrating several processes for establishing aesthetics contributes to a newer and better understanding of literary problems of the 1930s and our time as well as their solution.

Thirdly, although aesthetic criteria may be said to have been socially, historically, and institutionally constructed, the refusal of the aesthetic still obscures the dimension of politics by returning to the culture-and-politics dichotomy. The broader perspective of cultural studies has made us critical of the privilege that a canon of fictional or poetic works has enjoyed above all other art forms. Within the larger domain of culture, the effects of "literary" works on society as a whole are so meager that the value of literature seems to be nothing but "symbolic capital" reproduced through social hierarchy and academic institutions. Ian Hunter, for example, considers aesthetics a disciplinary mode of the self to adjust to social contradiction while the mode is contingent on historical and cultural circumstances. While careful practitioners of cultural studies did not reject aesthetics outright, the call for politicization of any discourse, including aesthetics, unintentionally and paradoxically lessens the strategic value of such politicization. As Raymond Williams' "structures of feeling" echoes Burke's "symbolic action" and Jameson's "ideology of form" discussed above, some strain of cultural criticism breaks up and revises the tradition of aesthetic theories without simply applying a formalist analysis to popular cultural works and cultural "texts". According to Williams, aesthetics historically cries "a protest against forcing of all experience into instrumentality ('utility'), and of all things into commodities," even though we tend to emphasize that aesthetics possess "the form of this protest…which led almost inevitably to new kinds of privileged instrumentality and specialized commodity" (151). Aesthetics share with cultural studies their critical attitude toward the norm of utility, but in countering reduction, they end up reinforcing the measure of utility by monopolizing the instrumentality of uselessness. One way out might be to stress the democratizing instrumentality of cultural products in a social arena and to create many contesting standards of utility. Another way out, and this may be more important, is to contemplate this unwilling consequence of uselessness

turning into an instrument without reliance on institutional or sociological explanation if we wish our cultural criticism to be much more than the easing of our boredom and to actually have meaning. We must examine a variety of aesthetics to approach the process we have gone through to determine the usefulness of certain goods and actions. As mentioned above, the logical presupposition of interests extends the range of interests in "use" to its farthest limits.

Examining and understanding aesthetics in this way, therefore, not only prevents us from perpetuating the cycle of aesthetics and politics or of domination and resistance, but also allows us to elucidate the nature of internal contradictions which propel that perpetuation. Scholarly works of the nineties, such as Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990), George Levine's edited collection *Aesthetics and Ideology* (1994), and Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just* (1999), attempted to dissolve the cycle by reappraising aesthetics and resetting the disciplinary ground of literary studies amid globally intensified competition among disciplines and universities. Two major currents of studies employ this thesis. One is the analysis of literary and academic treatment of the aesthetic in the 1930s. The other is the enrichment of our contemporary aesthetic discourses by accentuating theoretical views toward social aspects of the aesthetic. As Eagleton examines the characteristics of each aesthetic discourse by embedding theorists of the aesthetic in a historical moment,[14] I would like to probe the aesthetics of the thirties by focusing on theoreticians' or writers' grasps of the relationship between faith and conduct. Aesthetic concerns over political and social aspects of art were not limited to literary works and criticisms which willingly or unwillingly admitted taking responsibility for providing a rationale for making art during the Great Depression. Interdisciplinary movements, which transgressed and merged into existent disciplines, were due to not only financial crisis or imminent international war, but also to the emergence of problems that existent disciplines failed to address. These problems partly

accrue from the supposed intersection of faith and conduct, and while conventional aesthetics left them unanswered, other disciplines developed their own lexicons to develop theories without referring directly to aesthetics. Communication studies, the history of science, and above all literary criticism are interdisciplinary approaches founded on the issues of the aesthetic.

By revealing aesthetic apprehensions, especially those which give rise to the formulation of theories of perception leading to action through artistic or political maneuvers, this dissertation argues that the legacy of the thirties is to signal the constituents of faith—or (non-)thought which elicits the efficacy of social conduct—and contribute to our understanding of the aesthetic in a wide range of disciplines. The issue of the aesthetic cannot be dissociated from ethical dimensions unless perception is premised to relate closely to action. Or, more precisely, critics, theorists, and writers in the thirties were so mindful of this interconnection that they represented a certain mode to apprehend the process of belief. Whereas it is inaccurate to emphasize the sense that many individuals believed in false promises during the thirties, it is also wrong that close reading or organicist assumptions in New Criticism are two sins committed by "aestheticians" of the thirties. The thirties witnessed not the spreading of false faith in dogmatism, but an aesthetic-theoretical consideration of faith in order to apprehend the makings of social practices. When there are various ways to interpret text or the world, how can we, with our limited individual perspective, possibly take collective action to achieve something that transcends individual?

In Chapter 1, "Cultural History of Informational Genres in John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.*," I argue that Dos Passos' trilogy emphasized the mediating function of a new class, which social functions developed along with the emergence of new communication technology. As Dos Passos was aware of the importance of audience in literary works, his incorporation of

informational genres in his writing indicates Dos Passos' effort to establish literary disciplines in the era of mass communication, rather than to prescribe what to believe and what sort of action to take. New communication technologies promoted informational genres which not only organized large and extensive human relationships such as companies, states, and militaries, but also influenced our concept and use of language. His "behavioristic" form of writing challenges the reader to confront cultural environments affected by informational genres, and then trains their literary sensibility to grasp the insides of human characters. The literary form of the trilogy encourages the reader to pay attention to their position in signification and to acknowledge what characters fail to observe in their relationships.

Chapter 2, "Middle Ground in Civilization: The Challenges of Humanizing Science after Objectivity," argues for the need of the reexamination of 1930s literary issues together with theoretical frameworks after objectivity. In so doing, we can have a better understanding of the significance of interdisciplinary forces, which emerged as an attempt to bridge a gap between subject and object—the gap that has been bridged by traditional aesthetics, which no longer hide its rent in the face of modernity. New Humanism, which was a generic name of intellectual attempts to restore order, balance, and logic to temporal and social phenomena, posited a middle ground and theorized laws of civilization. Even though New Humanism of Irving Babbitt and George Sarton was unconvincing to many intellectuals of the 1930s, their New Humanistic awareness of modernization and supposition of middle ground was the source of creating an interdisciplinary project to clarify the making of "scientific" civilization. Arthur Lovejoy's discussion of epistemology allows us to understand his thoughts behind taking a socio-historical approach to science. Opposing any epistemology which supposes the ultimate structure of reality in human mind or material reality, Lovejoy's dualist epistemology does not exclude imagination or dream from knowledge production. Robert

Merton, influenced by Sarton, Burke and the continental sociologists, including Max Weber and Karl Mannheim, considered the cultural effects of knowledge on society and illustrated the unanticipated consequences of making knowledge in order to show the complex shift in knowledge. While Lovejoy's idea and Merton's institution were theorized to explicate the middle ground, their new disciplines, such as the history of idea and communication studies, endeavor to strengthen the possibility of knowing humanity as temporal and thus fallible existence.

While Dos Passos incorporated informational genres in his trilogy to represent the United States of America and to inaugurate a literary discipline, Ernest Hemingway in his works employed several media, including oral speech, film, play, and dispatch, to represent the Spanish Civil War. In Chapter 3, "Voices of Disinformation; Newness of Spanish Civil War in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*," the comparison of Hemingway's uses of different media clarify the importance of each representational strategy, including an interior soliloquy of Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, one of the most important and problematic literary representations. Regarding the Spanish Civil War as an example of modern warfare which obscured the boundary between civilians and soldiers, enemy and foe, and truth and falsity, this chapter explores what Hemingway thought peculiar in the civil war and discusses the difficulty of representing "truth" in the situations of propaganda and espionage. It was a challenge for intellectuals like Merton and Hemingway to establish the ways to withhold erosive influences of lies. His portrayal of the Spanish Civil War does not allow readers to reduce the novel's characters to a simple dichotomy between good Comintern and evil Fascism, and the war produces the chain of violent actions even though the participants of the war do not believe in any political cause. The separation of belief and action is embodied as the uncanny voice which derides a gap between belief and action.

Appropriating other genres, including autobiography, fable, and self-help book, to his comedy, James Thurber also draws the reader's attention to temporality and fallibility which indicate the physical limits of human existence. In Chapter 4, "The Physics of Laughter: Comic Methods in James Thurber," demonstrates how Thurber's comedy translates deplorable experiences into shareable human characteristics by eliciting laughter. While Hemingway struggled with an irreducible gap between faith and action under a war situation, Thurber exploited the same sort of gap for comedy. In his works, any action fails to meet the expectation. Just like Lovejoy postulating dualism in human understanding, Thurber acknowledges two different forces which alternately appear to disturb identification, causal reasoning, and moral imperative. In his works, however paradoxical, Thurber shows an individual's failure of grasping the consequences of one's own action implicitly unleashes a motivation to have trust in others.

Chapter 5, "Aesthetics of Medium in Literary Criticism: Close Reading as a Collaborative Strategy," examines the interdisciplinary traces of literary studies in the formations of literary and social criticism. The discussion of Kenneth Burke and Allen Tate reveals their shared interest in various ways to read and interpret literary as well as social "texts." While they were concerned about the cultural influence of science on language usages, they attempted to elucidate the creativity of (poetic) language and to transform aesthetics into something which can recreate a communal sense. Their critical theories function to locate social and historical elements in the occurrence of mistakes rather than to eradicate the causes of mistakes. Their criticisms may not restore a correspondence of belief with action; however, they connect many different ways of interpretation and explain why one interpretation seems inadequate in another interpretation.

As the historiography of the 1930s in this dissertation includes the premise that it can

present a radical shift in literary and intellectual history in the United States, it is necessary to emphasize the elements of continuity that drive this research as well as its objects. A part of the aim of this dissertation is to connect what has escaped from attention to what we think today. But we have to be very careful with the privilege of our retrospective views. The failure is not due to the fallacy of people in the past. And, another part of the aim is to recover the ways to grasp a gap between belief and action. The writers and thinkers in this dissertation strived to invent the ways to understand that gap caused by temporality. As Yoichiro Miyamoto discussed how the periodization of the 1930s involves a danger of constructing another narrative of "modernist" break,[15] I propose in this dissertation that the aesthetics are rehabilitated to meet temporality. I may rephrase this proposal as "Aestheticize history." This dissertation will show the aesthetic is not limited to the categories of pleasure and beauty, but only with the impact of time, the aesthetic is on the line for revision.

Notes for Introduction

1 Susman demonstrated the cultural significance of the middle class during the Depression era when it was customary to emphasize the proletarian literary movements in the 1930s.

2 For a detailed discussion of "Art and Propaganda," see Foley's *Radical Representation*, especially Chapter 4.

3 *Writers in Crisis* was considered to determine literary values in terms of social function. Even though Geismar's literary history is neglected in the canonization of the 1930s, I think he made a good point when he claims that literature becomes critical of being critical during the 1930s (Geismar "Naturalism").

4 Geraldine Murphy, "Romancing the Center: Cold War Politics and Classic American Literature," *Poetics Today* 9.4 (1988): 737-47. Lawrence H. Schwartz, *Creating Faulkner's Reputation: The Politics of Modern Literary Criticism*. (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1988 (1990).

5 Alan Wald, "The 1930s Left in U.S. Literature Reconsidered" in *Radical Revisions*.
6 See Green, "Back to Bigger," for Gold's self-censorship.

7 See Schiappa and Keehner for Burke's self-censorship of *Permanence and Change*, and Peck for Wilson' works. The original epilogue of Cowley's *Exile's Return* is included in the

latest version.

[8] This discussion moderated by Daniel Aaron was published "In Thirty Years Later: Memories of the First American Writers' Congress."

[9] Aaron and Frank Lentricchia refer to "factual" accounts of this episode. A few months after Burke's speech, the Comintern headquartered in Russia officially announced its Popular Front strategy which aimed at collaboration between workers and intellectuals and inclusion of "people" in social movements.

[10] For example, Gene Wise argues the weakness of New Criticism.

[11] Certainly, ideology does not have to be equal to false consciousness. As Terry Eagleton discusses in *Ideology*, there were many definitions of ideology, and the argument of "false consciousness" is the least productive concept in the sense that it connects "true" consciousness. Even though Burkes acknowledges this, he avoided using the word "ideology" probably because the word itself has a negative connotation which might distract the attentions of some readers. Eagleton's historical treatment of that concept is another strategy to refine the critical value of the concept.

[12] Here, Burke restated the last of his seven definitions of "ideology" in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (104).

[13] See Foley's *Radical Representation* and Karanikas' *Tiller of Myth*.

[14] For Eagleton's historical treatment of aesthetic discourses, see *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*.

[15] See Miyamoto, *The Twilight of the Modern*.

Chapter 1

Cultural History of Informational Genres in John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.*

Art is an adjective not a noun
---John Dos Passos, "Whither the American Writer"[1]

1. Technology as American Art

The United States of America has had meager resources to create fine arts to represent its particularity according to the European standard, which distinguishes fine arts from mechanical arts. Defined as "science applied to practical art" by Jacob Bigelow in 1826, technology, a fusion of scientific discoveries and mechanical arts, has been a decisive characteristic of American civilization along with democracy. Therefore, the representative art form of the USA is technology. Throughout the 19th century, technology played a significant role in expansion and construction of the American nation.[2] Technological inventions are recognized as landmarks of American civilization, especially since the USA became the major world power. In the 1948 book originally titled *Made in America*, John A. Kouwenhoven, for example, makes a counterargument against art critics who imposed "old" European standards on the "new" world whose art forms were uniquely produced "under democratic institutions in an expanding machine economy" (13). He explains that "[s]o irreconcilable have art and technology seemed that many who believe in the creative discipline of form still cut themselves off deliberately from important areas of contemporary experience" (11).[3] Leo Marx, who examines a cultural concept of machine in the mid-nineteenth-century America, points out that "American have seized upon the machine as their birthright….What is more, the agent [machine] has appeared at a providential moment" (205). Technology took a significant role in the material as well as symbolic characterization of American nationalism. David E. Nye also asserts that the importance of technology in American culture was related to the experience of the natural sublime in American landscape, and the sublime, both natural and technological, "represents a way to reinvest the

landscape and the works of men with transcendent significance" (xiii).

The prominence of technology in American civilization is undeniable in John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* (1938) trilogy—*The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936). Yet, its treatment of technology is obscure and controversial. For those who place his novels within the naturalist tradition colored by mechanical metaphors, his characters are typical of a group and, in the words of T. K. Whipple, "devoid of will or purpose" (150).[4] His narratives, according to Matthew Josephson, avoid "all rhetorical elegance, [and adhere] only to bare, factual chronicle [sic] of outward movements" (108). Designating one of Dos Passos' novels a "News Novel" in 1932, John Chamberlain points to the relationship between the characters and mass communication such as news: "Because of their living in and by the headlines, Mr. Dos Passos's characters are, sometimes, very flat and transparent" (104). Chamberlain understood the flatness of characters as a product of mass communication. In contrast to these comments, which denounce his characters as a sign of Dos Passos' weakness, other critics accepted the flatness or willlessness of his characters as a representational strategy to achieve a sense of irony, and interpreted it as a condemnation of the machine age. Donald Pizer appraises his narrative techniques as "free indirect discourse" which identifies the personality of each character with narrative style and also conveys a tone of "ironic" detachment from him/her. Pizer claims that Dos Passos "concentrates rather on an effort to render the stereotyped in thought and feeling through stereotypes of language—through the platitudes and clichés, the commonplace evasions and half-truths" (*Critical* 67). What looks flat or "stereotyped" to some critics is Dos Passos' ironic distance toward stereotyping influences of mass communication technology. From a slightly different angle, Cecelia Tichi argues that "in a world from which an omniscient God was thought to have disappeared," Dos Passos has been "trying to widen the scope of each novel with enriching artifacts of culture and history" (196-97). Technology for Dos Passos, according to Tichi, is both what he utilizes to describe the secular world and what he criticizes as an

incarnation of modern problems. Tichi summarizes that "[l]ike many of his generation, Dos Passos had a love-hate relation to the machine" (202). Because any fictional or biographical character in the trilogy embodies the virulent influences of modern technologies rather than an ideal vision of social change, it is not very hard to detect a "vulgar" correspondence between group psychology and mass communication.

However, what unsettles critics, and what incites Tichi to observe "a love-hate relation," is a formal, technical, or, on a deeper level, ideological similarity between communication technology and his novels. As repeatedly pointed out, the trilogy has four different literary modes: "fictional narrative" surrounded by "newsreel," "biography," and "the camera eye." The terms "newsreel" and "the camera eye" have captured critics' attentions in deciphering a connection between visual and verbal representations. "Newsreel" is a miscellany of fragmented words, phrases, and sentences from songs, slogans, news headlines, statistics, and so on while "the camera eye" produce unpunctuated sentences. Donald Pizer, a leading critic of Dos Passos, judges it as "a free-association stream-of-consciousness memory act" (*Critical* 57).[5] Dos Passos' "introductory note" in the republication of his first novel in 1937 reinforced these views: "Newsreel" is a literary point of view used to "give an inkling of the common mind of the epoch," and "the camera eye" is used "to indicate the position of observer" (Pizer, *John* 179). His note may indicate his concern that the reader may become confused over these two techniques or by the interrelation of all four modes. At least these are two extreme points of the subjective-objective spectrum or aesthetic-social spectrum. On the one side, "the camera eye" is too subjective and narrow to obtain a meaning.[6] On the other side, "newsreel" is objective and extensive to the point of losing meaning. The difficulty of articulating the purpose of Dos Passos' transcription of vision to language pushes critics to see beyond his "mechanical" records of events, especially when a representation of masses is, whether formally or historically, inseparable from political dimension.[7] Whereas the trilogy seems to criticize

communication technology, thee hypnotizing impacts of which endanger democratic society, the unique literary strategies of the author make such technologies the central to the representation of American nation.

In the same “introductory note” where the author explains the functions of each narrative mode, Dos Passos brusquely delineates his intention to find a pattern in difference and to dislocate that pattern:

> If several people describe the same scene, say a man and a woman sitting at a table in a room and talking, the results are sure to be very different. Through a bunch of such descriptions a number of identical stereotypes will appear which will reveal the commonplace attitudes and the common grounds of the human group the narrators belong to. But there will also be found here and there in the accounts an occasional phrase or mental slant that tends to break the stereotype and to give some added insight or breadth to the event and to relate it in some new or fresh way to the experience of the group. (Pizer 179)

His novel is meant to represent both a personal view and the group pattern as well as to break and recreate stereotypes. Dos Passos shares with Walter Lippmann an ontological view that due to physical limitations, stereotypes are necessary preconceptions for every individual to perceive a world exceeding an individual perspective. After the First World War, Lippmann noted, “[w]e are told about the world before we see it….And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception” (64). While many critics point to such patterned thoughts and attribute them to an invisible and obscure force of History and Capital,[8] I would like to draw attention to stereotypes stamped by the development of communication technology, especially to stereotyped notions of language. Dos Passos gains insight into the aesthetic of the novelistic form itself, recognizing that new communication technologies have induced changes in the linguistic functions of transmission, dissemination and materialization. It is not enough for him,

as well as us as his readers to unmask stereotypes if the notion of stereotype does not suppose a stereotype-free mind. Through his peculiar literary forms, Dos Passos attempts to establish literary discipline among his middle-class audience. Examining the writer's concern over correlations between communication technology and artistic form, this chapter discusses how the trilogy explores linguistic and conceptual changes brought by new informational genres. First, the thematic contextual examination of Dos Passos' historiography clarifies his view toward both communication technology and his audience. And second, his writing style and story can be recognized as breaking and recreating stereotypes toward language. Through his treatment of communication technology and informational genres, I will show Dos Passos' literary discipline rather than his attempt to produce class consciousness.

2. A Cultural History of Communication

There are two frequently quoted passages that confirm Dos Passos' emphasis on the significance of language in the *U.S.A.* trilogy. One is an introductory section of the trilogy, "U. S. A.," which ends with "mostly U. S. A. is the speech of the people" (3). The other is a description in "The Camera Eye (50)" after the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, which critics have considered Dos Passos' incentive for writing the trilogy: "America our nation has been beaten by strangers who have turned our language inside out who have taken the clean words our fathers spoke and made them slimy and foul" (1157). What these two passages tell the reader is that language is what represents the USA and what divides the USA. Even though the terms "the camera eye" and "newsreel" may seem to favor the visual, the trilogy examines language in terms of the cultural history of communication technology. The cultural history of communication technology in this chapter suggests the trilogy's concern over how communication technology historically affected cultural dimension, particularly in symbolic domains. In order to clarify his attitudes toward language, this

section situates the trilogy in a historical context by referring to Dos Passos' essays and illuminates the marks of technology in the theme and style of his trilogy.

First, communication in the trilogy is not limited to mass communication: rather, the trilogy is written amid a transitional period when the development of mass or distant communication changed the meaning of the word "communication." Identifying several branches of meaning of communication for the word—including "imparting" "physical/spiritual transfer" and "exchange"—John Durham Peters, a contemporary scholar of communication studies, reminds us that it is comparatively new for the word "communication" to be used as a term for "various modes of symbolic interaction" (*Speaking* 9). Before "symbolic" aspects of communication became prominent, communication had not been separated from physical institutions necessary for transporting messages.[9] Therefore, it is not strange, for example, that the report by The President's Research Committee on Social Trends in 1933 devoted one half of the chapter called "The Agencies of Communication" to transportation rather than point-to-point communication, such as telegraph and telephone, and mass communication media including newspaper, radio, and motion pictures. One of the early critics of the trilogy, Marshall McLuhan, explains that the term communication "has had an extensive use in connection with roads and bridges, sea routes, rivers, and canals, even before it became transformed" (*Understanding Media* 89). This shift in meaning is, of course, inseparable from technological advancement. James Carey argues that the invention of telegraphy enforced a symbolic/physical distinction in the meaning of communication: "Before the telegraph, 'communication' was used to describe transportation as well as message transmittal for the simple reason that the movement of messages was dependent on their being carried on foot or horseback or by rail. The telegraph, by ending the identity, allowed symbols to move independently of and faster than transportation" (203-04). The less materiality a message assumes, the more its symbolic aspects become salient.[10]

As biographies of Dos Passos affirm that he worked on the trilogy from 1927 to 1936 and wrote mostly about a period from the beginning of the twentieth century to Sacco and Vanzetti's 1927 death penalty, the trilogy's treatment of communication on the content level reflects a transition period in the definition of communication which includes telephone, radio as well as traffic-related technologies such as trains, automobiles, and airplanes. In the first novel of the trilogy, for example, the first job of Fainy (Mac) McCreary, a fictional character, is to physically visit the Michigan country-side by train and wagon selling pamphlets and books with Doc Bingham. Similarly, J. (Johnny) Ward Moorehouse,[11] who will become the head of a public relations company, also starts his job like Mac as he "went round Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania as agent for a bookdistributing firm" (156-57). He then gets jobs marketing real estate (158), advertising vacation houses (171), as "a reporter on *The Times Dispatch*" (215) and as a "temporary general manager" promoting hardware products. Even though Moorehouse is often contrasted with Mac in terms of economic class, their characteristics are related to the narrative background of technological developments in communication. As Moorehouse changes jobs, the message he must convey through his work is further and further detached from his physical body. With the real-estate job, his body is a part of the message attracting buyers: "he found out that he had a pair of bright blue eyes and that he could put on an engaging boyish look that people liked" (158).

When Moorehouse became a general manager and his name in the narrative shifted from Johnny to Ward, implying his administrative status as well as punning on "word," he perceives himself as a part of an engine, which is a metaphor for "American industry:" "He forgot everything in his own words…American industry like a steamengine, like a highpower locomotive on a great express train charging through the night of old individualistic methods….What does a steamengine require? Coöperation, coördination of the inventor's brain, the promoter's brain that made the development of these high power products possible" (234; ellipses in orig.). The metaphor of

"steamengine" refers to an abstract term of "American industry" in contrast to "old individualistic methods," which suggests small and traditional craftsmanship. In this image of steam engines, the contribution of an intellectual worker like J. Ward Moorehouse is invisible and symbolic, and only leaves marks on products as part of the design or template. His job is not making but arranging or "coördinating" material parts. His intellectual work as a symbolic coöperator disembodies and dematerializes him in exchange for his becoming a blueprint of "American industry." As he works as a PR man, his name is reduced to the initials J.W., which indicates Moorehouse is further dematerialized. Around the end of the trilogy, Richard Ellsworth Savage's subordinate Reggie Talbot complains that "J. Ward Moorehouse isn't a man…it's a name….You can't feel sorry when a name gets sick" (1199; ellipses in orig.). Savage defends Moorehouse's contribution by saying "[w]hether you like it or not the molding of the public mind is one of the most important things that goes on in this country" (1199). Moorehouse is a mere name without a body as he becomes a "mold" which connotes the original sense of "stereotype" which refers to a "printing plate" as if he impresses a language upon the public mind.

Not only is Dos Passos aware of the importance of audience in the communicative process, but his nonfiction prose and his fictional characters hint of middle-class white-collar workers as his intended audience. The fictional characters in the trilogy are engaged in communication-related work. They are what Dos Passos designates "technicians" in his essays and what we call the "professional-managerial class." Michael Denning rightly points out that "*U.S.A.* is not a story of robber barons and proletarians, nor even of engineers and profiteers, but a tale of journalists, advertisers, and songwriters. Characters who seem unconnected are united by the 'trades that deal with words'" (*Cultural Front* 178). The fictional characters in the trilogy are in a generation influenced by products of inventors and engineers introduced in biographical sections. The fictional characters and biographical figures are mostly born in families that migrated from Europe to the

American provinces, and they move to the cities to be involved in the "trades that deal with words." As we will see in our discussion of the historiography of civilization in the next chapter, Dos Passos' attention to jobs in communication technologies corresponds to contemporary efforts to analyze civilization in terms of cultural aspects.

To understand how new communication technologies and a new type of class struggle intersect and are represented in *U.S.A.*, we need to examine Dos Passos' constant emphasis on the audience of artistic works. It is fair to say that the burst of social issues arising during the Great Depression was *not* the first inspiration for his aesthetic conception that art needs to be social in the sense that it affects general readers and society. He had already recognized that the audience is a constitutive part of art work. His participation in the New Playwright Theater during the 1920s fostered his concern over an inseparable relationship between a work and its audience. In 1927, for example, Dos Passos defines a theater as "a group of people, preferably a huge group of people; part of the group puts on plays and the rest forms the audience, an active working audience" (Pizer, *John* 101). Here the process of signification was presupposed as unilateral. Or, his experience with the Sacco and Vanzetti incident helped him enhance his theory of audience. In an article "The Lesson of It for Liberals" in the magazine the *New Republic* to which Dos Passos often contributed, an anonymous writer drew a lesson from the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti: the liberals' cause to save them "aroused no positive interest or conviction among the middle-minded people who fill important administrative positions in American political, professional and business life; and these are the people who not only conduct the activities of the country but determine its immediately effective state of mind" (138). This author was disappointed with the indifference of the middle class to unfair treatment of immigrants as well as the liberals' impotence to provoke public attention.

Dos Passos probably shared a similar sentiment as he constantly mentioned the importance of a "new" class and carefully thought over appropriate approaches to the middle-class audience.

Two articles published in 1930 in the *New Republic* and *New Masses* asked the same question about the audience. His article "Whom Can We Appeal To?" in *New Masses* urged the reader to convince those who were not convinced. He claims that writers should "convince the technicians and white collar workers that they have nothing to lose and that they can at least afford to be neutral," and technicians here include "engineers, scientists, independent manual craftsmen, writers, artists, actors" (Pizer, *John* 132). Even though these "technicians" of the middle class may not be directly related to a class struggle, they as "handlers of ideas" or "molders of ideas" can at least "color events" (Pizer, *John* 132; "Wanted" 372). To Dos Passos, "coloring" is to "make [the class war] more humane" (Pizer, 132) or "to mitigate the bitterness of the class struggle in this country" ("Wanted" 372). In both articles, Dos Passos argued that a technical education ineluctably engendered certain political attitudes that made technicians indifferent to class struggle. Therefore, evoking the names of PR men such as Edward Bernays and Ivy Lee, Dos Passos asserted that the PR-like emphasis on neutrality for the technicians could motivate them to hold back a tendency to use violence in a class war. In 1932, he also signed his name to the pamphlet *Culture and the Crisis* which tried to convince technicians and white-collar workers to support William Z. Foster and James W. Ford of the American Communist Party for a presidential campaign. Said to be written mostly by Lewis Corey, the pamphlet shares Dos Passos' aim to appeal to a "new" middle class (Denning, *Cultural Front* 98-99). Therefore, his choice of technician-related jobs for fictional characters reflects his intended audience and their social function in a class struggle. If these insights are the backbone of his trilogy, it is important to note the trilogy's efforts to dissolve political attitudes learned from a technical education and to resituate them in a neutral position in order to "color" events.

Dos Passos' emphasis on a new class suggests that advancement in technological communications complicated the social struggle between labor and capital and signaled a new type of capitalistic order. Malcolm Cowley read *The Big Money* as an indication that [c]ompetitive

capitalism has been transformed into monopoly capitalism" (Maine 138). Dos Passos also asserts in a personal letter his interests in monopoly capitalism.[12] The tendency for monopolization and the absence of popular reactions to it alarmed intellectuals around Cowley and Dos Passos. Dos Passos perceptively detects that the new class of "technicians" is a symptom of monopoly capitalism. His notion of "technicians" is similar to the concept of "Professional-Managerial Class"(hereafter PMC)—a term coined by Barbara and John Ehrenreich. The Ehrenreichs theorized that two conditions were necessary for a new class to emerge in monopoly capitalism:

> 1) that the social surplus has developed to a point sufficient to sustain the PMC in addition to the bourgeoisie, for the PMC is essentially non-productive; and 2) that the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has developed to the point that a class specializing in the reproduction of capitalist class relationships becomes a necessity to the capitalist class. That is, the maintenance of order can no longer be left to episodic police violence. (14)

Technological inventions had surely facilitated an accumulation of surplus in exchange for worsening class antagonism between the working class and the capitalist class. The new PMC was expected to manage a stable production process under unstable conditions using technical-professional means. The aim of the PMC is clearly echoed by Dos Passos' trilogy when Moorehouse unofficially intercedes with investor-judge Bowie C. Planet and labor leader G. H. Barrow. He describes the function of public relations to them:

> Capital and labor, those two great forces of our national life neither of which can exist without the other are growing further and further apart….Well, it has occurred to me that one reason for this unfortunate state of affairs has been the lack of any private agency that might fairly present the situation to the public. The lack of properly distributed information is the cause of most of the misunderstandings in this world. (236)

The mission of public relations is the elimination of misunderstanding through the distribution of information, and the intervention of "technicians" like Moorehouse may reduce the risk of violent confrontations between "capital and labor." The ideal may be sound, but in the trilogy the mediating function of the new class blurs the line between the exploiter and the exploited.[13]

Not only social and labor issues, but also changes in the publishing industry convinced Dos Passos that novelists had a mission to target middle-class white-collar workers as their audience. He was aware of the close connection between technological advancement and the social value of the written word. To the reprinted 1932 edition of *Three Soldiers*, he added an introduction in which he recommends that writers take a certain attitude.

> The trouble is that mass production involves a change in the commodities produced that hasn't been worked out yet. In the middleages the mere setting down of the written word was a marvel, something of that marvel got into the words set down; in the renaissance the printing press suddenly opened up a continent more tremendous than America, sixteenth and seventeenth writers are all on fire with it; now we have linotype, automatic typesetting machines, phototype processes that plaster the world from end to end with print. (vi)

This brief historical view of communication technology indicates that a change in communication technology enforces a change in the quality of words.[14] The more people are exposed to words, the less authority the words assume. In this situation, Dos Passos demands that writers turn down writing for "money" and "self-expression" and organize "history" by capturing spoken words in printed words. This introduction echoes the introductory section of the trilogy I mentioned at the beginning of this section: "The mind of a generation is its speech. A writer makes aspects of that speech enduring by putting them in print. He whittles at the words and phrases of today and makes of them forms to set the mind of tomorrow's generation. That's history. A writer who writes straight is the architect of history" (vii-viii). In other words, writers should enfold evanescent, ordinary speech into

writing that constructs “forms to set the mind of tomorrow’s generation” because even the written words are bewilderingly ephemeral in the publishing industry. Like an architect, a writer is expected to create something enduring out of something evanescent. And, clearly organized words should become a form or a mold for the thoughts of the next generation. To Dos Passos, the aim of writers is to make a literary discipline workable in the time of automatic printing systems under the dwindling influences of the Bible: “We write today for the first American generation not brought up on the Bible, and nothings as yet has taken its place as a literary discipline” (viii). In short, writing can produce a kind of “literary discipline” or “mold” for an audience that has not acquired such discipline from the Bible. Dos Passos’ motivation is sound, but the only problem is that he seems like Moorehouse who has done most “to form the public mind in this country” (*U.S.A.* 1199).

The argument in the introduction of *Three Soldiers* grows into “The Writer as Technician” which was written for the American Writers’ Congress, an anti-fascist Communist-sponsored group of intellectuals. In this paper, he again refers to the connection between mind and language.

> The professional writer discovers some aspect of the world and invents out of the speech of his time some particularly apt and original way of putting it down on paper. If the product is compelling, and important enough, it molds and influences ways of thinking to the point of changing and rebuilding the language, which is the mind of group. (“The Writer as Technician” 79)

Here, Dos Passos suggests that the words of writers may provide a certain framework for the thinking process of people. Interestingly, what he proposes is easily comparable to the strategy of a propagandist. It is ideal, for propagandists, that writers are able to utilize art products for political gain. Dos Passos sounds as if he is justifying the social function of writer-as-technician for the maintenance of a liberal society. Yet, he takes great pains to separate technicians from office workers and bureaucrats. “The dilemma that faces honest technicians all over the world to-day is how to

combat the imperial and bureaucratic tendencies of the groups whose aims they believe in, without giving aid and comfort to the enemy" (81). His concern about appropriate writing shifts from his denouncement of "self-expression" and "money-making" to that of "organizations" and their bureaucratic administrators. The dilemma here is that technicians and administrators share the same objectives such as working with a collective to organize society. The only measures that enable technicians to distinguish themselves from administrators are concepts, such as "liberty, fraternity, and humanity" (82) which are too abstract to determine how these concepts can "mold and influence ways of thinking."

3. Informational Genres

As explained above, the introduction of *Three Soldiers* and its development into "The Writer as Technician" reveal how Dos Passos was conscious of his audience. The trilogy was written for and about the social stratum of his audience, or what he called "technicians," who were both the products and producers of new communication technologies. The fictional characters are in one way or another engaged in publishing activities, whether commercial or political. If they reflect opinions expressed in the author's essays about the elements of literary works, it is comprehensible that the trilogy depicts a split within the middle class rather than a class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. The middle-class split into technicians and bureaucrats indicated that technological development, particularly in the domain of organizational control, had altered the dynamics of economic process and produced new conflicting functions in the middle class. Like communication which comes to reconcile machine and spirit, the middle class is a mediator between owner and laborer in social organizations. In these historical and conceptual situations, Dos Passos incorporated informational genres—genres familiar to the PMC—rather than trying to directly persuade readers align with the labor side. The trilogy illustrates cultural aspects of the incipient PMC while adapting

generic norms of information technology in order to generate post-Bible literary discipline in the age of documents.[15]

Development in communication technology had nourished systematic management, sustaining massive and extensive business organizations through the smooth transmission of information.[16] Communication technology had materially and conceptually affected interpersonal relationships by forming new writing techniques. For example, systematic management inaugurated a particular writing style that targeted the efficiency of message transmission and the elimination of rhetorical styles. JoAnne Yates, a historian of business writing, argues that internal correspondence in several departments within a company were systematized through the standardization of "documents" with manuals, typists, carbon copies, and vertical filing cabinets. John Guillory detects a close relationship between modernity and a sudden rise of "documents." Documents like memorandums or reports became "a means of transmitting information within the larger bureaucratic structures organizing virtually all work in modernity" ("Memo" 112). Because of their occupations, many fictional characters in the trilogy rely on "documents" or standardized sets of writing. The standardization of documents for effective transmission of information produced a genre with some formal patterns, such as precision, concision and clarity, in an effort to avoid verbosity, variety and ambiguity. The trilogy itself is full of shortened remarks as if experiential data are quickly translated into words without much intervention of preconception. Cowley once described Dos Passos' writing as "the most effective way of recording a particular series of words and action" ("Poet" 305), and critics have argued that his writing styles are indebted to a mechanical reproduction with camera, particularly the montage technique. I agree that mechanical representations affected his representational style, but too much emphasis on technological accuracy can cause us to lose sight of, rather than supplementing our perception of, changes in cultural attitudes toward language through the development of communication technology. In a world stuffed with documents designed to

materialize monopoly capitalism, Dos Passos' choice of informational writing reveals and breaks our stereotypes toward language in order to structure a new literary discipline.

Before discussing Dos Passos' notion of new language education, it is necessary to analyze his representation of language on the level of content and form. A good example is the stenographer character, Janey, who has a closed connection to informational genres such as reports, memorandums, and internal correspondence: "the typewriters would trill and jingle and all the girls' fingers would go like mad typing briefs, manuscripts of undelivered speeches by lobbyists, occasional overflow from a newspaperman or a scientist, or prospectuses from realestate offices or patent promoters, dunning letters for dentists and doctors" (133). The prominent style of writing in modernity is informational in a sense that it is modified to facilitate transmission and rooted in a widespread range of private domains. Stenographer is a new-class job or professional-managerial job, which functions as a medium in institutions through symbolic reproduction. The enumeration of kinds of documents, such as briefs, manuscripts and so on, in the citation provides informational detail, but at the same time such details do not add much to the reader's impression of the passage. Dos Passos prefers enumeration in short phrases to long, eloquent sentences. When Janey wants to tell her friend Alice about her feelings for Moorehouse, Dos Passos packs her supposedly verbose stories into short topical phrases:

> Alice wanted to go to sleep, but Janey chattered like a magpie about Mr. Barrow and labor troubles and J. Ward Moorehouse and what a fine man he was, and so kind and friendly and had such interesting ideas for collaboration between capital and labor, and spoke so familiarly about what the President thought and what Andrew Carnegie thought and what the Rockefeller interests or Mr. Schick or Senator LaFollette intended, and had such handsome boyish blue eyes, and was so nice, and the silver teaservice, and how young he looked in spite of his prematurely gray hair, and the open fire and the silver cocktail shaker

and the crystal glasses. (254)

This long, hanging sentence demonstrates the fragmentation of Janey's story into phrases and reduces her love for Moorehouse to a list of topics related to what she sees and hears. Language is employed for the description of experiences.

In contrast to Janey, her brother Joe William is a victim of the modern writing system. Because he does not have a passport (387) or a registration card (494) to prove his identity, he is twice arrested as an alleged spy. The fact that personal testimony is not enough to prove identity suggests a decline in the value of verbal evidence. The working class organization also demands "a red card" for "a classconscious worker" (504). Even though Joe represents those who could not join the ranks of the PMC, he participates in a network of communication in an older and physical sense, such as ships and sexually transmitted diseases, where symbolic and physical aspects of transmission coexist.[17] In a historical context where documents are used to manage the masses, Joe encounters obstacles that keep him going on board ships. He cannot have a stable life with Della Matthews, his wife who works as a stenographer. Despite ideological differences between pro-war patriots and anti-war socialists, documents identify individuals: in other words, an individual's particularities are relegated into information in documents.

In the last two biographical sections of *1919*, "Paul Bunyan" and "The Body of an American," information is used for identification. Wesley Everest in "Paul Bunyan" is brutally lynched by "patriots" because he is a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). Even though both "reds" and "patriots" are "ex-soldiers," a difference in political affiliation leads them to kill each other. Without directly referring to the brutality, Dos Passos refers to a coroner's inquest which illuminates both Everest's similarity to the mythical figure of Paul Bunyan and the untrustworthiness of official information:

[The coroner] reported that Wesley Everest had broken out of jail and run to the Chehalis

> River bridge and tied a rope around his neck and jumped off, finding the rope too short he'd climbed back and fastened on a longer one, had jumped off again, broke his neck and shot himself full of holes. (750)

The professional coroner's "unprofessional" identification is limited to motion and appearance without any concern for sensation or emotion. Everest is reduced to a "the mangled wreckage" (750) while Dos Passos' narrative, which uses repetition to represent each biographical character, captures Everest's character with the phrase "[n]ot a thing in this world Paul Bunyan's ascared of" (748).[18] "The Body of an American," which commemorates unknown soldiers buried at Arlington National Cemetery, also shows how documents materialize living bodies. The narrator describes the process of enlistment. After "they weighted you, measured you, looked for flat feet, squeezed your penis to see if you had clap…[they] gave you a service record for a future (imperishable soul) and an identification tag stamped with your serial number to hang around your neck…" (758). As if his existence is fitted into a fill-out form, the "service record" and "serial number" documents are compared to an "imperishable soul." However, documents are, of course, not impervious to damage, loss and alteration: soldiers' bodies become anonymous when "[t]he service record dropped out of the filing cabinet" and "[t]he identification tag was in the bottom of the Marne" (760). While information is not enough to capture an individual, the loss of information is equal to anonymity.

While control by documents is presented as a significant feature of modernity or monopoly capitalism, physical domination over the channels of communication is the most visible effort for the maintenance of authority. An increase in the efficiency of accumulating and processing information creates a tendency to endow authority to documented information. For example, Richard Savage, who volunteered for military service, is discharged when the letter censorship detects his doubt about the ongoing war (535-37). Any anti-war or pro-labor message is an object of suppression, and characters are convicted for protesting activities; Ben Compton in a fictional narrative and Gene

Debs and Big Bill Haywood in biographical sections are notable examples of these situations. In contrast to those minor voices, which are censored and suppressed, the government takes the initiative to publicity disseminate information. Propaganda is the clearest example of such publicity.

What is important to notice here in terms of understanding the new class is that government propaganda incorporates the language of the working class and masses. Those in power grasp symbolic authority through the incorporation of popular language into their discourse. For instance, books by Thorstein Veblen, who possessed an "unnatural tendency to feel with workingclass instead of with the profittakers," are criticized and simultaneously appropriated for war propaganda: "the postoffice was forbidding the mails to *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* while propaganda agencies were sending it out to make people hate the Huns. Educators were denouncing the Nature of Peace while Washington experts were clipping phrases out of it to add to the Wilsonian smokescreen" (852). While intellectuals discredited books that were written in the hope that "the workingclass would take over the machine of production," (852) they rearranged Veblen's argument to fit into the anti-revolutionary and pro-war messages of Woodrow Wilson. In Dos Passos' biography, Wilson is illustrated as a person whose words contradict his deeds, which indicates a moral wrongness in Wilson for some critics. The biography quotes Wilson's speech in italics that "*the Unites States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest*," and refers to the fact that "he landed the marines at Vera Cruz" (567). Furthermore, a fictional labor leader, G. H. Barrow, "talked beautifully about Labor's faith in Mr. Wilson" and explained to Mary French that "[l]abor was going to get on its feet all over the world and start cleaning up the mess the old order had made, not by violence but by peaceful methods, Wilsonian methods" (866). By these strategies of persuasion and management with a wartime economic boom, "every day new friends were going around to Wilson's way of looking at things" and "laughed or got sore at any walk of protests strikes or revolutionary movements" (734). From perspectives of labor, like those held by Ben Compton, the

war was a “capitalist war” and “the workers’ll see that they were being deceived by false good times, that the war’s really at them” (735). Even though Compton insists on the falsity of the war, their language is so similar that it is hard to distinguish the discourse of “dominant class” from that of working class in the trilogy.

This blurring of language boundaries between the exploiter and the exploited is not always beneficial to those in power. For those who know Dos Passos’ political affiliation during the 1930s, Moorehouse and Wilson are ill-intentioned manipulators of language wishing to produce their own desired effects. Yet, control over information was not necessarily a successful or predictable method for managing social organizations by those in power. In *1919*, the pacifist attitude is common among people regardless of class, but it is suddenly transformed into belligerent patriotism: one fictional character, Donald Stevens, complains that a “pacifist could be a better patriot than a staff officer in a soft job and that patriotism was a crime against humanity anyway” (553). This pacifism turned belligerence can be understood as being a result of the propaganda efforts of the US government with the help of Moorehouse. In *The Big Money*, however, those in power cannot command information to achieve a desired consequence. Henry Ford who could heroically defy the pressures of the market, fails to prevent the war.

> He hired a steamboat, the *Oscar II*, and filled it up with pacifists and socialworkers,
> to go over to explain to the princeling of Europe
> that what they were doing was vicious and silly.
> It wasn’t his fault that Poor Richard’s commonsense no longer rules the world and that most of the pacifists were nuts,
> goofy with headlines. (810-11)

Even though the novel is critical of Hearst’s newspaper companies for their agitating tones, it suggests that Hearst’s failure to stop the war is more problematic: “Sometimes he was high enough

above the battle to see clear. He threw all the power of his papers, all his brilliance as a publisher into an effort to keep the country sane and neutral during the first world war" (1167). Hearst changed his position and tried to show his patriotism, but without success: "In spite of enormous expenditures on forged documents he failed to bring about war with Mexico" (1168). Despite their intentions, information was mobilized to so many people that its effects could not remain under their control.

The proliferation of documents has an impact on forms of social organization and generates an anonymous "superpower" that obscures class struggles and exceeds human control. Even though great figures like Taylor and Ford dominate modes of production, the trilogy does not place their power over the whole society into the foreground. The problems are more deep-seated. On the surface, there seems no specific consciousness shared by most of the fictional and biographical characters. Their economic statuses or family backgrounds are merely two elements among many that give individuality to characters. Both fictional and biographical accounts illustrate the social mobility of some characters. They do not remain in the same class, and not many characters are financially and intellectually privileged from the very beginning of life. As the emergence of a new class indicates, the capitalistic disruption of social order, ranging from Taylorism to war, means new opportunities for the underprivileged.[19]

The most vigorous and prevailing undercurrent encompassing the characters is the decline in ownership of private property and traditional capitalist ethics. The biography of Samuel Insull in "Power Superpower" reveals invisible forces that tear down private ownership and obscure the class struggle. Insull "came of temperance smallshopkeeper stock; already he was butting his bullethead against the harsh structure of caste that doomed boys of his class to a life of alpaca jacket, penmanship, subordination" (1210). The loss of small private-property ownership fosters a move to white-collar jobs that are vulnerable to exploitation. Insull's success is due to his life experiences cultivated through the small property ownership and the loss of that ownership. Furthermore, it is

paradoxical that his success produces the disintegration of property ownerships and results in similar experiences for other people. Therefore, even when Insull leads a failed investment that has wrecked lives of other investors and workers, his life experiences immunize him from harsh denouncement and evoke sympathy that obliterates his financial responsibility and the current economic situation.

> Old Samuel Insull rambled amiably on the stand, told his lifestory: from officeboy to powermagnate, his struggle to make good, his love for his home and the kiddies. He didn't deny he'd made mistakes; who hadn't, but they were honest errors. Samuel Insull wept. Brother Martin wept. The lawyers wept…..There wasn't a dry eye in the jury….Thousands of ruined investors, at least so the newspapers said, who had lost their life saving sat crying over the home editions at the thought of how Mr. Insull had suffered. (1215-16)

Insull's plea could be easily dismissed as the sentimental excuses of an irresponsible man and debunked as hiding self-interest under humanistic rhetoric. However, it is not his "power" that releases him from his crime. Insull's experience is comprehensible for many people because they have been in the same sorts of situations, and Insull recognizes that affinity between him and his audience. With Samuel Insull, Dos Passos captures the invisible Superpower in words and reveals the Superpower as paradoxical elements that destroy and reproduce the economic foundation. By reducing personal experiences to a series of information points, the Superpower derives its power from a narrative of collective experiences.

What Dos Passos aims to represent is not a rigid boundary between the bourgeois and proletariat but rather a dynamism in class boundaries that reproduces a social structure that is constantly changing. The supposition that the two distinct discourses of labor and management seem to compete to attract the attention of the masses is the very element that blinds the characters in the trilogy. These two discourses show similarity in the contents of information, but they preserve differences in political stance. For example, the narrative structure of both classes is logically

similar: it presumes that there is an enemy group (Red, Trooper, German, Patriot, Capitalist) who utilizes violence in opposition to an ally group, which wishes for peace and betterment. The point is that there is little difference between the working class and the upper class: it is workers who suffer from *in*difference. Indeed, an unequal class relationship between two is preserved in the presupposition of a narrative structure that distorts the shared foundation of both classes. Thus, though it may seem paradoxical, Dos Passos is careful to neither establish a superior viewpoint over others nor introduce a clear division between good and evil. In other words, we should not presuppose Dos Passos' sympathy toward working-class point of view in our reading because his formal juxtaposition techniques leave several discourses comparable without privileging one over another.[20] When we consider our previous argument that Dos Passos pays attention to the PMC audience, which may not be sympathetic to the working class, it is clearer that the political stance of the author should not be considered as grounds for finding meanings in the trilogy. More precisely, his choice of formal structure strives to break down the narrative structure preserving the dynamism of class boundaries.

4. From Class Consciousness to Radical Interpretation in Formation

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, the introductory note in the republication of *The 42nd Parallel* gives the gist of Dos Passos' penchant for involving his audience and restructuring stereotypes. He appreciates individual perception and simultaneously exhibits the patterns in the actions or thoughts of people. Yet, he complains that "no such breaking of stereotypes occurs and time-honored attitudes and phrases take on a liturgical insignificance and the standard of excellence becomes the exactness with which the stereotypes are repeated" (Pizer, *John* 179). The author's own comment on his work has motivated critics to locate those patterns and Dos Passos' dislocation of them. The motif of "two nations," derived from an oft-quoted passage "all right we are two nations,"

has been observed in various dichotomies such as bourgeois-proletariat, ally-enemy, speech-writing, fixity-fluidity, individual-society, totality-variety, leisure-unemployment, appearance-depth, propaganda-fact, and so on. Reacting to two nations within a nation, any critical comment would discourage dominant values as patterned stereotypes and bolster underprivileged values. However, Dos Passos must know that this sort of rhetorical strategy is not especially attractive to his middle-class audience whom writers failed to convince in the Sacco and Vanzetti case.[21] It is not simply that the new class refused to see the truth conveyed by radical writers, but rather that their ways of reading and interpreting were patterned, not specific to particular themes or contents. From different perspective, even when informational genres employ a style or mold that builds up patterns or stereotypes in the lives of characters, but the information alone does not break stereotypes; only Dos Passos' strategic treatment of informational genres can interfere with the patterns. Dos Passos is aware of how the proliferation of documents affected the public's understanding of language. His narrative forms employed informational genres to make "identical stereotypes" of information intelligible and to transpose information into different types.

Critics have struggled to theorize a relationship between Dos Passos' form and its effects. Even though they have not directly scrutinized his discussion of "a literary discipline" for a generation "not brought up on the Bible," as I do here, we cannot neglect to touch upon the question of how to read the texts and the importance of such reading in an era of social and economic instability. Since the first publication of the trilogy, many have not failed to recognize Dos Passos' writing forms, whose peculiarities would be torturous and monotonous if they are not meant to represent "society" or "Marx's materialist conception of history" (Josephson 107). Michael Gold is a good example in this respect. Gold, whose name Dos Passos used as pseudonym for his working-class character Ben Compton in *1919*, admired the achievement of Dos Passos' narrative form with the metaphor of architecture: "The architecture of these novels is masterly, and has

provoked discussion among the critics….Dos Passos has written one of the first collective novels" ("Education" 115). But after the publication of *The Big Money* and Dos Passos' antipathy toward the Communist party, Gold criticized his works: "He takes a dull, sadistic joy in showing human beings at their filthiest, meanest, most degraded moments. They have no will power; they are amoeba, moved by chemistry" ("The Keynote" 153). While the change in Gold's reaction to these literary works may be viewed as an effect of extra-literary, political concern on literary judgment, I do not think Gold's opinion is incoherent or groundless in terms of the paradox inherent in a "collective novel." Barbara Foley pointed out three generic characteristics of the collective novel. First, the collective novel treats "the group as a phenomenon greater than—and different from—the sum of individuals who constitute it," and second, it uses "experimental devices that break up the narrative and rupture the illusion of seamless transparency" (*Radical* 400, 401). On the one hand, these two techniques allow writers to represent historical forces without depending on a single perspective or a chronological causality. Theoretically, these techniques can build a structure and withhold the concrete that flows among diverse elements as Gold's architectural metaphor suggests. On the other hand, the representation of historical forces can reach a tipping point, moving toward a determinism which binds individuals to a law of arbitrariness, not a certain causal determinant. Like the amoeba in Gold's metaphor, any character seems powerless and inconsistent when s/he is situated in the vastness of history. The collective novel faces the danger of effacing the fact that human beings are the agents of their own history. Thus, also significant is Foley's third generic characteristic—the collective novel deals with "factual" references in order for the reader to observe "discursive practices through which [historical processes and forces] are known" (402).

Just as Foley relies on her own analysis of Dos Passos' trilogy to characterize this new genre, the collective novel, Dos Passos' novels transform readers from receivers of messages into active participants in a process of signification. For those who are familiar with theories about the negative

influence of mass culture, the society represented in the trilogy is replete with sins of technological and capitalistic development, which provoke violence, poverty, and indifference in exchange for material wealth and immediate pleasure for the rich. The "hollowness" of fictional characters is a symptom of this troubled society, and the knowledge of this frees Dos Passos and the reader from the seductive traps of mass culture. Thus, the trilogy implicitly advises readers to avoid the toxic influences of mass communication and to struggle for an alternative society in their living world.[22] Though a critical approach toward society may be a part of Dos Passos' works, it is overtly reductive to interpret characters as mere products molded by mass culture. Thomas Strychacz rightly pointed out that a debunking interpretation of mass culture structurally depends on a distinction between professionals and amateurs. The critical discourse against mass culture "consolidates the boundaries of the institutionalized discourses that it pretends to disturb" and "perpetuate[s] the organizing principle that allows writers of and about literature to fence off a special terrain of discourse" (142). The value of "professionalism" relies on its opposition to the nonprofessional interpretation attributed to the anonymous entity called "mass." While I am not convinced of Strychacz's conclusion that Dos Passos implies his desire for "communities of expert readers whose criteria for literary writing are virtually indistinguishable from Dos Passos's" (160), Strychacz's remark alerts us to literary critics' assumption that Dos Passos' work is literature while the writings of fictional characters like Moorehouse or Compton and the fragmented information in the Newsreel are not. There may not be a way to pin down exactly what reading techniques Dos Passos want readers to employ.[23] Still, Dos Passos' texts awaken our sensitivity to language as a media rather than call for the neutral objectivity of scientists and technicians.

The fact that his literary forms demand the participation of readers in creating textual meaning by erasing the privileged position of the author does not mean that any interpretation is valid. Rather, Dos Passos' novels train our sensibility to endure the complexity of a modern world.

What makes the argument about the trilogy difficult is that it cannot stand by itself: its forms which blur the boundary between fact and fiction, force readers to go to extra-literary sources to explain the phenomenon of the texts. While readers can find clues in actual events, the author's background and essays, sociological insights, and so on to make the trilogy more intelligible, not even Dos Passos has an authority to impose a definite meaning. The structural paradox here is inherent in any narrative mode when narrative inevitably privileges some statement or sentence over others in the process of signification, even from the stance that Dos Passos did not deliberately privilege any one meaning over others. Therefore, my argument sounds very peculiar as I assert certain texts' support for multiple meanings and simultaneously situate a particular sentence over others to prove this point. Admitting that this sort of reading relies on an assumption of "professional" readers who privilege coherence over incoherence, and looks for a principle that can explain as many aspects as possible, I would like to highlight Dos Passos' formal structure, meant to create a literary discipline without the Bible. His efforts to renounce the authorial privilege over the meanings of texts reveal his effort to break the reader's stereotypes in supposing the final arbiter of historical and literary signification. From Dos Passos' perspective, people in his generation may not share a notion of the Bible as a guide to the meanings of other texts, but their attitudes toward language are not changed. As they would if they were reading the Bible, readers attempt to settle into a single and definite meaning. Increased channels of communication made this kind of biblical-style reading hard to maintain because technology, as a representation of the young man listening to a radio in "U.S.A." at the very beginning of the trilogy suggests, can present many conflicting messages to readers.

Dos Passos' "behavioristic" writing style also functions to attract and repeal our expectations of the final arbiter. Gold's disappointment with *The Big Money* is evidence of Gold's aversion toward his opponent as well as of Gold's betrayed expectations of an arbiter that would guarantee the historical significance of the revolutionary movement and of revolutionary subjectivity.

Dos Passos' behavioristic writing style contains a touch of anti-metaphysical positivism as well as anti-humanistic scientism. This behavioristic writings bothered Edmund Wilson, who was a literary critic and a close friend of Dos Passos. In a personal letter to Wilson, Dos Passos called his own method "behavioristic" and described it as "the method of generating the insides of characters by external description" (Ludington, *Fourteenth* 522). This may be a surprise for many critics who consider characters as a symptom of mass culture: they are not devoid of inner emotions or thoughts.[24] It would be more profitable to understand the historical context that generated behaviorism rather than to start from the identification of behaviorism as a cult of technological and mechanical discourse. Behaviorism owes its emergence to the inability of conventional psychological discourses to explain mental processes. Introspection is not sufficient for understanding everything about the human mind. Kenneth Burke half-jokingly explained how behaviorism was culturally and historically embedded in the US:

> America is precisely the place where, on looking into one's head, one is least likely to find a vast store of regular, stabilized, recurrent experiences imbedded there, except for a few simple groups of stimuli, not highly complex at all, such as the lure of a new refrigerator, the fear of losing one's job, the distinction of smoking a certain brand of cigarette, etc. (*Permanence* 33)

The point is that new technologies and an overabundance of information made it hard to determine the motives behind actions. Behaviorism as a psychological discipline tries to skip this problem by observing actions as effects rather than consulting with the inner mind. Dos Passos' behavioristic writings suspend our proclivity for direct access to the internal minds of characters. The reader cannot rely on the author's or the characters' internality to derive the meanings of actions and events. While behaviorism tends to narrow the focus to some general (often biological) principles hidden in particular examples, Dos Passos' writings leave some space for the coexistence of conflicting

motives in each action. Thus we are left with the problem of why Dos Passos resorts to informational descriptions of events and actions and yet confides to Wilson that he is writing “the insides of characters.”

Again, Kenneth Burke’s insight, from which he develops behaviorist logic into his epistemological theories, deserves some attention to understand Dos Passos. Just like Dos Passos, Burke attempted to articulate characteristic patterns of readings in the twentieth century. Burke asserted that his “contemporary audience hears the lines of a play or novel with the same equipment as it brings to reading the line of its daily paper. It is content to have facts placed before it in some more or less adequate sequence” (*Counterstatement* 37). Because of informational genres, the reader is used to perceiving the novel as a piece of information, and s/he forgets the function of form in the signifying process. For Burke, every symbolic product is communicative, socializing, and strategic. Burke had deep concern that the domination of informational genres would wither concerns over forms whose functions were to motivate the reader to reflect upon stereotypes. By reversing the effects of informational genres on novels, Dos Passos blended forms of informational genres to highlight formal qualities or the “psychology of audience” in the process of constructing meaning.

The importance of the trilogy resides in Dos Passos’ purpose in establishing literary discipline in the audience rather than merely conveying useful information. The simple correspondence between the text and its audience, which readers in the 1930s (and even we ourselves) carelessly took for granted, is not possible in the age of the document. In order to represent the age of the post-Bible reading and to make readers aware of their (in)ability to communicate, the trilogy disrupts a hypothetical cognitive process which presupposes a simple correspondence between stimulus and response. This disruption at least makes it obvious that class consciousness, which should be clear and comprehensive to those in the same class, indeed is not itself communicated in the desired way. The presence of consciousness is proved only when intention

and action are correlated and when cause and method are consistent. In the trilogy, the advertising campaign of both Moorehouse for the war and Ben Compton for the strike aim at forming "consciousness" to provoke a specific action desired by them. The words, which are fragmented and removed from the context of utterance, are utilized for political purposes, as we saw in the example of Veblen. But the narrative form of documents shows that individual consciousness cannot adequately represent collective consciousness in society. Even though the advertisers and activists believe that the masses can act collectively only when the same information is shared, the trilogy evinces the contrary: collective consciousness never appears unified or consistent. The narrative form of documents allows the audience to reach an aesthetic appreciation that language can be meaningful only if it is in a form. Language is not a neutral medium that transmits raw materials to the audience. Dos Passos realizes that communication technologies give us a strong sense of the form or the medium that affects signification. Therefore, class consciousness cannot be reduced to a set of characteristics or "information." What Dos Passos tries to impart to readers is the formal process of change in these characteristics. Information is not meaningful in and of itself. Only when there is some form to give shape to information does it become meaningful and useful. Informing always involves more than mere information. Therefore, conflicting references can happen. In this sense, Dos Passos attempts to demonstrate recognition of the residual and polymorphic formal properties excessive to information in the trilogy as class consciousness in the "form" of an information society.

Progress in communication technology does not necessarily improve the quality of communication for the characters in the trilogy. Dos Passos uses the failure of transmission as a symbol of the infertility of humans. A child of Ben Compton and Mary French is aborted because "it would spoil [Mary's] usefulness" and "they had to sacrifice their personal feelings for the workingclass" (1144). Ben, separated from Mary and later expelled from the party, falteringly talks to her:

> "A party of yesmen….that'll be great…But, Mary, I had to see you…I feel so lonely suddenly…you know, cut off from everything….You know if we hadn't been fools we'd have had that baby that time…we'd still love each other….Mary, you were very lovely to me when I first got out of jail….Say, where's your friend Ada, the musician who had that fancy apartment?" (1222; ellipses in orig.)

Mary cut off the conversation by saying "what's the use of raking all this old stuff up" (1222). What Ben tries to communicate to Mary is a good example of what the trilogy takes up as a problematic situation in the 1930s. The breaks in his speech imply his hesitation. His words may be construed as asking to get back together with her or to give him a job, and Mary and the reader never know which. As the conversation becomes entangled, Mary leaves after calling him "a stoolpigeon as well as a disrupter," but comes back to withdraw the remarks that she just made. Here it is more important to consider contradictory behaviors than to determine the real intention behind the utterances: an utterance is not accompanied by a form for understanding another's real intention. Each utterance is limited to a single meaning. The audience needs to realize that the form makes words excessive, but it is in this excessiveness that the attraction and repulsion of the human relationship reside. The trilogy combines two arts, literature and technology, not only to define American-ness but also to define a new aesthetics involving a polymorph of language. The proliferation of documents generates an ideology that gives authority to information. At the same time, the development of informational genres allows technicians, including novelists, to realize the importance of form and to construct new aesthetics.

Notes on Chapter 1

[1] From Dos Passos' answer to interview questionnaire in *Modern Quarterly*. The title is from the magazine. See Pizer's *John Dos Passos: The Major Nonfictional Prose* (150).

[2] A concise history of the interrelation between technological development and American culture can be found in Washizu. Also, the early sociology of science for the American contexts is established by Dirk Struik, a Dutch-immigrant mathematician. According to Struik, the success in the application of scientific knowledge for efficiency enabled Benjamin Thompson to contribute money to Harvard University for "a professorship of the application of science to the art of living." The first recipient was Jacob Bigelow (86-91).

[3] *Made in America* was renamed *The Arts in Modern American Civilization*. Here Kouwenhoven cites Kenneth Burke as an example of the critics who ignore the "practical" influences of technology on American civilization. This revision of cultural criticism in the 1930s is possible on the premise that the antagonism between the aesthetic and the practical has dominated the discussion of the arts. However, the following chapters will reveal that many literary critics and writers including Burke, were far from ignoring the cultural effects of technology. For Kouwenhoven's brief biography, see Kerber.

[4] Several earlier criticisms of Dos Passos are quoted from a collection of criticism edited by Barry Maine.

[5] I am indebted to Pizer's consolidated study of Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* in his *John Dos Passos's* U.S.A.*: A Documentary Volum*e (2003) for a general view. Also, he compiled some of Dos Passos' prose into the book *John Dos Passos: The Major Nonfictional Prose* (1988). I cite the name Pizer for some parenthetical documentation even though the citation is originally from Dos Passos' prose.

[6] Making a comment on *1919*, Malcolm Cowley observed a vestige of aesthete's attitude in "the camera eye" point of view, and hoped for a change in the style. Because of his expectation of "the camera eye" as a device to connecting different narrative sequences in the next novel, he could only say that it "has been an element of disunity, a survival of the art novel in the midst of a different type of writing" ("The Poet" 305). After reading *The Big Money*, Cowley revised his opinion, arguing that "the camera eye" point of view is "to supply the 'inwardness' that is lacking in [Dos Passos'] general narrative" ("Afterthought" 134).

[7] For the relationship between film theory, especially montage, and Dos Passos' writing, see Murray, Foster, and Miyamoto.

[8] For critics who observes Dos Passos' confrontation of anonymous superpower, such as History, Capital, and mass culture, it is possible to interpret his trilogy either as critical of their repressive forces on individuality or as pessimistic about the inevitability of larger forces. Usually, Dos Passos' political affiliation is employed as a key to understand his attitude to the superpower. For pessimistic accounts, see Trilling (in Maine), Colley and Ludington's John Dos Passos. For critical accounts, Foley's "The Treatment of Time" and "History, Fiction and Satirical Form," and Corkin.

[9] Irr explains a correspondence between the cultural change caused by technology and Dos Passos' narrative modes in terms of "speed." The development of communication technology surely has contributed to our sense of ratio between distance and time. Because each new transportation and telecommunication innovation creates its own relation between space and time, new technologies may have broken a singular timeline and generated a diverse sense of time. It is like a machine, the velocity of each part is repetitious but inconsistent. Irr argues, "American history comes to resemble precisely the type of organized machine that he had hoped to write against; lacking a single speed, embodying the process of negotiation between different speeds, history becomes a reified concept" (61). Even though Dos Passos may renounce an absolute linear timeline to illustrate the history of the US, the assumption of difference in temporal endurance, according to Irr, resulted in a more disorganized sense of history replete with collisions.

[10] John Guillory made an interesting remark on the connection between technological development and Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of sign. "Saussure's inaugural Course in General Linguistics depicts communication in its starkest form, as two talking heads whose mouths, ears, and brains are linked together by lines composed of dots and dashes. However firmly this picture insists on the speech scenario, its slackly suspended lines hint at the telegraph or telephone, a visual pun that Saussure probably did not intend" ("Genesis" 349). For Guillory, who sought a convergence of "meditation" and "mediation" or internal contemplation and external technology, the twentieth century witnessed the ubiquity of "media" which intervened in the subject-object relationship. Lippmann's popularization of the concept of "stereotype" can be seen as an example of this recognition of ubiquity.

[11] Moorehouse is based on the real figure Ivy Lee who worked as a public relations agent (Strychacz 126). I agree with Strychacz analysis that Moorehouse's role is that of "medium" rather than "orator." Here I want to discuss the development of Moorehouse's characteristics.

[12] In a personal letter to Malcolm Cowley, Dos Passos considers the 1930s as a transition period from "competitive capitalism" to "monopoly capitalism," a transition Dos Passos says he did not see when he was writing *The 42nd Parallel* (Ludington, *Fourteenth* 404).

[13] For two different examinations of the conjecture of the middle class and culture, see Strychacz, Seguin, Hoberek and Schryer.

[14] Also, in the 1932 report of political campaigns, Dos Passos juxtaposes the Bonus Army in Washington and the presidential campaign in Chicago Stadium. While "worry and hunger and humiliation" moved the war veterans, people were mostly affected by "power of technicians who tune the loudspeakers and handle the lights" behind the scenes ("Washington" 177-179). There is a contrast in the quality of language.

[15] The historical background of characters in *U.S.A.* is contemporary with the actual development of public relations. The public relations as part of corporate practice emerged around the turn of the twentieth century, and its term was widely known by the 1930s. For the historical development of public relations, see Cheney and Vibbert, and Ewen.

[16] It was important for large companies to "co-ordinate" or "integrate" divisions of labor to increase efficiency and lower costs. To maintain a large system, jobs specifically collecting information became necessary (Litterer).

[17] John Durham Peters points out "communication could also mean coitus. Curiously, 'communication' once meant what we now call intercourse, while 'intercourse' once meant what we now call communication (the varieties of human dealings)" (*Speaking* 8)

[18] For a discussion of auditory culture and Dos Passos' concern on the reader, see Frattarola (99).

[19] The evidence of social mobility and the absence of a tradition of social classes in the US are two main reasons for American exceptionalism, which supported capitalist ideologies during the Cold War (Wilentz, Foner). Here, I am not taking the stance of American exceptionalism. Capitalistic process is an uneven development, peculiar to each nation. Dos Passos also tried to show the complexities of capitalistic forces, which make different classes seem both similar and different.

[20] The critics have recognized the absence of class antagonism in the story as either a positive or negative sign. Lionel Trilling, for example, asserted that Dos Passos "does not write of a class struggle….[H]e is almost alone of the novelists of the Left…in saying that the creeds and idealisms of the Left may bring corruption quite as well as the greeds and cynicisms of the established order" (Maine 156). For Trilling, Dos Passos who is an American individualist against capitalism and leftism does not use language to elicit physical confrontations between the bourgeois and proletariat. Dos Passos' antipathy against Communism was recognized around 1938 when Michael Gold noted that after visiting Spain, Dos Passos returns, not hating the fascism that has committed this crime against the people, but hating Communism" ("Keynote" 152). This was before the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. Some biographies attribute his breakaway to the assassination of Jose Roble, his friend and translator of his book. See Ludington's biography of Dos Passos and Koch for more details.

[21] Michael E. Staub argues that Dos Passos' representational strategy of Sacco and Vanzetti case shows Dos Passos' moving away from the muckraking strategy (22-32).

[22] This view that the trilogy directs readers to diagnose a disease of society is applied to the explanation that Dos Passos was a defender of individual liberty against all social and organizational forces especially after he was known to criticize the Communist party. In "The Writer as Technician," Dos Passos emphasized the importance of liberty in any social organization.

[23] Fred Pfeil refers to historical contexts of the 1930s and the reading habit of the middle class and explains why Dos Passos' trilogy sold fairly well. Supposing that literary tastes are rhetorically and socially constructed, Pfeil argues that Dos Passos' trilogy constructs a "coalition readership" whose ranks include a sizeable number of readers from the old—properly speaking, petit bourgeois—and new—that is, professional-managerila—"middle class" (160).

[24] For example, in "John Dos Passos: Technique vs. Sensibility," Marshall McLuhan regards Dos Passos' description of "behavioristic" patterns as his social criticism of the rich.

Chapter 2

Middle Ground in Civilization:

The Challenges of Humanizing Science after Objectivity

> The more you press in towards the heart of a narrowly bounded historical problem, the more likely you are to encounter in the problem itself a pressure which drives you outward beyond those bounds
> ---Arthur Lovejoy, “Historiography of Ideas”

1. The Dispersion of Objectivity

Just as Dos Passos was alert to the influences of technological mediations over democratic society, his contemporaries did not expect that scientific knowledge could spontaneously serve the material or spiritual wellbeing of society. The First World War especially made this fact evident. It was an urgent task for many intellectuals to clarify the fundamental relationship between human civilization and science in order to master science and technology. Also, when the emergence of new media, ranging from information technologies to laboratory instruments, raised an awareness in individuals like Dos Passos that differences in media altered the contents of the mediated, it became necessary for scientific knowledge to take account of the different layers in knowledge. The cultural aspects of science, whether or not scientists acknowledged them, were not negligible after the horrifying consequences of the war. While pure art was considered either solipsist or irresponsible, pure science which aimed to follow after the truth, became implausible.

When professionalism and specialization added to the creation of new disciplines in the fields of social and natural science, scientific knowledge needed a unifying thread that would string those divided disciplines together. Among several approaches for unifying divided knowledge, a prominent example was the science of history. According to Arnold

Thackray, “The history of science could, among other things, serve to unite the timeless laws of nature and the historical idea of progress” (458). Nathan Reingold also emphasizes that the historical treatment of science reflected historians’ confidence in their works to prove “Progress” in human knowledge or intellect: “Even after the Depression, it was assumed that Progress would restart if only the right minds took control. That is, Progress was no longer an inevitable forward thrust” (357). While this quotation highlights Reingold’s proposition that some historians subscribed to the idea of “Progress” as a historical narrative, it secretly refers to the wavering of the historians’ confidence in the 1930s. The technocratic assumption that “the right minds” are necessary to control society might have been dominant in the minds of many intellectuals as previous studies on the cultural history of the 1930s have shown. However, in order to acknowledge the intellectual atmosphere of the time, it is important to take into account disturbances in the unity of scientific knowledge and reactions to the residue of a “progressive” narrative. French philosopher and physician George Canguilhem reminds us that under the influential theories of thermodynamics, the process of progress cannot be meant to be a continuous supplement to deficiency. Since thermodynamics insists on a principle of dispersion, any progress in a social aspect inevitably concurs with a regress in some other aspect.

The reliance on history indicates that scientific knowledge failed to maintain objectivity, which created the potential for an immediate and disinterested perception of reality. Although scientific objectivity strove to exclude “arbitrary” and personal factors from observations and representations of reality, constant changes in scientific knowledge had cast doubts on scientific objectivity. Once the necessity of subjective observation can no longer be ignored, subjectivity becomes the basis rather than an obstacle for the production of knowledge. Writing a history of objectivity through their analysis of atlas

images, Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison illustrate this shift as what they call a transition from “mechanical objectivity” to “trained judgment.” It is suggested that the virtue of “trained judgement” is that “[o]nly images interpreted through creative assessment—often intuitive (but trained) pattern recognition, guided experience, or holistic perception—could be made to signify” (*Objectivity* 344). Objectivity alone cannot establish a meaningful system of knowledge. An objectivity achieved by mathematical theorem can calculate the objective world, but this would be divorced from our everyday experiences. Arthur Lovejoy summarized the problem that arises with the loss of objectivity: “The question…is no longer whether everything we perceptually experience is ‘objective’ and ‘physical,’ but whether anything we experience is objective and revelatory of the nature of the physical world” (*Revolt* 265). Furthermore, the demolition of objectivity in knowledge production also enforces a change in the historiography of past reality. Peter Novick, a historian of historiography, argued that one of the influential elements of the modification of historiography in the interwar period was a theory of relativity in natural science rather than a modernist vision of arts. Through the popular press, the idea of relativity was disseminated. After scientific support of relativity, historiography takes account of the fact that “historical interpretations always had been, and for various technical reasons always would be, ‘relative’ to the historian’s time, place, values, and purposes” (166). If historiography cannot avoid incorporating the position of the historian into a representation of the past, any historical knowledge might appear to possess the possibility of arbitrary distortion.

Unsatisfied with the ideas of progress and relativity—especially historical relativism whose functions simply “debunk” a bias in scientific knowledge—the historiography of science in the 1930s carefully explored an epistemology which allowed

the admission of the impossibility of definite knowledge without eradicating the possibility of common knowledge. This chapter first takes a brief look into the significance of Irving Babbitt and George Sarton's "new humanism" in the development of the history of science, and then moves on to the historical methods and the epistemological discussion of two intellectuals, Arthur Lovejoy and Robert Merton. Lovejoy and Merton inherited some humanistic concerns from Babbitt and Sarton and considered the recurrent instabilities of scientific knowledge rather than its progress. Lovejoy's dualist epistemology, which may be construed as a more detailed illustration of new-humanist Babbitt's mediation-meditation fusion, enhances our understanding of his project for the history of ideas. Merton reforms Sarton's positivistic tree narrative of scientific development with the theoretical insights of the sociology of knowledge and reconfirms the strength of scientific rationality by revealing a process of unanticipated consequence. Both writers renounced the assumption of scientific knowledge as an autonomous unit which possesses an immanent law and inherited goodness, and instead make non-rational or irrational factors in the production of knowledge intelligible.

2. Humanizing Science with History

Around the interwar period, many academic intellectuals still asserted that history could play a vital role in redefining scientific knowledge through recourse to a humanistic tradition. One of the most prominent approaches was taken under the banner of "new humanism," which implied the humanism of the Renaissance era when the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome were re-examined to reconstruct a comprehensive view of humanity. Similar to the Renaissance era, "new humanism" in the twentieth century also called for historical points of view to redefine humanity. Irving Babbitt, one of the most

outspoken and influential advocates for new humanism, pointed out both specific and general meanings of humanism: the former is “an historical meaning in its application to the scholars who turned away from the Middle Ages to the Greeks and Romans,” and the latter is “psychological meanings” applied to those “who, in any age, aim at proportionateness through a cultivation of the law of measure” (“Humanism” 30).[1] In the eyes of Babbitt, power and speed in modern technological society made human values disparate, relative, and arbitrary without providing any sense of direction or center. The Romantic concept of self was insufficient to withhold the flux of modernity for the humanist.[2] Therefore, Babbitt advocated “the law of measure” to avoid going to two “humanitarian” extremes, which “lay stress almost solely upon breadth of knowledge and sympathy” (*Literature* 7), and to restrain imperialistic temper to expand physically and mentally. There is a scientific rationality to the accumulation of knowledge on the one side of the humanitarian extremes and a Romanticistic sentimentality on the other side.

Classics professors like Babbitt seem particularly regressive only when we hear them professing a return to traditional values.[3] Some researchers have concluded that Babbitt’s new humanism was the swan song of the conservative mind, which merely repeated the old forms of law and order. Yet, what we should not ignore in his “law of measure” is that his “law” can be “intuited” or perceived in continuity from ancient traditions to the modern condition.[4] A careful reading of Babbitt allows us to notice that he defines humanism as the balanced middle ground that “mediates” dichotomous concepts such as present-past, one-many, general-particular and natural forces from within and without the human being. Babbitt connects religious thoughts to modern humanistic thoughts by punning upon the etymologically different words mediate and meditate: “The energy of soul that has served on the humanistic level for mediation appears on the

religious level in the form of meditation….Mediation and meditation are after all only different stages in the same ascending "path" and should not be arbitrarily separated" ("Humanism"41). His conceptual, if not arbitrary, association between mediation and meditation does seem charge us to "contemplate but do not act," a position denounced by some critics. Yet, it is significant for our purpose to confirm that new humanism strives for the mediating role.

When we look at this from a different angle, Babbitt's defense of the classics may be understood as a sign of his concern over the position of the classics in American education where new "scientific" disciplines organized by "modern" languages and research were increasingly displacing the humanities. Some intellectuals, who wished to secure the academic status of science in universities, felt that scientific discourse needed to take into account humanist concerns and overcome the division between humanism and science. George Sarton, the Belgian historian who migrated to the US in 1915 and established the discipline of the history of science, emphasized the importance of historical perspectives toward science. Against criticism claiming that specialization in scientific fields aggravated the fragmentation of knowledge, Sarton argued that the history of science showed continuity surpassing temporal and national boundaries and allowed the divided disciplines to be organized into a logical development of human knowledge. Using the old analogy of the tree of knowledge[5], Sarton asserts that the history of science can prepare one for both diachronic and synchronic approaches to science: "one may study transversal sections of the tree….Or else, one may study the development of a branch or group of branches from its roots to its youngest twigs" ("New Humanism" 30). Each new discipline or piece of scientific research establishes its own history. What made Sarton's history of science different from those of anteceded historians was his new humanistic project to

reconciling science with other aspects of human life by restoring unity to fragmented knowledge in the twentieth century.

In the same essay, Sarton differentiated general history from the history of science: the history of science can contribute to our understanding of institutions because "the development of institutions is obviously a function of the progress of knowledge" (32). Though his description of the tree of knowledge was not particularly successful in mapping the development of human rationality in each civilization, his encyclopedic view acknowledges that science is not the work of individual genius or the steady unfolding of general truth. Instead, in an effort to stress the importance of institutional elements in the production and reproduction of knowledge, he tries to situate scientific scholarship within the university in relation to other disciplines. Despite the mildly progressive view toward science, his argument points to a middle ground that connects human knowledge with the physical world. It is essential for Sarton's history of science to be interdisciplinary and international in order to establish the visibility of institutional roles, "the skeleton of the history of civilization" (28).

Under the pressures of relativistic views, it was difficult for the new humanistic project favored by Irving Babbitt and George Sarton to win support. Babbitt's attempt to intuit "the law of measure" between dichotomous elements and Sarton's attempt to delineate "progress" in human rationality were often the focuses of criticism. Babbitt's "law of measure" is confusing because it refers to "a free will which is at once selective (and not causally determined) and a mechanism of ethical control" (Grattan 15). Sarton was "above all a man of the nineteenth century" who attempts to capture "the universal history" through progressivist and positivist approaches (Thackray and Merton 476). However, the theoretical problems that their attempts tackled are neither outmoded nor trivial. The loss of

theoretical confidence in objectivity disturbs the possible correspondence between the realm of objects and that of mind, and it is very difficult to mend the gap in that correspondence without falling into a solipsistic worldview where individual perspective and previous experiences determine every bit of empirical reality. In short, relativism, however self-contradictory the term itself may be, endangers the possibility that knowledge is shareable for the cooperative advancement of human civilization. Even though there are differences in Babbitt's and Sarton's definitions of new humanism, they share a common interest in a historical approach, through the introduction of mediating functions, to compensate for the lack of a comprehensive view of humanity. From the turn of the century to the 1930s, this sense of lacking a comprehensive view of humanity emerged, and history as a discipline was employed to seek the core of humanity in a time of drastic changes.

3. Arthur O. Lovejoy: Ideas as Media in Epistemological Dualism

Known as the advocate of a new discipline, the history of ideas, and as the founder of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Arthur O. Lovejoy is an often misunderstood philosopher whose works play up not only the historicity of philosophical concepts but also philosophical importance in history.[6] His most famous work, *The Great Chain of Being*, has been interpreted as a historical study of the mutability of philosophical concepts which their creators believe to be accurate and unchangeable. Historical analysis routinely shows that every concept is bound to presumption at any given time or place of an individual or a group to which he or she belongs. However, as we have seen in the purpose of Sarton's history of science, history can also allow us to establish a synthetic view that may detect something continuous and thus permanent in a lapse of time and in different disciplines. This dialectic of change and permanence confounds the reader of Lovejoy. In the process of

proving the transition of ideas, Lovejoy's historiography seemed to some readers to repeat the fallacy of presupposing immutability of "his" ideas. However, our focus on his historiography of ideas allows us to perceive that his epistemological discussion aims to solve the epistemological difficulty in scientific knowledge, and the solution comes from historicizing ideas. This closer examination of Lovejoy's writings from the 1930s allows us to understand the importance of ideas in his defense of epistemology. The particularity of his epistemological dualism is that it gives priority to limitation, impossibility, and absence in cognition. Lovejoy's intention to establish a history of ideas was deeply connected to this era's discussion on the relation between history and science. While previous studies on Lovejoy's philosophical standing have probed his polemics against other schools of thought,[7] I focus on Lovejoy's epistemological discussion, which implicitly incorporates the aesthetic function of imagination in the process of knowledge. The strength of Lovejoy's argument resides in his refusal of the often conflicting relation between history and science, and this is our discussion's point of departure.

Since the publication of *The Great Chain of Being*, Lovejoy's historiography and his categorization of "idea" are points of controversy. For some, Lovejoy's history relies on the presumption of certain intellectual or cognitive components which resist historical transition and cultural particularity. William J. Bouwsma, for example, criticized Lovejoy for the "detachment of his 'unit ideas' from a larger context of changing human needs and conditions" and for his theoretical dependence on "mysterious psychological impulses, inexplicable cravings for simplicity or complexity" (282). In contrast to this sort of prevailing misunderstanding of Lovejoy, Daniel Wickberg recently asserted that criticisms toward Lovejoy's decontextualization and essentialization tendencies in his analysis of ideas had been inherited from the theoretical debates between Lovejoy and Leo Spitzer

during the Second World War. Furthermore, Wickberg reframed Lovejoy's ideas in the structuralist terms: his ideas are "not only the picture, but also the frame; Lovejoy solved the text/context conundrum by making ideas the context in which texts were written and received" (450). Ideas are not only historical objects that historical studies revive from the past but also analytical tools of the present to explore the past. Lovejoy's historiography and concepts are, just like any historiography including "new historicism" after a cultural or linguistic turn, confined to time and place or to culture and language. Besides, it should not be forgotten that his historiography was founded on his epistemological discussion of the processes of human cognition and knowledge production.

Foremost, the most important aspect of Lovejoy's epistemology is his emphasis on the possibility of human fallibility in his theories of cognition and knowledge. His theory of knowledge confronts irrational elements in the process of knowledge production and questions a concept of knowledge which accepts the premise that empirical findings will achieve the objective and eternal truth. Defending his epistemological dualism from the attacks of contemporary philosophical thinkers, he approaches the traditional debate on dualism in two ways. In *The Revolt against Dualism* (1930), Lovejoy theorizes the logical and historical development of the "epistemological" dualism and the "psychophysical" dualism. With epistemological dualism, he claims that knowledge is founded on a certain ignorance of logical contradiction or on the faith of the knowers. There is the knower's "two-fold belief that he is on the one hand…in a world which transcends the narrow confines of his own transient being; on the other hand, that he can somehow reach beyond those confines and bring these external existences within the compass of his own life yet without annulment of their transcendence" (11). The knower believes that the world exceeds his comprehension but that he can have some relationship with the world. This

"two-fold" belief sets up a series of epistemological questions which urges philosophers to elucidate a correct way to bridge the gap between the knower and the known. Epistemological dualism may become an acceptable thesis for thinkers when they can acknowledge the gap forever separating perceived qualities from sensible qualities of the reality—or, using Lovejoy's terminology, the gap separating datum from *cognoscendum*. Within the assumption of epistemological dualism, there is always the potential for misrecognition produced by the gap between subject and object.

In his argument of "psychophysical," not "epistemological," dualism, Lovejoy again regards this sense of a gap as the possibility to acknowledge a distinction between the psychical and physical. He hypothesizes the mythical experiences of cavemen who had no *a priori* knowledge of distinguishing psychical from physical phenomena. However awkward this supposition sounds, he makes an important point that dreams, hallucinations, errors, and imagination are not psychological obstacles to the cognition of physical phenomena, but necessary "discoveries" dividing a mental world from a physical universe. In other words, errors and imaginings, rather than spontaneous or disinterested "intuition," paradoxically authorize physical science by taking charge of what physical science has to throw away to establish its system:

> The world of "mental" entities served as an isolation-camp for all the "wild data," the refractory and anomalous facts, which would have disturbed the tidiness and good order of the physical universe; and it left the theorist, primitive or modern, free to remold the scheme of things nearer, not to his heart's desire, but to the demands of his intellect. (29)

Mental phenomena like dream or hallucination cannot be reduced to "mere appearance". The formal difference between a dream and perception, or more precisely a formalization

of experiences under two different spheres, can make knowledge of physical science possible. Neither epistemological nor psychophysical dualism opposes knowledge with ignorance or rationality with irrationality, but rather they situate these dichotomies in a dialectical relation. In Lovejoy's epistemology, it is mandatory for knowledge to rely on its twin, that is nonknowledge. Lovejoy would not state that errors and dreams are the causes of knowledge, but he is confident that historical observation of failures or gaps in knowledge can tell much more about the nature of knowledge than the analysis of scientific methods does.

His appraisal of what is usually excluded from the domain of rational or scientific knowledge alerts us to our careless handling of Lovejoy's notion of "ideas." Without his discussion of dualistic worldviews, we cannot even halfway comprehend his tenacity in writing a history of ideas. Lovejoy observed that the two dualisms mentioned above had different origins but "converged in seventeenth-century philosophy in the hypothesis of 'ideas' (in the Cartesian and Lockian sense)" (26). Dualism, or the supposition of two sorts of existence, requires the theoretical notion of an idea as an agent connecting two realms. Lovejoy's notion of ideas is neither as substances of objects nor as abstract products of minds. The dualistic notion of ideas is a medium irreducible to either the internal mind or external reality.

> The datum, once distinguished from the *cognoscendum*, and finding no other local habitation in the physical world, fell into that "inner" world of "appearances" which had long since been discovered by man through his experiences of illusion and phantasy and dream and error; but by virtue of the cognitive function ascribed to it, it assumed in the latter world a place of special dignity, as a (more or less) "true" appearance, a "representative idea." (32)

Lovejoy here admits that we cannot directly cognize the *cognoscendum*, or the referent of objects in the external world. At the same time, the cognition of datum may be in the "inner" world of the perceiver, but not be identical to the perceiver's thoughts. Although his strange wording such as "by virtue of the cognitive function ascribed to [the datum]," obscures the dualist as the ascriber, Lovejoy strives to show that the datum attains the paradox of "representative idea" or a mixture of the opposites "truth" and "appearance".[8]

It is paradoxical because the very notion of "representative idea" as a medium implies self-contradictory accounts that "the object is not *directly* known" and "it nevertheless *is* known" (309). Lovejoy does not suppose all individuals should endeavor to acquire knowledge copying the "objective" world. He presupposes the particularity of an individual's perception and the knowledge derived from perceptual experiences. What makes critics of dualism too stubborn to understand a dualist worldview is the absence of a causal explanation of knowledge production. Dualists cannot precisely describe a uniform set of causes of perception. Or rather, dualists posit a complex interaction between matter and mind as the cause of perception. Lovejoy explains that in perception, it is difficult to discriminate "those features of the datum which can be taken as reporting characters possessed by the external existent at the locus of reference, and those which are to be taken as additions or modifications due to the cognitive event" (317). Lovejoy claims that the dual nature of cause in perception is not evidence of a defect in dualism, but rather the validity of the postulate of an agent. In short, Lovejoy not only holds up his idea of dual existence in the process of knowing, but also points out the genesis of ideas in the very gap separating the datum from the referent.[9]

For a dualist like Lovejoy, as long as human knowledge depends on two kinds of existence, an idea contributes to knowledge production by introducing "relational"

categories into the two sorts of existence. In a response to one of his critics, he provides an analogy of an individual within an enclosure to explain the paradoxical features of cognition. According to his critic, Lovejoy's theory suggests that "we can see beyond the fences which surround every finite cognitive event without jumping over the fences, and points out *the way* in which this is, and *the only way* in which it could be, accomplished [italics added]" ("Dualism" 593). This rather negative criticism misleads us into believing that Lovejoy's theory pretends to know "the only way" to present the objects outside the fence. However, Lovejoy's epistemological dualism implies that an idea itself *is* the very "way" to "see beyond the fences…without jumping over the fences." In the essay in questions, he calls this "way" or idea "a conceptual schema of relations of mutual existential externality" (594, 598). Idea in Lovejoy's epistemology does not reflect characteristics of the referent. Rather, idea is a schema which disposes the perceptual content to have some sort of relation to the perceived object as well as entities that do not coexist with the perceiving individual. A particular cognitive event is possible only when a schema relates the event to something other than a present personal experience. In other words, the schema in an individual's mind organizes logical, temporal and spatial differences into perceived contents to structure the experience of physical reality. At the end of the essay, Lovejoy summarizes his epistemology as follows:

> knowing, in so far as it is "something more" than the blank awareness of sense-data or imagery, is made possible solely by the fact that there is given *in* any cognitive experience the idea of a realm or realms of being not therein given, that we are provided with means of referring to regions lying beyond that experience without reaching them. (605-06)

The schema, which represents "the idea of a realm…being not therein given," is "given *in*

any cognitive experience;" only by incorporating the traces of past experience into present cognition, can knowing be achieved.

One of the fundamental differences that a schema provides for experience—and probably the most significant aspect of Lovejoy's epistemology—is the temporal. In his epistemology, temporality is not something to be suppressed or surpassed for an abstract system of thoughts, but is rather a key aspect that led him to become a strong supporter of dualism.[10] When he stresses epistemology, he submits remembrance or memory as examples in postulating epistemological dualism: "to remember is to be aware of a contrast between the image presented and the event recalled" (*Revolt* 305). He further asserts that any form of knowledge, including that of physical or empirical science, depends on retrospection which involves the objects not perceived for the present and transfers what is spatially or temporally absent to the present in the thinking mind. Therefore, science "always consists in beliefs about objects which are not now present to us, and remain, indeed, in their own individual being, forever inaccessible" (308). While this conclusion sounds tremendously offensive to scientists, who claim objectivity and impartiality in knowledge production, his emphasis on duality indicates that beliefs are not obstacles to the possibility of knowledge. The belief in objects is not a subjective illusion of perceivers. Rather, these beliefs verify the existence of objects independent of perceivers' minds through their persistence across a period of time, or through "their filling the temporal gaps between actual perceptions" (267). The temporality here provides an opportunity for the internal mind to recognize itself in the connection between the present experience and the past experience, also referred to as the absent experience. And this connection cannot be solely attributed to the mental functions of the perceivers. Nor can it be solely attributed to objective reality. Temporality demands that a human make a connection to the objective

world by introducing intervals even though that connection does not exist objectively. And alleviating the tension between the two realms by connecting them is what Lovejoy supposes as a function of idea in his epistemology.

The epistemological importance of temporality as a precondition for recognizing the divisions between subject and object, and external and internal is transferred to the theoretical foundation of Lovejoy's historiography. Although there is no explicit discussion about the epistemological dualism in *The Great Chain of Being*, we should not overlook the possibility that Lovejoy's establishment of the history of ideas cannot be detached from his previous discussion on dualism. In order to acknowledge Lovejoy's ingenious approach to historiography, it is essential for us to remember that he undertakes a history of ideas, not a history of philosophy or a literary history. By emphasizing "ideas" in his historiography, Lovejoy not only traces the vicissitude of human thought but also scrutinizes the operations of various representative ideas. Many critics have tried to abstract the history of ideas from Lovejoy's explanation of the "unit-idea" and his practice in *The Great Chain of Being*.[11] Those critics ended up separating his epistemology from his historiography and construing Lovejoy's "idea" as another name for an immutable and determinant element of human cognition. Their views toward Lovejoy's ideas were not completely off the mark because Lovejoy is, as we discussed above, confident in postulating the existence of ideas which fill the gap between the psychical and the physical. However, he does not define the characteristics of the idea in general.[12] He asserts that "unit-ideas" are "rather heterogeneous" (*Great* 7) and points out four different factors— "unconscious mental habit," "dialectical motive," "metaphysical pathos," and "philosophical semantics"—that orient the mediating functions of ideas. While the history of ideas is meant to address assumptions or beliefs ("unconscious mental habit"), other factors suggest that we can

approach ideas through the analysis of logical ("dialectical motive"), aesthetic ("metaphysical pathos"), and linguistic ("philosophical semantics") aspects, and especially the aspects which have been excluded from a rational and static system of philosophy.

Of course, the main argument in *The Great Chain of Being* is the persistent influences of the three "unit-ideas"—plentitude, continuity and gradation—in Occidental thought. If we consider Lovejoy's discussion in *The Revolt against Dualism*, unit-ideas can be seen as an attempt to "see beyond the fences without jumping over the fences." Unit-ideas mediate between what is inside the fence and what is outside the fence, between "this-worldliness" and "other-worldliness." The implicit assumptions of plentitude, continuity, and gradation are attributed to the finite ability of human beings to know the self and its place in the outside world. These unit-ideas are "relational" in the sense that they distribute individual entities, which are mutually external to each other, to a particular schema of relations. No idea is objective, and so no idea can endure over the time even if one attempts to stabilize some of its attributes by enclosing them within the unreachable "otherworldliness" in a Platonic sense. Therefore, Lovejoy concludes that "[t]he history of the idea of the Chain of Being—in so far as that idea presupposed such a complete rational intelligibility of the world—is the history of a failure" (329). Ideas fail to grasp the universal characteristic of objects and to convey them to human intellect. Moreover, he draws another conclusion from his historical inquiry: "rationality, when conceived as complete, as excluding all arbitrariness, becomes itself a kind of irrationality" (331). Unless ideas are heterogeneous, it is too limiting to impose a rationally consistent order to the relation between the subject and the object. A historical context allows Lovejoy to analyze how these unit-ideas behave either without or beyond the intentionality of perceivers and how they affect thoughts through time.

The history of ideas was Lovejoy's efforts to remodel humanity when the emphasis on temporality disparaged the idea of absolute and statistical order in the world and contaminated the realm of objective knowledge with subjective perspective or prejudice. Knowing through ideas as the medium between the present and non-present and between the internal and external is crucial in his epistemology and historiography. Because there is also no direct way to *know* ideas, Lovejoy has to rely on history for the many experiences of his antecedents and their ideas in order to know the function of an idea, or what Lovejoy calls "particular go." But as the indirect nature of any knowledge is evident, the purpose of historical knowledge is reduced to its utility for the solution of the present problem. Lovejoy cannot accept this pragmatic treatment of history. Indeed, he refuses the logical priority of the present over the past and acknowledges that no history is possible without the present explanatory hypothesis and also that no hypothetical knowledge is possible without transcending the present. Even though reason would not achieve comprehension of an objective world in flux, Lovejoy abandons not human rationality but "the dogma of the internality of all relations" ("Present Standpoints" 485). Each mutually external thing does not internally possess a relatedness to others; it is *idea* that transforms the referent into the datum in the process of relating. This is why the criticism of Lovejoy's "idea" as a decontextualized element of an object is inappropriate. Lovejoy is comfortable with the fact that "any entity…may actually have one set of properties which are relevant to one context, and others which are relevant to other contexts, and that, in attending to one of these sets, you do not thereby alter either it or the others" (485). Lovejoy is not blind to the contexts in which "ideas" are articulated and effectual. "Ideas" contextualize an entity by making "one set of properties…relevant to one context" without confining the entity to that set of properties. This insight allows us to avoid falling

into solipsism, which counts on the particularity of an individual perspective and insists on the incommunicability of one's experiences to others. Lovejoy's conceptual schema does not authorize a perceiver to manipulate his/her empirical world, but his notion of idea leaves some space for us to permit a variety of individual experiences in an event. At the very end of his essay in the first issue of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, he defines an idea as follows:

> An idea, in short, is after all not only a potent but a stubborn thing; it commonly has its own "particular go;" and the history of thought is a bilateral affair—the story of the traffic and interaction between human nature, amid the exigencies and vicissitudes of physical experience, on the one hand, and on the other, the specific natures and pressures of the ideas which men have, from very various promptings, admitted to their minds. ("Reflections" 23)

Only through history can we know how ideas are "potent" and "stubborn" things, which are both independent of perceivers and effectual to them. Therefore, he laid claim to the necessity of a new academic journal which could promote interdisciplinary, inter-lingual, and international approaches to various ideas. In this way, Lovejoy's works touched the core of intellectual argument in the 1930s.

4. Robert K. Merton: The Unanticipated Consequences of Science

While Lovejoy developed his history of ideas based on his own epistemology, Robert K. Merton initiated historical research to develop a system of sociological thought. Even though his studies have influenced at least the two different fields, the history of science and communication studies, scholars in these fields have limited their attention to those of Merton's thoughts that are congenial to their interests rather than attempting to see

their continuity. In the history of science, the hypothetical relationship between Puritan ethos and modern science found in his first book, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England* (1938)[13], known as the "Merton thesis," is a much debated issue.[14] Thomas Kuhn, for example, in his writing of a history of the history of science, indicated how his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was based on "remarks about the Merton thesis" to maintain the importance of social and cultural factors in incipiency of new fields (80). Merton also worked with Paul F. Lazarsfeld at the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University and contributed to a theoretical foundation of the yet-to-be-defined discipline of communication studies. In order to determine causes of actions, Merton contrived methods of empirical research to meet theoretical demands, as seen in his second book *Mass Persuasion* (1946).[15] Certainly, it is much easier to claim that Merton's specialty is "sociology," and thus that he treats both history and communication from a sociological perspective. Yet, his intellectual works go beyond one academic discipline. Merton reminisces in his new edition of his first book that his approach to "the remarkable efflorescence of science" starts from a sociological premise that "various institutions in the society are variously interdependent so that what happens in the economic or religious realm is apt to have some perceptible connection with some of what happens in the realm of science, and conversely" (xvii). If what Merton meant by "sociology" is an abstract presupposition of interrelations among particular realms or institutions in society, it is profitable for us to analyze his thought process in regard to the history of science and communication, which would render the interrelations more detailed and intelligible. To disentangle the infinite complexity of social interrelations, which do not correspond with the law of cause and effect, Merton assesses the meditative functions of institution, which reproduce both human collective actions and their unanticipated

consequences. There are two separate but closely related ways to see his concept of "unanticipated consequence:" first, the concept developed as he probed the discourses of natural philosophers in the seventeenth century, or second the concept provides much more than an historical narrative of secularization and reveals Merton's hope in sociology.

Starting from the contemporary sociological assumption that any scientific knowledge is not absolute and pure but is rather inseparable "from its social and cultural context" (xxxi), Merton indicates the contextuality of knowledge in the phenomena of "unanticipated consequences." In *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England*, Merton tackled the question of why science undermined theology despite the purpose of natural philosophers to uphold God's works and their religious commitments. With the cooperation of his mentor, George Sarton, who introduced him to the history of science in his doctorial program at Harvard, Merton reached the conclusion that "[p]uritanism inadvertently contributed to the legitimacy of science as an emerging social institution" (xvi). This sentence epitomizes the overall argument of the book. The word "inadvertently" imitates a paucity of planning or intention, and the specification of "an emerging social institution" emphasizes a process of translating Puritan words into actual practices embodied by social institutions, including the Royal Society. As suggested in the sentence, Merton doubts the correspondence between intention and action, that is, between theological doctrine and religious ethos, and attributes this slippage to contexts in which the action is performed and interpreted. Puritan natural philosophers did not at first intend to promote science in opposition to religious teachings. When natural philosophers turned religious teachings into actions or institutionalized activities, there appeared "unanticipated consequences" from Puritanism through influences of other fields in society. He argues that:

> with the complex interaction which society constitutes, the effects of action ramify. They are not restricted to the specific area in which the values were originally centered, occurring in interrelated fields specifically ignored at the outset….It is this usually unlooked-for reaction which constitutes a most important factor in the process of secularization, of the transformation or breakdown of value-system. This is the essential paradox of social action— the "realization" of values may lead to their renunciation. (101)

When new doctrines are actualized in actions, the meanings of actions acquire an "unlooked-for" or social effect and exceed the original intention of the actors. This is not idealistic historiography where the transition of one value system to another is done as a conscious transformation in a human mind. Since "effects of action ramify," actions might defeat their own purposes.

Merton's sociological approach especially endeavors to establish a system of thoughts to comprehend this enigmatic emergence of "unanticipated consequences." Merton's sociological inquiry is related to a specific field called the sociology of knowledge or *Wissenssoziologie*. Merton was one of the intellectuals who brought the sociology of knowledge from Germany and France into US academic discourse, and his studies specified the importance of unanticipated consequences in relation to the sociology of knowledge. Before the publication of his first book, Merton admitted in the article "The Unanticipated Consequence of Purposive Social Action" that social thought has recognizable consequences, unexpected by actors or deviated from purposes. Unless such unanticipated-ness could be attributed to "the inscrutable will of God or Providence or Fate" (894), an unanticipated consequence was considered a mistake in comprehension rather than a socio-cultural by-product of knowledge production. Merton thought it problematic

that a “lack of adequate knowledge” is “the *sole* barrier to a correct anticipation” (898). There could not be enough knowledge to foresee the exact consequences, but our disappointment with a failed expectation implies our blind faith in the possibility of enough knowledge. In the essay, Merton enumerates five possible causes of unanticipated consequences—ignorance, error, “imperious immediacy of interest,” basic value, and shared future prediction.[16] Although he tries to categorize the “causes” of the gap between intentions and consequences of actions, they are closely related to each other. What fascinates Merton most was a process of cultural changes, as he describes in his first book: “activities oriented toward certain values release processes which so react as to change the very scale of values which precipitated them….Here is the essential paradox of social action—the ‘realization’ of values may lead to their renunciation” (903). It is important to realize that Merton pays attention, though not as strongly as Lovejoy does, to temporality, which allows actions to embed in different contexts and to ramify effects throughout society. Temporality dislocates a familiar relationship between knowledge and action. We will be never able to know a consequence and act to achieve that consequence. Action cannot be a direct expression of knowledge while knowledge is unable to guarantee the results of action. Merton’s sociology of knowledge, therefore, should compensate for the gap between knowledge and action.

The sociology of knowledge does not overlook irrational and sentimental elements of knowledge. In his 1937 article, “The Sociology of Knowledge,” Merton explained about two-way method of knowledge: the sociology of knowledge needs to show that “in certain realms knowledge does not develop according to immanent laws of growth (based on observation and logic) and that, at certain junctures, extra-theoretical factors of various sorts…determine the appearance, form, and in some instances, even the content and logical

structure of this knowledge" (494).[17] In the case of secularization of science in the seventeenth-century, Merton emphasizes the absence of a logical development from religious bias to scientific truth and simultaneously enumerates a variety of "extra-theoretical factors" to delineate the dynamic relations between sentiment, action, and institution. He acknowledges both the internal influences and external influences on human knowledge and action: internal factors such as interests, impulses and emotions, and external factors including economic situation, social prestige, and interpersonal relations. "The religious component of thought, belief and action becomes effective only when it is reinforced by strong sentiments which lend meaning to certain forms of conduct….And, as we shall see, behavior in its turn reacts upon the sentiments, re-enforcing, moulding, at times altering them so that the whole process is one of incessant interaction" (56). Here, action is split into conduct and behavior: the former implies the actor's conscious motive and a choice of means; the latter connotes a not-so-conscious routine or naturalistic response.[18] Without sentiment, thought or action seems sporadic and meaningless.

Furthermore, sentiments cannot accidentally transform themselves to encourage different thoughts and actions. For instance, "One formula which…became the focus of the strong sentiments among Puritans is "the glorification of God" as the end and all of existence….God must be glorified but institutional controls canalized this glorification in particular directions, with a variety of social effects (60-61). Merton does not clarify how a set of conducts is converted to institutions or how effects of (religious) conduct ramify into other institutions, yet behaviors structured by institutions react with sentiments to trigger changes in values. The purpose of conduct for the natural philosophers of seventeenth century-England was "the glorification of God," and this was supported by their sentiments. When this thought was implemented into an institution to establish scientific ethos,

scientific conducts for “the glorification of God” achieved social prestige and ritual function, which affect other conducts or behaviors and eventually reach out to sentiment. Institutionalization endows conduct with social meaning that is not included in the original purpose. “Once science has become firmly institutionalized, its attractions…are those of all elaborated and established social activities…Institutionalized values are conceived as self-evident and require no vindication” (83). As soon as scientific actions became too self-evident to need a discursive defense, religious doctrines were examined according to scientific rationality. Also, institutionalization enabled scientific behaviors to interact with economic, military, and distribution institutions whose technological and material needs propelled motivations other than “the glorification of God.”

Merton’s reliance on an obscure historiography and a specific subject demonstrates that his insistence on these “interactivities” between the socio-economic factors and the psycho-empirical factors realizes the approaches of the sociology of knowledge and confronts the challenges that such approaches happen to produce. Karl Mannheim, whom Merton scrutinizes to advance his analytical style, argues that “only empirical investigation will show us how strict is the correlation between life-situation and thought-process, or what scope exists for variation in the correlation” (*Ideology and Utopia* 267). By empirically investigating a particular knowledge production and transformation, Mannheim and Merton refrain from enacting their own epistemological standard that presupposes the determinants of the mental process. Merton focuses on a system of thoughts and its development at a certain time and place, though without starting from the epistemological discussion of how people “actually” perceive the outside world and acquire knowledge. This is partly why Merton’s historiography attempts to reveal complex interactions between a thought and a situation but sounds arbitrary and inconsistent. He

does not specify a certain correspondence, for example, between social norms and individual attitudes. On the contrary, he makes a case for empirical-textual investigation to compare differences and similarities between the precedent and antecedent systems of values in order to hypothesize the influences of social interactions on knowledge. Therefore, even on an ideological level, there are no objective interactions that determine the characteristics of a new value system: "the acceptance of every great change of belief depends less upon the intrinsic force of doctrines or the personal capabilities of its proponents than upon the previous social changes which are seen—*a posteriori*, it is true—to have brought the new doctrines into congruence with the dominant values of the period" (104-05). His method shows the reconciliation between "old" dominant values and "new" views, and unfolds a social and discursive context for the transitional period.

Although it is not clear who the interpreter or seer of the "previous social changes" is, old values and new doctrines merge to produce unanticipated consequences. There would be no complete cleavage between the old and the new, but the new doctrine would not maintain logical and conceptual purity if it made itself intelligible to those under the influences of the "old" value system. However, the difficulty with Merton's historiography is that it derives both the conscious and unconscious process of people in the past only from textual evidence without relying on his contemporary presumption of mental function. Proving irrational sentimentality was especially difficult: "Puritan advocacy of experimental science was not, however, the result of a reasoned process. Rather it was the inevitable outcome of an emotionally consistent circle of sentiments and beliefs linking into a chain of non-logic various designated activities which satisfied these sentiments" (115). Merton argues that experiments were not rational consequences of Puritan teachings or scientific knowledge placed before empirical science.[19] Even though he seems to point

to irrational elements such as sentiments and beliefs in the Puritan insistence upon experiments, his visual evocation of “circle” and “chain” in the preceding citation does not tell us much about mental process. He reaches for evidence that there were some “extra-theoretical factors” which affect any theorization. It may be easy to find some stains contaminating the (presupposed) purity of scientific thought. However, it is hard to point to the causes of such stains by referring to socio-historical factors without an epistemological foundation.

Since Merton assigned to the sociology of knowledge the task of explicating unanticipated consequences, he had to go further to reflect his own insight. He, therefore, tried to anticipate the unanticipated consequences of the sociology of knowledge and prepare for subversive reactions to sociological discourses. This theoretical reflection is not an academician’s tedious erudition. It is burdened with a political implication. As Merton demonstrates the unanticipated consequences of socio-economic forces and ideological transitions in the natural philosophers of seventeenth-century England, he shifts his attention to his time and observes the contemporary relationship between society and knowledge. Citing Max Weber’s dictum at the turn of the twentieth century, “the belief in the value of scientific truth is not derived from nature but is a product of definite culture,” Merton claims that “this belief is readily transmuted into doubt or disbelief” (“Science and the Social Order” 321). His theoretical insight, which is derived from society losing faith in religion in the seventeenth century, is applied to society losing faith in science. He situates the sociology of knowledge within the cultural context of his time. The sociology of knowledge is not a flawless description of the relationship between society and knowledge: it has to generate its own unanticipated consequences through circulation and translation of its doctrine into everyday practice.

The major unanticipated consequence for Merton was Nazi theorists' employment of the sociology of knowledge to criticize science and to reinforce their nationalistic view: "totalitarian theorists have adopted the radical relativistic doctrines of *Wissenssoziologie* as a political expedient for discrediting 'liberal' or 'bourgeois' or 'non-Aryan' science" (328). To refute this relativistic proposition, he did not think it appropriate to return to the doctrines of "pure" science because the insistence on purity neglects the social and economic influences on science. Instead, he analyzes the unanticipated consequences of science whose "[o]rganized scepticism involves a latent questioning of certain bases of established routine, authority, vested procedures and the realm of 'sacred' generally" (334). Unless skepticism as an institutionalized attitude of science destabilizes other institutions, science produces its resistance from them. At this point, Merton tries to distinguish "totalitarian" society from liberal society in terms of its relation to scientific ethos, however unsuccessfully. Contrary to a centralization of institutional control in the totalitarian society,"[i]n liberal structures the absence of such centralization permits *the necessary degree of insulation* by guaranteeing to each sphere *restricted rights of autonomy* and thus enables *the gradual integration of temporarily inconsistent elements* [italics added]" (336). The italicized phrases obscure the element of limitation or control on "insulation," "autonomy" or "integration." This sentence indicates Merton's hesitation to completely set democratic freedom against totalitarian control.

Without accepting the presupposition that democracy and science go against totalitarianism, Merton had to perform difficult theoretical maneuvering to justify a place for science in society. Merton explains the possible paradoxes inherent in social structure in terms of cultural goals and institutionalized means.[20] With the means-ends discourse, Merton asserts that we need social structure to organize a means to make our collective

lives meaningful and purposeful. Without such organization, social life would be subject to anomie: “Insofar as one of the most general functions of social organization is to provide a basis for calculability and regularity of behavior, it is increasingly limited in effectiveness as these elements of the structure become dissociated” (“Social Structure and Anomie” 682). As long as people behave according to mutual expectations and get expected results from doing so, social structure can formally sustain cultural values. However, if the mutual expectation is betrayed, and the means to an end does not lead executers of the means to the end, anomie presides over the society. Too much emphasis on the end destroys the appropriate means to achieve it. “‘The-end-justifies-the-means’ doctrine becomes a guiding tenet for action when the cultural structure unduly exalts the end and the social organization unduly limits possible recourse to approved means” (681). He also extends this discussion of the unbalance between means and end to describe international conflicts whose goal is to seize dominant power throughout the world by any means necessary.

Certainly, too much emphasis on means is also problematic. Merton does not overlook the fact that adherence to the status quo through organizational means may maintain the calculability of human interactions but not necessarily meet social demands. In this case which he observes in bureaucracy, “an instrumental value becomes a terminal value” (“Bureaucratic Structure” 563). That a means becomes an end is another example of unanticipated consequences. An outright elimination of bureaucratic structure would not solve the problem which bureaucracy unintentionally produced because the original purpose of bureaucracy was, according to Max Weber, to attain “precision, reliability, efficiency” (562) through “the complete elimination of personalized relationships and of nonrational considerations (hostility, anxiety, affectual involvements, etc.)” (561). Bureaucracy comprises “clearly defined patterns of activity in which, ideally, every series

of actions is functionally related to the purposes of the organization" (560). The concept of organism, where parts are meaningfully related to the whole, is evident in the blueprint of modern bureaucracy. However, rationalized organizations such as bureaucracy demonstrate that social structure cannot function without "infusing group participants with appropriate attitudes and sentiments" (562). Even though the rationality of bureaucracy undertakes to restrain non-rational, sentimental consideration and to solve a problem that personalized relationships cannot solve, its structure depends on sentiment which has the potential to transform a means into a goal. With the means-end discourse, Merton shows how unanticipated consequences occur by analyzing what he abstractly calls "social structure." His attention to social structure allows us the benefit of assuming that a bureaucrat is not necessarily a conscious agent who says one thing and does another. Rather, the very efforts to utilize rationality to renounce nonrational consideration or to comply with specific functions of bureaucracy to serve social purposes are bound to sentiments. This view toward the social structure does not presume human action to be subject to a definite cause, such as a private desire or economic force. Although his essay does not clarify how to achieve a balance between a means and an end, his theory of social structure does not necessarily exert an irresistible force upon individuals. Merton assumes that rationality is inseparable to its opposite in the sense that our rational thoughts and actions are emotionally elicited. Admitting this inseparability, he both criticizes and refines the cultural values of social structures like bureaucracy.

When his corroboration with Lazarsfeld at Columbia University prompted Merton's shift from the sociology of knowledge to communication studies, Merton examined the theoretical and institutional consequences of the sociology of knowledge, and gave prominence to the position of audience in the process of knowledge production. In his

1941 essay “Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Knowledge,” he again takes up a more detailed analysis of Karl Mannheim and, this time focuses on the theoretical weakness. His criticism of Mannheim and other of Marxist theories of ideology would seem disloyal to the theoretical foundation on which Merton had previously depended. As Merton began weighing empirical methods of social science against more “speculative” continental theories around the 1940s, his shift from ideology to positive evidence may be one example of the large current of American-dominant post-war media studies, which Stuart Hall later disputes.[21] Despite Merton keeping his distance from the concept of ideology and European theories, I argue that he is loyal to the insights of the sociology of knowledge, and unsatisfied with Mannheim’s solution to relativism. Mannheim’s solution was unexpectedly produced from the sociology of knowledge, which the Nazis exploited for their theoretical arguments. Merton cannot dismiss the Nazis’ discourse as irrational. Mannheim’s argument about the historicity of knowledge implicitly invokes a logical extension which tolerates the possibility that any validity of knowledge is historical and thus temporal and dismissible. For Merton, Mannheim has left this paradox unsolved. Particularly, Merton does not like the fact that Mannheim gives a “classless position” to the “the socially unattached intellectual” (263).[22]

Instead of being disappointed with the sociology of knowledge, he applies its own methods to the sociology of knowledge itself: he places the sociology of knowledge within a specific context to evaluate its findings and its “paradigm.” While he inspects the social context and logical development that led Mannheim to demand a privileged position for intellectuals, Merton refers to relationships between intellectuals and bureaucracy to demonstrate that the neutrality and objectivity of intellectuals are hardly possible.[23] Through all these empirical and theoretical maneuvers, Merton realizes the importance of

creating an audience-centered model of knowledge production. At this point, he achieves a logical reversal of unanticipated consequences. This is not the model where intellectuals produce knowledge and disseminate it to a public that always misunderstands it, and generating consequences unanticipated by originators of knowledge. On the contrary, intellectuals or "men of knowledge do not orient themselves exclusively toward their data nor toward the total society, but to special segments of that society with their special demands, criteria of validity, of significant knowledge, of pertinent problems, and so on" (34). In short, intellectuals need to be aware of their contexuality by listening to the various demands of diverse audiences in order to produce knowledge.[24] His emphasis on the intellectual's responsibility to audiences brings us back to his doctoral thesis: "The scientists in seventeenth-century England and France who were organized in newly established scientific societies addressed themselves to audiences very different from those of the savants who remained exclusively in the traditional universities" (34). It is his and our challenge to be able to address ourselves to audiences and anticipate their demands.

5. Temporality and Fallibility in Epistemology

Without presupposing rigid categories for the foundation of knowledge, Merton and Lovejoy strove to articulate a process of knowledge production which could withstand temporal flux. Their arguments do not oppose permanence to temporality, universality to particularity, or natural philosophy to instrumentality. Rather, they are more apt to determine the conditions of our perception, or of our sense of time, without relying on visual or spatial abstractions. An event, for example, can be confined neither to a singular place of occurrence nor to a specific place in the brain. Even though Lovejoy invokes a visual metaphor with his use of the term "schema" in his epistemology, he redefines the

characteristics of idea as a medium by dissociating ideas from visual images. If our spatial conception of time makes us presuppose the irreversibility of time and the singularity of a time-line, it is hard to conceive why Merton and Lovejoy advocate epistemological dualism. Time is not something that they have to dismiss as “mere appearance” in order to name every mental as well as physical element generating human experiences. Time is an inevitable condition that complicates—or enriches—the significance of events and our experiences. Therefore, they put forth epistemological arguments pertaining to the temporal domain.

When Lovejoy and Merton accentuate time without spatial metaphors, they resort to discussions of things that are usually excluded from knowledge such as errors, misunderstandings, and dreams. Of course, humanistic arguments, including those of Babbitt and Sarton, are based on the acceptance of human fallibility. Even though humanists have attempted to concede human fallibility without religious assumptions, they often end up being trapped into the pitfall of division between the physical and the metaphysical. In this division, there are repetitive denouncements of culpability in smuggling the metaphysical “prejudice” back into the description of the physical phenomena. Lovejoy and Merton’s historiographies are also considered culpable in privileging certain words or assumptions. Yet, as we have seen above, close examination of their works from the 1930s reveals that they were fully aware of the logical consequence of assuming human fallibility and careful to not plunge into a cycle of denouncements. In particular, Merton had to contrive a solution to indeterminacy in the sociology of knowledge because Hitler exploited that sociological reasoning for the purpose of political persuasion. A more detailed analysis of fallibility, in terms of unanticipated consequences and epistemological gaps between subject and object in a temporal domain, is what roused

both Merton and Lovejoy into departing from New Humanism.

As their epistemologies are coordinated with a temporal dimension that generates unanticipated consequence or failures, their mediating concepts, such as idea and institution, reveal their efforts to communicate the importance of temporality and fallibility. Their history of science is not a demonstration of the gradual development of scientific and human knowledge. Neither is the history of science a set of examples to persuade the reader to give up scientific inquiries. Even though they point to the necessity of assuming a "medium" that affects the relationship between the knower and the known, only specific examples of historical events (mostly errors) can partially express the qualities of media like "idea" and "institution." Although their vocabularies refer to "subject-oriented" ideas and "object-oriented" institutions, their terminologies do not limit function to one side or the other of individual/society dichotomy. Their medium concepts are meant to provoke in us an awareness of the inevitability of failure and the ways in which some thoughts or actions are transformed into mistakes. Works by Lovejoy and Merton, thus, suggest an important aspect of the intellectual discussion of the 1930s in terms of temporality and value shift, and this supplies a constructive perspective from which to examine the literature and literary criticism of that time.

Notes on Chapter 2

[1] The article "Humanism: An Essay at Definition" is included in *Humanism and America* edited by Norman Foerster. In response to this book, articles by non-academic intellectuals including Allen Tate and Kenneth Burke, whom I will discuss in Chapter 5, are published in Grattan's *The Critique of Humanism*.

[2] See Hoeveler's account of Babbitt.

[3] For instance, Vanderbilt. Also some critics in Grattan's *The Critique of Humanism.*

[4] In *The Revival of Humanities in American Education* (1940), it is noteworthy that the "new humanist" movement was never homogeneous, and each scholar expressed the importance of humanism in his own way. Without the conflicting interpretations of humanism of the time, Babbitt would not have labored over his own argument to distinguish his definition from other definitions. See the first chapter of Babbitt's *Literature and the American College* (1908).

[5] The tree is illustrated as a visual metaphor for the genealogy of knowledge. See Lima for a more detailed history of tree metaphors.

[6] For a concise summary of Lovejoy's works and his critics, see Grafton.

[7] On Lovejoy's relation to other schools of thought, see Feuer, Diggins and Wickberg.

[8] For more precise accounts of Lovejoy's complex epistemology, see his "Dualisms Good and Bad."

[9] For additional details about Lovejoy's conception of emergence in a sense of results exceeding their causes, see his "The Meanings of 'Emergence' and its Modes" and Kathleen E. Duffin's "Arthur O. Lovejoy and the Emergence of Novelty."

[10] Lovejoy's discussion on the importance of temporality in his philosophical thoughts; see "A Temporalistic Realism".

[11] For criticisms of Lovejoy's methodology, see Daniel J. Wilson's "Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* after Fifty Years."

[12] Lovejoy can enumerate the sources of ideas or unit-ideas: for example, "types of categories, thoughts concerning particular aspects of common experience, implicit or explicit presuppositions, sacred formulas and catchwords, specific philosophic theorems, or the larger hypotheses, generalizations or methodological assumptions of various sciences" ("The Historiography of Ideas" 538). However, he does not give a common characteristic among these. Rather, ideas seem to be a synthesis of communality and variety. On the one hand, they are "to be found at work in the most various regions of the history of human thinking and feeling" (538). On the other hand, the prevalence of certain ideas does not create the uniformity of opinions: "the intellectual and affective 'reactions' of men—individuals and masses—have been highly diverse" (538). It is possible to argue that Lovejoy tries to find the hidden structure which binds Occidental thought. However, it needs to be emphasized that ideas also generate diversity and various ways to confront problems of the day.

[13] This was originally Merton's 1936 doctoral thesis. It was published in 1938 in *Osiris*, (4, 360-632), one of the two academic journals founded by George Sarton. Every citation of the book is from the 1970 reprinted version.

[14] On Merton thesis, see Hall's "Merton Revisited," and Abraham's "Misunderstanding the Merton Thesis."

[15] See Coser, and especially Lazarsfeld's "Working with Merton" (35-67).

[16] "Imperious immediacy of interest" means an unintended result of a careless judgement caused by strong interests in immediate gains. Basic values are social norms people follow without much intention. Merton takes Weber's discussion of the Protestant ethic as an example of basic values, which eventually cause unintended consequences in conventional practices. Prediction is supposed to reflect the future, but the announcement of prediction affects the present condition whose change may not result in what is predicted.

[17] Merton did not refer to Karl Mannheim's Ideology and Utopia in his doctoral dissertation, but did in "The Sociology of Knowledge." This citation corresponds to Mannheim's point.

[18] It is doubtful he distinguishes behavior from conduct in Science, Technology and Society. But he makes the distinction in “The Unanticipated Consequence of Purposive Social Action.”

[19] Merton explains that “[t]he Puritan insistence upon empiricism, upon the experimental approach, was intimately connected with the identification of contemplation with idleness, of the expenditure of physical energy and the handling of material objects with industry. Experiment was the scientific expression of the practical, active and methodical bents of the Puritan” (93). In short, experiment is derived from translating process from religious teaching to scientific practice, but it cannot be reduced to either.

[20] In “Social Structure and Anomie,” Merton creates five modes of social structure in terms of the relation between means and ends. They are conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Conformity is the ideal correspondence of a means to an end. He especially focuses on innovation and ritualism, that is, ends-oriented and means-oriented respectively. For a more detailed discussion of this schema, see page 676 of “Social Structure and Anomie.”

[21] Stuart Hall, in “The Rediscovery of ‘Ideology’,” may be right to point out that the American “mainstream” media studies are oriented to positivist social science. But, my discussion of Merton allows us to see why he ended up realizing the importance of interviews.

[22] The citation from “Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Knowledge” comes from the 1949 version of *Social Theory and Social Structure*.

[23] For a close examination of the sociology of knowledge, see “The Sociology of Knowledge,” published in *Twentieth Century Sociology* (1945), and republished as “Paradigm for the Sociology of Knowledge” in *The Sociology of Science* (1973). For Merton’s discussion of bureaucracy and intellectualism, see “Role of the Intellectual in Public Bureaucracy,” originally published in the journal *Social Forces* (23 (1945): 405-15), and reprinted in *Social Theory and Social Structure*.

[24] It should not be ignored that Merton’s trust in audiences leads to his insistence on sharing knowledge in scientific communities.

Chapter 3

Voices of Disinformation: Newness of Spanish Civil War in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)

For your information in stories about the war I try to show all the different sides of it,
taking it slowly and honestly and examining it from many ways.
So never think one story represents my viewpoint because it is much too complicated for that.
---Ernest Hemingway, A Letter to Ivan Kashkin[1]

1. Which Contexts?

For Whom the Bell Tolls (hereafter *FWTBT*), of which Ernest Hemingway made the Spanish Civil War the subject matter, begins with an epigraph cited from some verses of a John Donne poem. The epigraph first challenges the notion of a unique individuality separated from any external environment by saying that "no man is an Iland, intire of it selfe." Because there is no individuality without collectivity, the demise of other people can be rethought as a loss to any living person or "Mankind." The sounds of the bell in the poem symbolize collective identity and the indivisibility of a people, both the living and the dead, in a community. This epigraph has functioned as a nodal point that is significant in determining the meanings of the novel as well as the political stance of the celebrated author Hemingway. On the premise that the protagonist Robert Jordan is a self-projection of Hemingway, the most controversial issue among critics is whether or not the author is committed to the cause of the Comintern-supported Spanish Republic. By comparing the novel with the author's personal letters, facts pertaining to the Spanish Civil War, gossip, and biographies of the author, critics have scoured every corner for evidence to verify Hemingway's political intentions behind writing the novel.[2] The bell described at the beginning strikes some critics as a warning against all totalitarianism, including both fascism and communism, and others as a humanistic figure which goes beyond any partisan interests.

The problem with criticism that focuses on authorial belief is that it necessarily treats particular passages as references to Hemingway's actual experiences in the civil war. This critical approach analyzes statements by the narrator and characters, and seeks correspondence between their words in the novel and factual events in order to judge the values of statements. Hemingway's actual political stance is evaluated according to the degree of negativity expressed in the novel in regard the reputation of the Comintern to which he openly declared his support.[3] For early critics, such as Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling, and Alvah Bessie, the novel's references to deceits and brutalities on the side of the Republic evince the author's disillusionment over the cause of the Comintern and his intention to move from political commitment to private-artistic salvation. Throughout Hemingway studies during and even after the Cold War, a liberal-democratic view of aesthetics repeatedly proposes that the source of Hemingway's art dwells in an individuality irrelevant to (collective) politics. From this view, Hemingway is disillusioned and recoiled from politics.[4] In opposition to this view, some critics, such as Cary Nelson and Ryoichi Funayama, recollected Hemingway's personal letters, which prove his commitment to the cause of the Republic, had not been interrupted. In a recent critical essay about *FWTBT*, Ichiro Takayoshi argues that what seems to be a "non-political" stance of the protagonist Robert is actually a parallel to the political stance of the Comintern whose "propaganda campaign…advertised the republican cause as the defense of bourgeois democracy…[and] touted its pragmatic prioritization of war over social revolution" (120). Because these critical approaches presume the literary work to be an expression of the authorial stance toward politics, or more specifically toward party and ideology, they fail to recognize that criticism based on a comparison between the explicit contents of the novel and the actual lines of political camps could also result in a certain political configuration.[5]

The presumption that the novel realistically reflects what Hemingway experienced in Spain undermines the novel as a literary genre and the monologue as a literary style of the novel. Why did

Hemingway choose a novel and monologue as his means to describe the Spanish Civil War? He worked as a war correspondent and wrote some journalistic articles. He also made a public speech at the American Writers' Congress, wrote a play, *The Fifth Column*, and participated in the making of the film *The Spanish Earth*. Hemingway's attempt to reach his audience through different genres and media is significant in terms of construing what the novel tries to convey. As Dos Passos integrated different media into a single work to represent the USA, Hemingway used different channels to represent the Spanish Civil War with awareness that every medium has its particular advantages and disadvantages. Analyzing the different media of Hemingway's works, this chapter demonstrates that the Spanish Civil War provided a medium through which to expose the problems of language in an era of propaganda, and that the style of monologue employed in the novel is an effective tool for addressing these problems. The novelistic technique of protagonist monologue functions as a description of a paradoxical situation destabilizing the enunciated statement rather than as an expression of a character's personal feelings or truth. In the end, it is revealed that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* tackles the political dimension in signifying the meaning of death in war.

2. A New Kind of War

According to Paul Preston, a historian of the Spanish Civil War, there is as much scholarly research on the Spanish Civil War as there is on the Second World War, despite its comparatively limited scale and size. This fact indicates situations of domestic warfare much more complex than fighting between the Franco-led nationalists and the Republicans alone. From even before the beginning of the war, the determination of what was and was not fact had been a matter of politics. There were so many fabrications and deceptions that it was and is very difficult to judge with certainty what is true and false. Hemingway's work is not exceptional in this. Even though *FWTBT* is a fictional account of the war, its valuation has exclusively relied on its accordance with historical

facts. For example, Alvah Bessie, a veteran of the Lincoln Battalion, criticized the novel for attacking Andre Marty, "the organizer of the International Brigades," "with the very terms that have been leveled at him by the French fascists" (28). While I will argue later in this chapter that the function of Marty in the novel cannot be reduced to Hemingway's acceptance of fascist "facts," here I will demonstrate that Bessie's criticism represents an interpretation of the propagandist elements in the novel by identifying correspondences between discourses in and outside the novel. While admitting that the war is wrong and inhumane, Hemingway wrote in his personal letters that there is a war necessary to be fought and won.[6] In the novel, the protagonist persuades himself that there are murders to be executed in war situations, as if he were tracing the views expressed by Hemingway in his letters. Yet, it is quite precipitate to point out the similarities between the protagonist's inner voice and the author's private letters, and therefore conclude that the novel is a statement of authorial intention in the form of fiction. Indeed, these similarities show the difficulties in grasping the connection between Hemingway's anti-fascist stance in his public speeches and his slighting of fascist ferocity in the novel. His slighting of the fascist side indicates to some readers the betrayal of his original commitment to the cause of the Republic and Comintern.

It is, in general, problematic to lightly read the political stance of an author into the contents of his/her story, especially when the ubiquity of propaganda complicates the audience's and author's attitudes toward language. As discussed in Chapter 1, the smooth transmission of facts to the masses grew much more difficult as the masses were aware of propagandist elements in mass communication. Some critics, particularly those who denounce propaganda in preference to art, interpret Hemingway's work as propaganda, the manifest contents of which reflect the author's political beliefs. Thus, for example, Erik Nakjavani interprets Hemingway's The Fifth Colum as "propaganda…to influence the attitude of those who chose to see it on the state…in favor of the supporters of the Spanish Republic" (85). It is, however, very hard to imagine that Hemingway

chose a realistic style to tell the story of actual events of the Spanish Civil War objectively in effort to affect the reader. This is because Hemingway acknowledges the influences of war instruments, such as propaganda and spies, which significantly modify discursive situations to create a "new" kind of war. This newness demonstrates not a rise of "totalitarian" fascism and communism but that of what we now call a "total war."[7]

Going to Spain as a correspondent from March 1937, Hemingway declared his feelings of discomfort toward the civil war in a dispatch called "A New Kind of War," and sent it to his publisher in April 14th. This dispatch is not a third-person, objective, journalistic description of events. Rather, it occasionally takes the form of a short story with a second-person narrative to allow the reader to experience the events vicariously. The narrative form does not specify why the events relayed gave Hemingway a new impression of then "modern" warfare. There are two main events depicted. The first is the routinized aerial bombings of civilian areas of Madrid: "in the morning, before your call comes from the desk, the roaring burst of a high explosive shell wakes you" (*By-Line* 262). Although at this point, air raids are not total and massive, the indiscriminate attacks indicate an erosion of the boundary between civilians and soldiers. (Several days after the bombing referring to here, the infamous massive air raid occurred in Guernica.)

The second event is Hemingway's meeting with J. Robert Raven, a critically injured soldier of the Lincoln Battalion. When Hemingway listens to Raven's story of his heroic struggle and injury, he firmly believes that Raven's story is not true because it was "the sort of way everyone would like to have been wounded" (*By-Line* 265). Hemingway confides his own opinion in the dispatch: "In the war that I had known, men often lied about the manner of their wounding. Not at first; but later. I'd lied a little myself in my time" *(*265). Hemingway scholars interpret this passage as evidence of his exaggeration of experiences in the First World War. Telling a lie about an injury is nothing new to Hemingway. But, in this case at the Spanish Civil War, Raven lied about his injuries from the

start. A captain of Raven's battalion, Jock Cunningham, tells Hemingway a story slightly different from Raven's, and the reader of the dispatch may hypothesize that Raven was actually telling the truth.

> He [Cunningham] told me [Hemingway], in military terms, the history of the attempt to rally retiring troops on his battalion's right flank, of his bombing raid down a trench which was held at one end by the fascists and at the other end by the government troops, of the taking of this trench and, with six men and a Lewis gun, cutting off a group of some eighty fascists from their own lines, and of the final desperate defense of their impossible position his six men put up until the government troops came up and, attacking, straightened out the line again. (267)

Hemingway gets a sense of clarity and cogency from Cunningham's "history" as compared to Raven's "story." But, Cunningham's explanation in "military terms" does not seem to contradict Raven's account if Raven was in "a trench which was held at one end by the fascists and at the other end by the government troops" and part of "the final desperate defense." It is possible that the grenade that critically injured Raven was thrown by the government troops who mistook their own soldiers for fascists. Nevertheless, the dispatch ends with the following strange passage:

> We [the captain and Hemingway] talked for a while and he told me many things. They were all important, but nothing was as important as what Jay Raven, the social worker from Pittsburgh with no military training, had told me was true. This is a strange new kind of war where you learn just as much as you are able to believe. (267)

The ambiguity in the last sentence could be construed as an implication of fallacy in reports of any heroic acts or battle situations under censorship. Hemingway as a correspondent judges Raven's story as neither true nor false but considers it "important." But, in what sense was "what Jay Raven…had told me was true" important enough to make Hemingway realize this as "a strange new

kind of war"?[8]

The newness can be found in the nodal point which connects the two events told in the "A New Kind of War" dispatch—the bombing of civilians and the soldier's lie. The Spanish Civil War has characteristics of both "modern war" and "total war." According to Hew Strachan, "modern war" refers to "the means of fighting" developed through "the fruits of industrialization and technological innovation." The term "total war," which is derived from the definition of a German general, Erich Ludendorff, signifies "an observation about the power of the state, about its right to conscript its citizens not only for military service but also to mobilize the economy and society" (Strachan 351). Critics have noticed aspects of modern war described in Hemingway's works—modern weapons such as warplanes, tanks, and automatic rifles and modern organizations such as military bureaucracy. Allen Guttmann argues that modern war technology such as "bombing planes and armored tanks should become, in the writings of Loyalist-sympathizers, symbols for the enemy; the symbols corresponded to the historical situation" (542). These aspects of the novel show both an increasing efficiency in murder and Hemingway's critical stance toward inhumane warfare. But, these aspects overshadow the important but elusive undercurrent flowing through tone of the narrative. This undercurrent is the domain of language, with which the idea of "total war" is invoked because symbol changes in propaganda and the presence of spies obscure the distinctions between friend and foe, and between civilians and soldiers.

With both total and modern aspects of the war in mind, the Raven episode can be interpreted in several ways. It shows the gullibility of soldiers represented by Raven. In the conversation, Hemingway pretends to believe Raven's story, and Hemingway "was glad he [Raven] thought I [Hemingway] believed it" (265).Because his injury required him to wear a bandage over his eyes, he must have been unsure whether his conversation partner was actually Hemingway. This episode also implies the possibility that Raven consciously pretends to believe in lies or not to know

anything because he assumes there may be military police or spies nearby. Outwardly, he does not insist upon his commitment to the Republic cause: he repeats, “I was always awfully interested in things and I really wouldn’t mind the pain at all” (264). In this respect, Hemingway’s prioritization of Raven’s story over the captain’s history is conceivable not because the matter involves a distinction between truth and lie, but because the problem is a disappearing gap between unintentional illusion and intentional subterfuge. It is impossible to know Raven’s true intentions while it is obvious and thus “important” that the war atmosphere suppresses expression of anything “true” such as true intentions and true situations. Therefore, by ending the dispatch with the sentence “you learn just as much as you are able to believe,” Hemingway declares the paradox of stating someone’s belief. In order to learn what others believe, the knower has to believe what he knows is others’ beliefs. On the surface, there seems to be a simple relationship between knower and believer in the sense that someone knows that the other believes something. The problem is that the other can also pretend to believe. In this case, the relationship between the knower and believer is reversed. The knower is only the believer who believes that the other believes something. In the last sentence, Hemingway breaks the simple dichotomy between truth and lie and between knowledge and belief by claiming a belief within knowledge. It may not be accidental that the protagonist in *FTWBT* shares his first name with Robert Raven. This dispatch is a symbolic episode that characterizes the newness of modern and total war, and probably leads Hemingway to employ different genres and styles.

3. Hemingway’s Propaganda: Film, Speech, and Play

Facing this new kind of war, Hemingway tries to reach his audience through many channels of communication. It is undeniable that Hemingway took political action in contributing to the Popular Front and the International Brigades: he helped make a film, urged American writers to

be anti-fascist, and wrote a play and a novel whose profits went to supporting the writer-soldiers of the International Brigade. Widespread recognition of propaganda, censorships, and spies in the late 1930s made it difficult both to present the truth and to obtain the truth through media.[9] In the face of this, Hemingway seemed to be obsessed with knowing and writing the truth insofar as he himself went to Spain and urged other writers to do the same. Even though his dislike of "fascism" seems evident, "fascism" and "totalitarian war" are very complex process that Hemingway attempted to dissect through his many works and styles. In order to appreciate his techniques in his novelistic rendering of the new kind of war and his approaches to this newness and to fascism, close examinations of his other works, such as the speech, film, and play are needed. We might overlook the complexity of the novel if we presuppose, as Cary Nelson has done, that Hemingway "wrote about no devils on the fascist side…because he took the demonic quality of fascist ideology as a given" (*Remembering* 25). Hemingway is against fascism, but his strategy is neither demonizing the enemy nor drawing a clear division into guilty and innocent.

Before writing the novel, Hemingway made a public speech and showed a film at the second American Writers' Congress in June 1937. Hemingway's speech emphasized new elements of the war that surpassed the opposition between truth and lie. His speech, "The Writer and War," defines fascism as "a lie told by bullies" and asserts that "A writer who will not lie cannot live or work under fascism" (69). He persuades the audience with second-person narrative that "you learn, watching them live and fight and die, that there are worse things than war. Cowardice is worse, treachery is worse, and simple selfishness is worse" (70). After criticizing the "totalitarian war" of fascism, which attacks "unarmed citizens," his speech becomes more belligerent at the end when he provokes writers who have "skillfully chosen positions with no risk involved in holding them. Positions to be held by the typewriter and consolidated with the fountain pen" (73). The speech seems to emphasize practice over theory, actions over words, and guns over pens. We should not

forget that the speech is about “The Writer and War” and that problems of fascism are not reduced to “fascist states” or particular nations but extended to writers’ attitudes such as cowardice, treachery and selfishness, in remaining in “positions to be held by the typewriter.”

Before Hemingway’s speech, Joris Iven, who filmed the civil war with him, showed the movie *The Spanish Earth*, which Hemingway narrated. Iven explained that the film “tried not merely to show people fighting, and the dead, but why the people were fighting” (Hart, *Writer* 207). The main purpose of the film is to reveal the intervention of German and Italian military in the civil war and the struggle of the Spanish people in both the country and the city against unofficial foreign invasion. Hemingway as narrator identifies the enemies as “professional soldiers fighting against a people in arm” “with the constant aid of Italy and Germany.” Germany and Italy did not officially admit their involvement in the civil war until an armistice during which members of the International Brigades were dismissed. Thus, the film was very important in telling the truth about German and Italian involvement. Also, the way this truth was presented is notable. The narrative of the film presents scenes from the perspectives of the Spanish Republic including villagers of Fuenteduena and townspeople of Madrid. However, the narrator implies that soldiers on the fascist side are not so different in term of social class from those on the Republican side. The narrator, for example, refers to prisoners’ statement that “they signed to work in Ethiopia” and claims with letters of enemy soldiers that “all the letters we read were sad.”[10] This scene indicates that the Italian soldiers at the front were not in a position of knowing where or whom they were attacking. The film reinforces the similar circumstances faced by soldiers by showing a young solider named Julian, writing a letter at the front line early in the film. If we can admit that all art is propaganda, as we will discuss in Chapter 5, Hemingway’s speech and film are propaganda with anti-fascist messages. But, we must be aware that what he calls the truth is the complicated and difficult nature of the war and humanity, and compare this to what the political camp tried to publicize.[11]

The problems of total war as it pertains to belief and lie are observable in Hemingway's play, whose title, *The Fifth Column*, clearly signifies the presence of spies on both sides and the absence of a clear boundary separating foe from ally.[12] The setting is Madrid under the Republican rule. There are spy-civilians inside Madrid who work with the Nationalists against the Republicans. Petra, a hotel servant in the play, explains, "they always shoot from windows at night during a bombardment. The fifth column people. The people who fight us from inside the city" (54). The protagonist Philip Rawlings is working in counter-espionage which detects Nationalist spies within the city. Even though the main plot is Philip's struggle to arrest the members of the fifth column, the language the characters employ always contains an irresolvable tension produced by the invisible spies. The most distinct embodiment of this tension is Philip himself. Philip is split into two different personalities, which troubles his girlfriend Dorothy Bridges and himself. Dorothy asks Philip to stop acting as "A *Madrid* playboy" (26) and recommends that he write "[n]ovels and articles and a book on this war perhaps" (28) without knowing that Philip's duties lie with counter-espionage. Philip hesitates to accept her suggestion and later asks her to move out of the hotel after the assassination of Philip's subordinate, Wilkinson. Philip tells Dorothy "I can't ever talk to any one" (28), which suggests he is unable to tell the truth, at least in this play. The only way to state the truth is a self-contradictory way: "Every night I ask her to marry me, and every morning I tell her I don't mean it" (91-92). While his night-time personality craves to marry the heroine Dorothy, his other personality dismisses the proposal as impossible.

As the sense of duality or implicitness in the characters and their statements dominates the whole atmosphere of the play, Dorothy is suspected of being a spy. Dorothy buys a fur coat made of fox, which is metaphorically connected to slyness and thus spy activity. When Max, a German spy working with Philip, tells Philip "[t]his girl [Dorothy] is all right?...You must remember I have never seen so many foxes" (78), Max implies that Dorothy may be a spy. However, the play

concludes with the implication that the collaborator with the fifth column is Anita, another female character, a “Moorish tart,” who was Philip’s ex-girlfriend. Philip asks Anita “was the water hot?” (100), indicating that she was now in a difficult situation. And because Max, who cannot bear the scene of torture, begs Philip “I go. Please, please, please, I go” (100), the audience may anticipate that torture may follow the ending of the play. Even though Anita’s real identity is not verified explicitly—she only says to Philip that she thought he would “tell how you catch all the people of the Fifth Column” (92)—the play ends with Philip suspecting that she has blown his cover. The problem under total war is that the characters constantly lie in order to know the truth and thus expect that others are doing the same. Detecting a lie is never simple: undercover agents are never confident that their knowledge is really the truth. Philip confesses that he knows “a couple of definite people. I mean sort of by classes” (44). Just like the fifth column members who would shoot a man if “they could see he was a working man from his clothes” (54), Philip is unable to determine the definitely “fascist” spies except in terms of abstract categories of “classes.” The play does not portray people being too gullible to believe lies or enemy propaganda, but it portrays characters who are so obsessed with the detection of lies that the acts of detection paradoxically creates an atmosphere of pretention and deception.

The most important paradox, and that which makes a love relationship between Philip and Dorothy is impossible, is that the more personal and intimate feelings language expresses, the further language deviates from the original intention. In military situations where unintentional failure to fulfill an obligation cannot be distinguished from deliberate treachery, statements of personal feelings or intentions are interpreted as nothing more than excuse or fabrication. As Philip states to his subordinate, “discipline is kindness” (21); any means to make people obey the rules is “kindness,” and “kindness” can be one of the ways to discipline others to follow orders. Once an intimate feeling such as “kindness” is expressed to other people, the expression assumes a surplus

meaning because of the covert atmosphere of spies and gains the potential to be misunderstood as something other than an intimate feeling. From the perspective of spies, the more intimate feelings the statement expresses, the more valuable and useful it becomes. However, from the perspective of lovers, these surplus meanings generate a suspicion that disturbs belief in an intimate relationship.

This paradox in language usage is evident in the last scene, where Philip, who decided to leave Dorothy, remarks to a crying Dorothy that "[t]hat's a commodity you shouldn't pay too high a price for" (98). Dorothy interprets this remark as his pointing to her uselessness in war situations and reflects his question back to him: "Did it ever occur to you that you're a commodity, too?" (98) Laughing, he replies that "No. But I see it the way you put it" (99). His reply connotes that Dorothy has misunderstood his statement in the sense that she thinks she is cheap and replaceable, while he has evaluated himself in the sense that he as a spy is worthless and replaceable. In spite of her response, Philip's statement can be contrived as an expression of his intimate feelings. Because Philip has his true identity revealed, he has to "pay too high a price for" continuing the relationship with Dorothy. As long as he can decide not to act dutifully for "a commodity," he paradoxically claims her worth to him: If he *should* pay too high a price for her, she is not different from other duties that he has to follow with superficial kindness. Dorothy somewhat realizes this paradox when she says to Philip, "[y]ou're frightful when you're kind. Only kind people should try being kind" (99). Dorothy does not interpret his expression of "kindness" as his love for her. We as readers cannot exactly determine what Philip's real intension is, but Hemingway's play does show that intimate connection through language is risky in the atmosphere of the fifth column which exploits intimacy for war maneuvers.

In dealing with the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway takes different approaches to the complex situations in the total war that eradicates a clear boundary between the true and the false. In particular, the roles of espionage are not limited to stealing useful information through deception:

deception affects the whole atmosphere of conversations and human relationships. In this atmosphere, it is difficult to describe the truth of an intention or experience because their factual description, by force of circumstance, is charged with a suspicion that produces surplus meanings. Michael Szalay incisively argued that writers like Hemingway "embraced literary objecthood for…releas[ing] the writer[s] from dependence on invariably equivocal markets" and an "audience" whose literary standards seem contingent and arbitrary (266). But, Szalay misses his own point when he claims that "[a]ccording to Hemingway, the alteration of any one word means that the whole story is altered, reinforcing the idea that every word is irreplaceable and fundamentally necessary to a text's identity" (96). Even though Szalay observes in Hemingway's works the author's attention to the mediating functions of market and audience, it is not necessary to come to the conclusion that Hemingway's formal invention is to balance the relationship between the parts and the whole and to preserve the integrity of literary works in face of these arbitrary standards. Hemingway's works about the Spanish Civil War, including *The Fifth Column* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, however, emphasize his interest in the mediating functions of spies, propaganda, and (self-)censorship that complicate the communication process between the characters as well as between the writer and his audience. From this perspective, Hemingway's formal innovation is less for the protection of his textual integrity and more for his audience to understand abundance of deceptions and dualities in a "total war."

4. Duality and Voice in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)

The most important technique employed by Hemingway in *FWTBT* as a literary work whose generic characteristics are different from his speeches, dispatches, and play is an interior soliloquy denoting the gap between action and intention. The interior soliloquy demonstrates an emotional affinity between the opposing political camps and a self-conscious distance toward the

causes of political parties. Critics have recognized the elements of hesitation or duality in this interior soliloquy and concluded that the use of inner voices was Hemingway's chosen method for breaking away from political ideology, to focus on the individual experience. Edmund Wilson evaluates the soliloquy as an impediment to the flow and scale of the narrative: "the author has not found out how to mold or to cut the interior soliloquies of his hero. Nor are the excursions outside the consciousness of the hero, whose point of view comprehends most of the book, conducted with consistent attention to the symmetry and point of the whole" (887). Because characters express their inner conflict through soliloquies, this technique may have allowed the writer Malcolm Cowley to project a sense of rationalization in what he calls "the philosophy of Nevertheless…the only possible philosophy for a fighting man who also wants to remain intelligent and clear-sighted" (*Think Back* 362). For example, "Jordan tells himself that there are good and evil on his side; *nevertheless* he had balanced them together and has found that the good predominates" (362). With the analysis of the protagonist Robert Jordan's soliloquy, Ichiro Takayoshi expounds on the two-steps rational resolutions of his inner conflict: "The first rationale—the civil war as a 'holding attack' against global fascism—prompts Jordan to volunteer in the first place and exhorts him to stay in the fight. The second, fallback rationale—soldierly pragmatism—helps Jordan rationalize the action he continues to take after the persuasiveness of the first discourse wears off" (121). For Takayoshi, the soliloquy reveals Hemingway's justification of war actions through the mixing of anti-fascist and pragmatist rationalization. Contrary to Wilson's argument, this section asserts that the interior soliloquy and limited points of view in the novel do convey a specific sense of dilemma that many participants of the Spanish Civil War might confront in the eyes of Hemingway. Taking account of the conflicting dualities suggested by Takayoshi and Cowley, this section illustrates that soliloquies are a significant narrative form of the novel employed to portray situations of the total war rather than to rationalization of war actions.

At first, the third-person narrative voice shifts to the second-person narrative to reflect internal monologues, and this allows the reader to surmise that statements made by characters often differ from their actual personal intentions. This is most obvious in the protagonist Robert Jordan—an American who taught Spanish in college and volunteered to fight under the command of the Comintern. He keeps saying that he does not believe in the cause of Communism,[13] but because only Russia decided to intervene in the Spanish Civil War, Robert has no choice but to work as an agent of the Comintern. His inner dialogue is developed: for example, his internal voice enters the narrative when he encounters Pablo, a guerilla leader. The narrative shifts to the second-person voice to illustrate Robert's inner voice telling him not to trust Pablo easily: "No, he said to himself, don't fool yourself. You do not know how he [Pablo] was before" (16). His internal voice is a commanding influence, demanding that Robert accomplish his military operation. There are many occasions where Robert's inner voice talks to him in the second person as if someone outside of himself is trying to convince him. The second-person pronoun used by his inner voice is juxtaposed with his first-person voice: "You're a bridge-blower now. Not a thinker. Man, I'm hungry, he thought. I hope Pablo eats well" (17). This example represents a narrative form that splits Robert into two selves, "I" and "you," as he engages himself in a dialogue.

Even though the narrator does not have access to the inner minds of all characters, internal voices reveal the erosion of the boundary separating friend from foe in two important characters. One character is Anselmo, an illiterate guide and naïve and egalitarian ex-peasant, and the other is Lieutenant Berrendo, who is on the nationalist side supported by fascism. Anselmo and Berrendo are the Spanish citizens who have been drawn into a war and divided into two different camps—either the Spanish Republic or Nationalist Spain. In Chapter 15, the soliloquy of Anselmo, who is overseeing an enemy's post in the freezing night, acknowledges the indistinct line separating him from his enemy: "I have watched them [guards at the post] all day and they are the same men

that we are….It is only orders that come between us. Those men are not fascists. I call them so, but they are not. They are poor men as we are. They should never be fighting against us and I do not like to think of the killing" (192-93). The narrator also provides the interior voice of Berrendo, who reluctantly gives orders to decapitate his three enemies, who were killed by bombs during an air attack: "taking the heads is barbarous. But proof and identification is necessary…There are those of them who like such things" (326). From Robert's perspective, the decapitations reinforce the image of abominable fascists. However, the narrator's interposition between each side implicates an indistinctiveness of motives related to military actions: low-rank soldiers execute brutality in the name of fighting against "them" with a sense of guilt.

The dividing line between the Republicans and the Nationalists is contingent on a familial background, not determined by political conviction. The inner thoughts of Andrés, a guerrilla fighter dispatched to deliver Robert's message to a higher official, also mentions the contingency of his position: "If our father had not been a Republican both Eladio [his brother] and I would be soldiers now with the fascists and if one were a soldier with them then there would be no problem" (367). It would be easier for the guerilla members to engage themselves in the war if antagonistic relations between communism and fascism—between the Republicans and the Nationalists—were as clearly delineated as each political discourse might suggest. But, this clear delineation does not seem true to Robert and other soldiers, who, from time to time, glimpse their indistinctiveness from their supposed enemies. The characters of both camps work for their own camps without fully identifying with the political cause. Andrés also claims in his mind that "I believe truly in the cause" and "the fascists attacked and made our decision for us" (367). However, his inner voice, using the second-person, makes his heroic decision into obscene jokes: "You have a message to give away. And you're full of crap that you can give to the earth….You can anoint it also with urine" (368). Ranging from self-reflection and self-accusation to self-mockery, the inner voices allow the

characters to create a space in the cause of their respective political camps and provide the reader with a sense of difference between intention and action.

From the perspective that sees duality in the inner voice, whole scenes of the novel turn into situations full of deception and counter-deception. From the beginning of the novel, Robert avoids being suspected as a spy by refusing to know Golz' overall offensive plan because only in this way he can prove that "it was not me that talked" (7). Frenando reported that in La Granja there was a rumor that "the Republic is preparing an offensive" (81) and "the Republicans would try to blow up the bridges" (82). Although it is not clear whether the reports reflect mere rumor originating in a contingent guess or accurate information gained and spread by spies, this episode makes it plain that Robert's worries about spy activity might spoil his mission. And Robert's suspicion of spy activity shifts onto Pablo. Moreover, Karkov, who calls himself a journalist (244), suggests that anyone has the potential to become a fascist conspirator either by intention or by being falsely accused (247). Karkov, though a journalist, once destroyed all evidence "of any Russian intervention to justify an open intervention by the fascists" (237). This incident hints that he is engaged in espionage and has significant authority over the course of military operations. Karkov claims to "make jokes sometime" and to "make jokes in joke" (245), and his conversations with Robert are so equivocal and perplexing that Robert as well as the reader are unable to distinguish joke from truth. Preventing his words from being taken seriously, Karkov creates cynical distance between himself and what he says or what others say. These descriptions in the novel draw our attention to the sensitivity of conversation in espionage: in such situations, it can be fatal to take words literally. Therefore, it is inadequate to conclude, as some critics have done, that the novel is another debunking novel about a corrupt Republic.

If a conversational atmosphere filled with deception produces duality or equivocality in some characters, it is also possible that other main characters, such as Maria, Pablo and Pilar, have

their own rhetorical strategies to cope with the deceptions. Robert finds it difficult to interpret Pablo's intentions through his speech throughout the novel. For instance, in Chapters 16 and 17, Robert cannot determine whether Pablo is or pretends to be a drunk horse lover who lost his courage. Pablo's words and actions do not correspond: he claims he does "not provoke" when he actually insults other guerilla fighters (214). The guerilla fighters interpret his words as a sign of incoherence and timidity that would disturb their collective action and they decide to kill him. Right before the fighters execute Pablo, Robert realizes that "there are not going to be any shooting matches or monkey business in here with that dynamite around either. Pablo thought of that, of course" (221). Robert infers that Pablo had outwited him despite seeming drunk and unaware of the dynamite. If the fighters had taken Pablo's insult literally, they might all have been dead at that point.

A similar point can be made with Maria and Pilar. Critics have opined that Maria is the weakness of the novel because her submissiveness to Robert appears extremely passive and innocent to the point of absurdity. But, is she really a docile girl? Does she really fall in love with Robert at first sight? Why does she trust Robert and have a sexual relationship with him even though she has a painful memory of sexual abuse by the enemies? On the first night, Maria tells Robert of Pilar's advice that "nothing is done to oneself that one does not accept and that if I [Maria] loved someone it would take it all away" (73). In other words, if she does not accept what she experienced and if she loves someone, she will get away from "it." What these pronouns, "nothing" or "it," substitute for cannot be specified. Yet, she has her own interests beyond her spontaneous desire to have a relationship with him. Pilar also uses equivocal pronouns: "There is always something like something that there should not be. But with me there is not. Truly there is not. I want thy [Maria's] happiness and nothing more" (162). While Pilar claims that she is not *tortillera* [lesbian], the relationship between Maria and Pilar is undoubtedly more than friendship. The reader may infer that Maria approaches Robert because Pilar orders her to do so. Pilar creates

equivocality by palm reading. By palm reading, she can pretend to know his future. She later confides to Robert that "[i]n regard to that thing of the hand. That is all gypsy nonsense that I make to give myself an importance" (387). Robert cannot determine whether her confession is true or false. At the end of the story, the internal voice brings up the palm reading again as if he believes she had truly learned something from his palm: "She was afraid maybe I believed it. I don't though. But she does. They see something. Or they feel something" (486).[14] As internal voices emphasize the duality of personalities in Robert, Anselmo and Berrendo as well as the similarity between opposing camps, other characters whose internal voices are not revealed to the reader employ rhetorical strategies to obscure their real intentions. Karkov is a cynical joker. Pablo is a drunk fool. Maria is an obedient girl. Pilar is a superstitious poet. For the reader as well as for Robert, it is necessary to make sure that what is said is true, however unsuccessful we may be in doing so within the deceptive atmosphere where it can be fatal to take words literally.

5. Obscenity in the Internal Voice

As we have seen so far, there is no simple correspondence between action and belief in *FWTBT*. Rather, the characters in the novel act with intention to hide intention in the fear that a revelation of one's intention makes an individual vulnerable to others' control and to guilt. Propaganda can exploit an object of belief to manipulate believers so characters attempt to distance themselves from any ideology. Even when they proclaim personal belief, there is a hint of aloofness or artificiality in the statements as if the proclamation is not meant to be taken seriously. Whatever their intentions may be and however disadvantageous their positions may be, Robert and his band end up executing their plan. Although none really believe in the political cause, the way they have to pretend that they believe and act according to orders from the political party is dubious. The paradox in the novel is that people are contingently divided into two camps to kill each other, and

this contingency is translated into the premise that the other sincerely believes in an ideology and therefore deserves to be fought against, in contrast to “we” who simply follow orders. The character’s internal distances from political, religious, or social ideologies lead them to separate “us” from “our” enemy by believing that the enemy enjoys killing people. Therefore, it is necessary for “us,” at least on the surface, to adhere to orders to maintain that distance from “our” enemies. This internal distancing brings about the intervention of internal voices, which find culpability in soldiers’ reasoning and paradoxically induce more violence.

The uncanny aspect of soliloquy is especially resonant in Robert’s internal thoughts. What seems to be his own soliloquy emerges as a strange entity when Robert spend that first night with Maria and wakes up to the sound of enemy planes: “They [enemies] can’t know about the attack, he told himself and something in him said, why can’t they? They’ve known about all the others” (76-77). This inner statement is important both because Robert suspects the presence of spies and because this “something in him” contradict his original thought. This voice sounds both intimate and alien; intimate because it seems a logical conclusion after putting his thoughts together; alien because it gives him an opposing opinion. After the long soliloquy, which goes on for two pages, the narrator suddenly asks, “who censored his thinking,” and answers, “[n]obody but himself” (135-36). Robert’s internal voice is a kind of self-censorship. But, this censorship operates with a totally different purpose than the censorship required at wartime.

At one time, when Robert attempts to distinguish “us” from “them” by referring to barbarity inherited from old religion, his inner voice eradicates the distinction; it urges him to “admit that you have liked to kill as all who are soldiers by choice have enjoyed it at some time whether they lie about it or not” (297). At another time, the voice throws the heavy weight of responsibility onto Robert: “No, himself said. You have no right to forget anything. You have no right to shut your eyes to any of it nor any right to forget any of it nor to soften it nor to change it.

Shut up, he told himself. You're getting awfully pompous. Nor ever to deceive yourself about it, himself went on" (304). In this scene, the voice finds guilt in Robert's murder as well as murders done by others but indirectly related to him, such as the peasant family that was shot because they gave Robert a place to hide. At another time, the voice commands him not to think too much but to concentrate on the mission: "[D]o not start deceiving yourself into thinking you won't have to blow it....It is not you who decides what shall be done. You follow orders. Follow them and do not try to think beyond them" (335). His inner voice becomes less unfamiliar to himself until he sounds "schizophrenic" (394) or like he has a complete split within him. This is not the set of multiple voices of actual and historical people whom James H. Meredith argues Robert embodies. Rather, his inner voice bombards various injunctions and intensifies his sense of guilt.

The uncanny voice of Robert ultimately manifests itself as a conflicting representation of his father and grandfather. Robert remembers his grandfather as a great soldier in the American Civil War. However, Robert considers his father a coward who, even though he fought in "the War," killed himself after coming back home. These two soldiers give two different meanings to war in the novel. The grandfather represents an ideal soldier who bravely performs his duty to achieve a victory and survives the war. The father represents an ethical and emotional excess that spoils veterans. The grandfather's achievement looks splendid to Robert while the father's agony implies the underside of his "achievement." Robert feels confident and encouraged by thinking of his grandfather, but thinking of his father offends Robert's mood. Robert "understood his father and he forgave him everything and he pitied him but he was ashamed of him" (340). Although he is sympathetic to his father's troubles, his inner voice advises him not to think of it: "You better not think at all, he told himself….When you have been concentrating so hard on something you can't stop and your brain gets to racing like a flywheel with the weight gone. You better just not think" (340). To avoid the interference of ethical and emotional considerations with the mission, he refuses

to deliberate on the death of his father and the possible real meanings of his mission.

Because of this internal voice and the sense of guilt embodied by his father, Robert, as a representative of other soldiers in the same situation, formally clings to external orders in order to relieve his guilt. As argued above, the internal voices in the novel function to abolish the boundary between allies and foes. What is most terrifying for Robert and the guerilla fights is not the fear of being killed, but rather an enjoyment of killing. What they regard as the proof that separates them from their enemies is the cruelties of their enemies. Anselmo concede that he killed "Many times and will again. But not with pleasure and regarding it as a sin" (42). In place of cruelty, Anselmo, who claims "I can do anything that I am ordered," and Robert wish for orders from above to avoid personal responsibility: "he told himself, and there is not you, and there are no people that things must not happen to. Neither you nor this old man is anything. You are instruments to do your duty" (43). Agustín, another guerrilla fighter, explains a similar fear to Robert: "Fear and the other. And in his life there is no stronger thing than the other" (286). Listening to Agustín's remark of "the other," Robert contemplates the difference between him and his enemies: "We do it coldly but they do not, nor ever have. It is their extra sacrament" (286). While Robert asserts he does not have "the other" which "they" have, his inner voice coerces him to "admit that you have liked to kill as all who are soldiers by choice have enjoyed it at some time whether they lie about it or not" (287). In other words, the internal voice points out that Robert murders for personal enjoyment, if not under forced orders or for political cause. After the bridge was destroyed at the cost of Anselmo's life, Robert renounces his responsibility for his death by shifting the blame onto Pablo or the snow and by suppressing his inner self: "Once you saw it again as it was to others, once you got rid of your own self, the always ridding of self that you had to do in war. Where there could be no self. Where yourself is only to be lost" (447). In war, it is so unbearable to take on all the responsibility of individual action that soldiers follow orders to renounce the self.

Hence, Robert's internal voices are not simply his moral conscience or Hemingway's attempt to debunk the whole political maneuver of the Spanish Civil War. They cannot be reduced to his personal desires or to social norms. They are derived from forging the distinction between allies and foes and from killing enemies in the name of a political cause, an excess of belief embodied in conduct. Any conduct based on a belief results in the production of more than the expected consequences. Since the consequences of actions never quite follow the intentions behind the actions, the characters tend to distance themselves from belief by substituting external orders for intentions and by unconsciously believing that it is others who act on their beliefs. Allowing the soldiers to simultaneously renounce their own possession of a belief and to hold a belief creates a motivation for them to deal with those—usually enemies—who supposedly believe. However, the internal voices take advantage of this dilemma and bring out the guilt of self-deception concealing a belief. What was previously felt as an internal voice becomes so foreign that it forces the self to dissipate.

At the very end of the novel, the uncanny voice is represented as a broken bone stuck against Robert's leg skin. Its malignance is implied in the description of Robert's broken leg, which gives him pain from within his body. "It was as though there was a new joint in it; not the hip joint but another one that went sideways like a hinge" (461). The voice comes out of a new joint! The broken bone is a part of Robert's body but feels "as though it were not part of his body" (467). His monologue is more like a dialogue between him and an anonymous voice. The voice is simultaneously a part and non-part of his body. He talks to himself as if demanding permission to kill himself, and the voice in italics replies to Robert to discourage him from suicide.

> His leg was hurting very badly now. The pain had started suddenly with the swelling after he had moved and he said, Maybe I'll just do it now. I guess I'm not awfully good at pain. Listen, if I do that now you wouldn't misunderstand, would you? *Who are you talking to?*

> Nobody, he said. Grandfather, I guess. No Nobody. Oh bloody, I wish that they would come. (469: italics in orig.)

The sense of Robert being tempted to commit suicide in the sentence "I'll just do it now" is obvious. Robert, who despises his father's suicide as an act of cowardice, happens to be in a situation where the suffering is unbearable enough for him to wish to die. He worries that his suicide to be "misunderstood," as was father's. Until then, he presupposes the anonymous voice to be his grandfather's. But, the italicized voice coming from his innermost mind assumes obscenity as it drives Robert to more violence: "*And if you wait and hold them up even a little while or just get the officer that may make all the difference. One thing well done can make—*" (470: italics in orig.). Even though the last statement urges him to wait for "the officer," the fact that the coming officer is Lieutenant Berrendo implies a disappointing consequence: Berrendo is the one juxtaposed with Anselmo.

This anonymous voice censors the culpability of Robert's inner thoughts and generates guilty and "painful" feelings for Robert to enjoy—although, of course, it is impossible for him to enjoy these feelings. In order to examine how this sinner voice operates here, the theory of the voice by contemporary philosopher Mladen Dolar is extremely useful because it points to a vicious cycle perpetuated by failure, deception, and guilt: "It is a voice that always reduces the subject to guilt, and the guiltier we are the guiltier we will become, in a self-propelling process; we even relish our self-reproaches and our failures" (99). Too many moral injunctions suspend ethical thoughts on the subject and put pressure on the subject to renounce its own pleasures, attained by the pursuit of the desire. Dolar borrows a term from psychoanalysis to designate this kind of moral injunctions a "super-ego." At first glance, the super-ego seems to be an internal voice, which saves the subject from the potential of transgressing moral or political norms. But, every subject is, in some way or other, posited as guilty from a viewpoint of the superego, which functions to increase guiltiness. It

finds enjoyment in the very renunciation of desire, and the belief in a certain cause is the very desire under which warfare is conducted since it motivates action. It is then comprehensible why Robert and other characters must attach themselves to the party even after its cause becomes absurd and impossible to them. It is unbearable for them to detach from ideology and thus to face the super-egoistic injunctions that constantly bring into question responsibility for war crimes. The party provides formal purposes and meaning that allows them to fend off the direct confrontation of their guilt. What sustains communal ties in *FWTBT* is guilt, rather than political ideologies or rage against fascism.

The reader also encounters an injunction from the obscene voice that forbidding us to derive a privileged position from reading the moral failures of characters. In Chapter 42, because André Marty delays Andrés's dispatch, which would change the course of the war if it reached Golz, some readers might interpret Marty's error as a corrupted side of the Republic. The narrator, mostly uses the past tense throughout the novel except for internal monologues, adds the following, in the present tense, as if preempt possible accusations by the reader toward Marty:

> It is doubtful if the outcome of Andrés's mission would have been any different if he and Gomez had been allowed to proceed without André Marty's hindrance. There was no one at the front with sufficient authority to cancel the attack. The machinery had been in motion much too long for it to be stopped suddenly now. There *is* a great inertia about all military operations of any size. But once this inertia *has been* overcome and movement *is* under way they *are* almost as hard as to arrest as to initiate [emphasis added]. (*FWTBT* 440-441)

This passage conveys an aphorism to the reader: we should not expect war in general to be under the control of any human agency. It stubbornly refuses the comfortable position of judge that would allow the reader to regard him/herself as the very incarnation of good. As the guerilla fighters and their enemies do not know how to stop the cycle of violence, the war machine keeps moving

irrationally and without a cause. This irrationality, which the narrative voice points out from the omniscient perspective, may seem too abstract and universal to be true and convincing. However, the relationships of the characters in the novel concretize this irrational machinery at the moment when each takes a cynical distance between themselves and the cause and attributes one's own responsibility to someone else.

6. Faith in the Bell

The fact that there is no moral resolution but only a vicious cycle of violence and deception in *FWTBT* returns us to the epigraph of the novel because the epigraph urges us to accept "any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind." Reading these fictitious accounts of complicated situations in the Spanish Civil War, the reader is required to take a route different from what the protagonist Robert Jordan has taken to understand the deceptions, troubles, and dilemmas. Although Robert stops further attempts to penetrate the minds of Spanish people, he proclaims that "to understand is to forgive" (355). Robert is also unable to understand his father and therefore to forgive him. The unforgiven element of the father returns to Robert as an obscene voice that prohibits suicide. Because he cannot understand his father's troubles or the dilemma of modern war, suicide is an unforgivable action for Robert. As the novel progresses, it is the reader, rather than Robert, that achieves the deeper understanding necessary to dispel the obscene voice.

The strange absence of the bell is the most significant when we think about the novel in terms of the title and the epigraph. Instead of a bell that tolls, it is the airplanes that announce good or bad news to those who can hear. After the mission is over, many airplanes fly above Robert and the survivors as if his mission had resulted in more horrifying retaliation:

> He had the feeling of something that had started normally and had then brought great, outsized, giant repercussions. It was as though you had thrown a stone and the stone made

> a ripple and the ripple returned roaring and toppling as a tidal wave. Or as though you shouted and the echo came back in rolls and peals of thunder, and the thunder was deadly. Or as though you struck one man and he fell and as far as you could see other men rose up all armed and armored. He was glad he was not with Golz up at the pass. (451)

Where John Donne's bell tolls for the death of others for their communal ties, the airplanes convey a portent of death and the destruction of communities. The significance of the absent bell-toll in *FWTBT* can be found in the historical account of the social role that bells played in the lives of the people of the pre-modern world. In his book *Village Bells,* Alain Corbin, though not referring to Spain or to Hemingway's works, reminds us that bells had the function of disseminating messages and of connecting communal ties.[15] The sound of bells embodied various rhetoric related to the sensibility of local inhabitants. For example, with bells, a person's death is communal, not familial or private. Philippe Ariès, in his book *The Hour of Our Death*, traces the historical process of separating death from daily life and an increased feeling of awe at death as a consequence of this separation. In the twentieth century, we deceived ourselves about the awe of death with anesthesia or deathbed lies. Walter Benjamin also observes the decay of stories with death's recession from the public space and in new communication technology since the nineteenth century. According to Benjamin, the authority which death gives to a story is the core of story itself. When lies and information replace the stories of those on their deathbed, death no longer gives authority to stories and, as a result, communal ties maintained by death are eroded. We shall remember that the novel is set in the new and modern-total war, where the communal role of the bell is replaced by the airplane.

As these scholars' insights confirm, it is not accidental that airplanes function as a substitute for the bell in *FWTBT*. The sound of bells was taken over by radio waves or airplane engines. People had to lose communal ties and adapt to national or military organizations. Political

purpose glossed over fear of death and treated death as mere information. With the exception of death as information, which is a practical necessity for strategic and militaristic purposes, stories of death are powerless and devoid of authority. The problems of "modern war" and "total war" that Hemingway strives to represent can be summarized in this separation of story from death. If death is only a matter of information, war is a matter of efficiency in breaking up any communal tie by substituting lies for stories. This is the context in which Hemingway needed to create a novel employing soliloquy. Thus, if we interpret the events in the novel as a depiction of what really happened in actual history, we overlook the story itself as well as the genre in which Hemingway consciously chooses to convey. *FWTBT* is supposed to be read as a story, not as information. The novel does not assert how horrible and cruel war and deception are or whose faults it is that such turmoil is produced and prolonged. Rather, we should understand why the characters come to distrust people and how consequences of war actions overwhelm our expectations.

Notes on Chapter 3

[1] From his personal letter reprinted in *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters* (480).

[2] For example, Macdonald, Sanders, and Baker (esp. ch. 10).

[3] In his public speech at the second American Writers' Congress. It is included in Hart's *The Writer in a Changing World* as well as republished with the title "Fascism Is a Lie" in *New Masses* (22 June 1937)

[4] The disillusionment of Hemingway is the common topic which stays at the recent work of Scott Donaldson.

[5] The facts of the Spanish Civil War are usually treated as a key or a standard to comprehend Hemingway's intention or commitment in *FWTBT*. (For example, many essays in Sanderson and Josephs.

[6] See *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters*, 490.

[7] For the relationship between "total war" and "modern war," see Strachan.

[8] Edwin Rolfe also reports the story of Raven's fate from what he heard in the frontline.

[9] On propaganda and cynicism, see Smith, Sproule and Gary.

[10] In Chapter 26 of *FWTBT*, there is a scene in which the protagonist reads an enemy's letter, revealing the cause of the Nationalist side, which is "doing away with the Reds to liberate Spain from the domination of the Marxist

hordes" (302-03). For Hemingway, the letters in the novel symbolize an invisible connection between foot soldiers rather than a fallacy on the part of the enemy.

[11] For a more detailed discussion on The Spanish Earth, including its representational strategy, see Waugh, Tashiro, and Guill's "Now You Have Seen It."

[12] For a historical background that generates the term "fifth column," see Bolinger and Valis. For an analogical reading of the play with Hemingway's actual life experiences, see Jackson-Schebetta, Washington and Raeburn. Nakjavani's argument of Hemingway's "esthetics of detective fiction" is instructive in the sense that dramatic form is structured to appeal audience.

[13] According to Takayoshi, Hemingway changed the original version, which placed Robert's communist affiliation in the foreground at the request of his publisher Scribner (119).

[14] According to Thomas E. Gould, Hemingway's original draft was more explicit about Maria and Pilar's intimacy. From another perspective toward Hemingway's female characters, see Guill's "Pilar and Maria." For Guill, Pilar and Maria represent a change in gender relations as Maria with an advice of Pilar develops the sense of agency.

[15] Other scholarly studies on the cultural significance of church bells and the devastating impacts of warfare on the bells include Richard L. Hernandez and Percival Price.

Chapter 4

The Physics of Laughter:

Comic Methods in James Thurber

Grace can't save us unless we save it.[1]
James Thurber

1. Comedy as Weapon against Propaganda

During the 1930s when comedy was one of the popular genres, there were debates over social and political functions in laughter. Since Henri Bergson took laughter seriously at length and affected philosophical argument about laughter in the US during the 1930s, the significance of laughter has been thought to exceed the matter of individual taste. According to Bergson, laughter is not "a strange, isolated phenomenon, without any bearing on the rest of human activity" (7), but rather "a sort of *social gesture*" which "restrains eccentricity…and softens down whatever the surface of the social body may retain of mechanical inelasticity" (13). Laughter is a social corrective for the individual inertia and inattentive routines that interfere with active participation in social life. For some American intellectuals of the 1930s, laughter serves as a creative force in the renewal of communal life by relaxing the rigidities of convention, law, or prejudice. Borrowing theoretical insights from Bergson, Constance Rourke revealed a prototype of American culture in humor and insisted on humor's function to build a communal sensibility of the new nation. Humor "has engaged in warfare against the established heritage, against the bonds of pioneer existence. Its objective—the unconscious objective of a disunited people—has seemed to be that of creating fresh bonds, a new unity, the semblance of a society and the rounded completion of an American type" (232). Kenneth Burke, another

reader of Bergson, argued for the importance of "comic correctives" during the nation's hard times. Burke, with a slightly different tone from Bergson, accentuates the need for a comic framework not to ridicule others into correcting their own wrongdoings, but to comprehend our physical existence and to learn from inevitable errors and mistakes, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

This positive portrayal of the socially harmonizing function of laughter instantly shapes its obverse side, where laughter functions to compel people to submit to social circumstances and political imperatives without necessitating physical enforcement. Bergson does not overlook this negative assumption that laughter can distract our attention from social life and indulge us in a dream-like world of play and pleasure: "comic absurdity gives us from the outset the impression of playing with ideas. Our first impulse is to join in the game. That relieves us from the strain of thinking" (93). Instead of evoking thoughts for social life, laughter might become habitual, repetitive, and meaningless. Dwight Macdonald, also referring to Bergson, defines laughter as "a defense of the social order, like police force" in "societies that are flourishing and hence united" (48).

In contrast to this "classic formula" of laughter's policing function, Macdonald detects a changing sense of humor in writers contributing to the magazine *New Yorker*. And, this change takes a form of cynicism which reflects the disorganization of society. In the *New Yorker*, Macdonald argues, there is no clear boundary between "a rational observer and an irrational person or phenomena" (48). The loss of boundary does not allow an observer of comical figures to create distance between comparing norms with comical actions and laughing at their own deviation from the norms. The *New Yorker*'s comedy takes "the insufficiency of the norm" into its comic narrative and thus reflects "an accurate expression of a decaying social order" (49). Laughter here does not restore order to society,

but rather cynically plays with social confusion. Around the end of the 1930s, some intellectuals, who partook in propaganda analysis, considered cynical laughter an unfavorable behavior which made American citizens vulnerable to an imminent danger.[2] Robert Merton conducted research about propaganda with Paul Lazarsfeld and worried in 1943 that "[a]ny statement of values is likely to be tagged as 'mere propaganda' and at once discounted" (*Social Theory* 524).[3] Under such circumstances—the circumstances similar to those illustrated by Hemingway in his fiction and reportage as discussed in the last chapter—the audience may have no choice but to mock any such statements or social norms and, as a result, leave social issues intact. Far from a "neutral" position, laughter could function as a mode of escapism where an observer can privately and secretly enjoy a sense of resistance toward oppressive forces without any effort to initiate social change.[4]

James Thurber, one of the most famous comic authors to write short pieces for the *New Yorker*, is not an exception to the argument that laughter has both positive and negative social meanings.[5] Many critics, including Macdonald, admit a shift in the general sense of humor during the depression era and judge Thurber to be the most important writer in this shift. Norris Yates, for instance, suggested that Thurber incorporated, though unsuccessfully, a politically motivated advocacy of freedom into a realistic portrayal of the Little Man whose "uncertainty" "was part of a general drift in American humor" (222). Thurber's Walter Mitty, who has amassed sympathetic reactions from readers, is often considered to be representative of the Little Man.[6] Even though the Little Man's uncertainty might evoke a cynical attitude toward social issues, Thurber's works are not at all cynical or defeatist. Yates argues that "one of Thurber's masks has been that of a Little Man helpless in the grip of nature, his wife, and his own nature; the other, used somewhat less often, has been that of a militant of the Progressive-New Deal stamp" (296). Thurber's

works are considered both subversive of and helpless against social order. Richard C. Tobias, another literary critic, affirmed that the comic device in Thurber's works prevented them from falling into the category of "propaganda," which would elicit direct actions. "Even when the subjects threaten to come close to us (and some do threaten our moral and emotional sensibilities) his saving comic skill pulls them away so that we can preserve a proper distance and keep on responding to comedy" (43). Jesse Bier, who defined the prominent literary style of interwar humor as a "debunking" mode, observed resistance to simplification in Thurber's works: his "fantastic reversals of political or domestic epigram force us to see things the other way around and, in discrediting cherished formulae, educate us in the humorous but real complexity" (217). As Bier and Tobias specify the political function of Thurber's comedy as its questioning inadequacy of social norms, their recognition implies not only Thurber, but laughter itself creates the potential to convey new social awareness to the reader.

Although laughter cannot be reduced to a single social function, it is profitable to grasp the connection between Thurber's persistence to comedy and a social function of laughter. Critics could recognize Thurber's political messages against fascism, but hardly articulate how his comedy may be effective at the face of an imminent warfare. This is partly because Thurber has not directly discussed his works in detail. Yet, Thurber once claims that it "is up to our writers, in this era of Oral Culture, to bring back respect for form and for the innate stature and dignity of comedy" (*Lanterns* 147). He thinks that literary form is the important element of his works to generate literary effects. Indeed, the humorous shares many experiential characteristics with the aesthetic—for instance, playfulness, mimicry, unpracticality, imaginativeness, and representativeness. As John Morreall in his general view toward the humorous argues that "humor involves not a

suspension of reason, but a nonserious use of reason," comedy enables us to see beyond the practical aspects in daily life if seriousness signifies usefulness.[7] Kenneth Burke touches the reason in comedy when he insisted that comic correctives are meant to help the individual "'transcend' himself by noting his own foibles" and "to provide a rationale for locating the irrational and the nonrational" (Attitudes 171). Through formal device, comedy can allow us to comprehend both irrationality and nonrationality—including those of practical reasoning.

Collaborating with other literary genres such as autobiography, self-help book, and fable, Thurber's comedy not only renders otherwise-embarrassing miscalculation or misunderstanding comical, but also gives the reader some insights into fallibility as a basic human condition. His comedy is not a twisted imitation of those borrowed generic conventions. His comical appropriation of these genres directs our view toward the assumptions folded into the genres and opens our minds to the inevitable inconsistency (or excessive consistency) which disturbs what is supposed to be the "normally" smooth process of human reciprocity. Along with a focus on Thurber's comic appropriation, this chapter argues that Thurber's comedy allows the reader to touch on cracks in the boundary between opposing concepts such as cosmic and mundane, dream and reality, belief and disbelief. These cracks, which generic conventions usually hide, are not the cause of human wrongdoings but the possibility of establishing cooperative attitudes.

2. Time to Escape in *My Life and Hard Times* (1933)

During the Great Depression, when many writers could not help but pay attention to political and social issues, Thurber wrote about the events that happened in the narrow sphere of his everyday life and published them as his autobiography. Unlike Dos Passos

and Hemingway, who incorporated social issues in their novels, Thurber packed his short stories with his life experiences surrounded by new technology, his family members, and dogs. *My Life and Hard Times*, a collection of autobiographical short stories, applies comic techniques to the most characteristic of autobiographical themes: the search for identity or self. While Thurber's characters are criticized for refusing to face reality, Thurber comically affirms a motivation to escape that represents inherent incongruity in identification. As Lovejoy defends the importance of duality and Merton delimits the process of unanticipated consequences in our second chapter, Thurber presupposes at least two different dimensions which produce incidents that go beyond the actor's intentions. In the introduction of his autobiography, Thurber explains to the reader that a short story is "not a joyous form of self-expression but the manifestation of a twitchiness at once cosmic and mundane" (138).[8] This exaggerated explanation expresses a marionette-like characteristic of writers whose "twitchiness" is brought about by pulls from two forces: regular everyday life (the mundane) and more comprehensive life (the cosmic), which may be abstractly called social or economic structure. His autobiography, therefore, demonstrates that these two forces create a situation which provokes a sense of escape or elusiveness in characters as well as animals, machines, and language.

Thurber emphasizes in the introduction that a writer of short stories for commercial magazines is not an artists who offers a new political or world vision, but a restless individual who is entangled with both cosmic and mundane forces. Ostensibly, the short story writer recognizes social issues, but separates him/herself from the writers who tackle the larger social life, symbolized as "nation," "universe," and "earth" (139). The short-story writer is so ill-adapted to regular life that they cannot afford to pay any attention to a world larger than their own personal reach. This short-story writer's inability to go

beyond the mundane is humorous when seen within the context of a social background that urged writers to take a serious, political action. Even though he left critical comments on what he calls "literary communism" for personal letters and a book review on an anthology about the proletarian movement,[9] Thurber does not simply ridicule the "ideological" works of proletarian writers as some critics claim he does. Thurber's middle-class characters, not workers or socially conscious writers, are laughable due to their willful ignorance of social issues. The short-story writers are "aware that billions of dollars are stolen every year by bankers and politicians, and that thousands of people are out of work" (139), but his primary concern about "time" is the fear of wasting time on pointless action. Thus, Thurber does not attempt to divide life into the mundane and the cosmic or to isolate his characters from social issues. He seems to admit that the strings attached to short-story writers stem from both regular life and socio-economic life. They are not separate, but combined (or in a sense tangled) to enhance Thurber's humor.

Although Thurber posits these mundane and cosmic aspects of life, his autobiographical self-reference and humor confide his lack of intention to create practical consequences either for he himself as writer or for his reader. In his introduction, Thurber announces that his autobiography is functionally different from other autobiographical works that highlight the authors' excellent accomplishments, joyous self-expression, or that paint a picture of the author's time. In other words, he denies any feasible purpose for his autobiography:

> The 'time' of such a writer, then, is hardly worth reading about if the reader wishes to find out what was going on in the world while the writer in question was alive and at what might be laughingly called 'his best'. All that reader is going to find out is what happened to the writer. The compensation, I suppose, must lie in the

> comforting feeling that one has had, after all, a pretty sensible and peaceful life, *by comparison*. It is unfortunate, however, that even a well-ordered life can not lead anybody safely around the inevitable doom that waits in the skies [italics added]. (*Thurber* 139)

Thurber acknowledges the merit of reading his "time" only in "the comforting feeling" which seems unrelated to the actual events of the past world. These quoted passages do not specify an object of "comparison" to acquire that feeling. It is possible to assume that by comparing his/her own situation to Thurber's confused experiences the reader may achieve a sense of peace. Or, many readers may compare their personal life with "inevitable doom", and interpret Thurber's comic autobiography as a desperate attempt to seize the day. His autobiography, in short, seems to be a form of escape from "the" reality into personal fantasy and hilarious experiences even though an eschatological ending pardons any escape.[10] In a sense, what Robert M. Coates said in 1933 about the autobiography is right: Thurber "isn't really trying to lead anybody anywhere. Mostly, he is trying to escape" (138).

His escape, however, should not be considered another mode of aestheticism in the sense of "pure" comedy dedicated to the principle of pleasure or amusement. His comic autobiography is highly conscious of its generic elements of comedy and autobiography. In the final chapter, he maintains that he could not write about his life around the time of the Great Depression because "the confusions and the panics of last year and the year before are too close for contentment" (204). He requires a certain amount of time for "memories of blunderings and gropings" to be transformed into "the painstaking examination of distress and the careful ordering of event" (204). It is easy to dismiss these passages as mere excuses by an aesthetician for evading the social issues of the day. But, we should not

ignore his emphasis on the "time" required for a comic retelling of events. The immediacy of raw experiences does not bring out an accurate or detailed reflection of those experiences. With his statement about time, Thurber emphasizes the gap between a past event and its representation, and he incorporates that gap into self-referential elements of his autobiography. In other words, Thurber's comic autobiography accentuates the temporal gap that is part of identifying process: there is always a gap between a past occurrence and its (comic) meaning because the past experiences that Thurber represents as comic were not usually comic for those who were actually experiencing them when they occurred. When he proclaims in the introduction that his autobiography is about "his own personal time, circumscribed by the short boundaries of his pain and his embarrassment" (138), many critics take it at face value and urge us simply to enjoy Thurber's *My Life and Hard Times* as if his "time" is not really hard times. However, his language, even in the introduction of his autobiography, is ambiguous in a sense that we cannot determine whether we should take his words at a mundane level or a cosmic level. Tobias points to this ambiguity when he remarks that "we do not know whether simply to laugh at the events or whether to look beyond for what Thurber may be telling us about our world" (47). His comic treatment disturbs the process of identification in autobiography while his comments indicate that his own autobiography is not a strict duplication of his past experiences. The comic narrative, making good use of time, allows the enjoyment of that moment of almost achievable but always slippery correspondence between expectation and consequence or between subject and object.

"A Note at the End," the last chapter of Thurber's autobiography, somehow represents what the book is about—the story is about "escape," and the autobiography itself is full of various unsuccessful escapes. In the last chapter, the narrator imagines himself

escaping “like a character out of Conrad, silent and inscrutable,” and soon remembers that beads salesmen and native women “tried to sell me baskets,” which means that they had no problem recognizing him as a tourist (205). He could not escape false identification. He reaches the conclusion that “there are always, ready to snap at you, the little perils of routine living, but there is no escape in the unplanned tangent, the sudden turn” (206). Both Thurber’s narrator and Joseph Conrad’s fictional character, Lord Jim, fantasize an escape a routine filled with “little perils,” but it turns out that they are vulnerable to “the unplanned tangent, the sudden turn.” At the end of the chapter, Thurber decides not to stay from the tour ship to be left out at Martinique, one of the Caribbean islands, and comes back to the ship, only to find out “that somebody had stolen the pants to my dinner jacket” (206). While Thurber’s “unplanned tangent,” resulting in stolen pants, may not be as tragic and remarkable as Lord Jim’s, the narrator cannot escape “the sudden turn” that brings him back to the “little perils” of routine. The point in this story is that escape is an act of finding an authentic self as well as an elusive characteristic of selfhood during the identification process. After he fails to discover individuality free from social norms or routines in a foreign country, he is probably determined to content himself with his ordinary life, from which he had attempted to escape. The loss of his pants indicates that his tenuous grasp of his own self in the first place. So, it is ridiculous of him to go back to his “former” self because that self has never existed. He thinks he has escaped from his former self, but from a converse viewpoint, his authentic self is constantly escaping his apprehension.

By focusing on the personal obsessions of himself and of other characters, Thurber’s autobiography demonstrates that escape is the representation of a person’s obsessiveness or uniqueness. Contrary to the assumption that escape is an act of cowardice or insanity meant to avoid reality, the stories designate characters with personal obsessions,

or their own unique ways to cope with reality. Characters are constantly obsessed with something through which they comprehend their own experiences. This obsession usually comes across as very funny in his stories. For example, each character in "The Night the Bed Fell" has an object that occupies their mind. While his "father had decided to sleep in attic…to be away where he could think," his mother worried that "the heavy headboard would crash down on father's head in case the bed fell, and kill him" (141). Her worry would not be strange if we ignored the fact that his grandfather, who is obsessed with the memory of the American Civil War, usually sleeps in the bed which might fall down. The narrator continues naming family members and their obsessions: Briggs Beall, "who believed that he was likely to cease breathing when he was asleep;" Aunt Melissa Beall, who "suffered under the premonition;" Aunt Sarah Shoaf, who has "the fear that a burglar was going to get in;" and Aunt Gracie Shoaf, who also has "a burglar phobia" (141-42). Thurber identifies the uniqueness of the characters with relation to the objects of their obsessive concerns.

In order to become the objects of laughter, these personal obsessions appear eccentric only when the methods employed to relieve the worries are unusual. These obsessions are logically established by characters in an effort to understand their situation and escape from their worries while at the same time, the logic itself seems unpractical to the reader. Aunt Sarah and Gracie contrive an unusual counterplot against burglars to address their worries: Sarah "always piled her money, silverware and other valuables…outside the bedroom," and Gracie "throw[s] shoes down the hallway" (142). The lack of practicality of their solutions as well as their seriousness is meant to provoke our laughter. Yet, seen from a different perspective, however faulty their selected means are, their efforts to escape their indefinite fear, or "the sudden turn," are comprehensible and

commonplace. Here, Kenneth Burke is helpful in drawing our attention to how accusations of "escapism" unfold:

> It is quite normal and natural that people should desire to avoid an unsatisfactory situation…. Whereas [the term "escape"] properly applies to *all* men, here was an attempt to restrict its application to *some* men…. At least, there are many critics who avoided telling us precisely what they meant by life, avoidance, and facing reality. In this way, through escaping from the difficulties of their critical problem, they were free to accuse many writers and thinkers of escape. (*Permanence* 8)[11]

The accusation of escapism, in other words, may be based on mere differences in orientation. Using "escape" in a derogative sense comes with the possibility that the user of the term is in the same category of "escapist" and thus in another potential object of laughter as s/he is also attempting to escape from understanding other people. With Thurber's comedy, we can go a step further and interpret the peculiar (ir)rationality of characters as a condition of human interactions.

Moreover, the characters, both physically and symbolically, simultaneously take action to escape a situation and to catch an escapee. In Chapter 1, which describes the father sleeping in the grandfather's bed, the whole sequence of attempting to escape or to make others escape only complicates matters: when Thurber's cot flips over, his mother rushes to the conclusion that the sound came from the father's bed and that she has to go upstairs to save him. Her shouts wake up Herman whose shouts wake Briggs whose struggle to get out of bed wakes Thurber who supposes "the whole uproar was being made in a frantic endeavor to extricate me from what must be an unheard-of and perilous situation" (145). In a sense, none of the characters correctly judge the overall situation. One misjudgment elicits another misjudgment, and so on and so forth. The sequence develops

when the very act of trying to escape made each situation harder to escaped from. Their very efforts to escape added to "the general banging and confusion" (146). The whole slapstick sequence results in the mother's final comment, "I'm glad…that your grandfather wasn't here" (147). This is the highest point of absurdity in the episode because the end of story refers to the initial cause of the whole sequence: because of the grandfather's absence, the father has decided to sleep in the grandfather's bed. Her comment is humorous when she sees the actual cause of the whole sequence of events as the blighter side of the confusion. So, there is a twisted cycle of cause and effect: because there was no worst case (the grandfather is absent), there was, ironically, a whole series of slapstick escapes.

Another incidence of a gap in communication generating reality is in Chapter 4, "The Night the Ghost Got In," where a suspicion of the presence of a ghost shifts to a suspicion of burglars which shifts to a suspicion of deserters. In his childhood, the narrator heard footsteps around the dining table and went to identify the cause. The narrator and his brother Herman heard footsteps coming toward them, but did not see figures. Their mother also said that she heard footsteps and speculated that they must be from a burglar. She throws a shoe to break a neighbor's window to tell them to call police (165). In an effort to identify the cause of suspicion—it is a ghost for the children, a burglar for the mother—they unknowingly act as if their expectations actualize the presence of figure they suspect to be in the dining room. Even though there is the possibility that they are mishearing, the point is that the results of their own imagining are materialized as if there actually were ghosts, burglars or deserters, for whom their grandfather mistook the police. No one actually confirms the identity of the suspected figures, but the glass of the neighbor's bedroom window shattered, the house looks burglarized, and the police go back to the station house. The referential function of a word is suspended while its performative

function is fully in effect: the word precedes its referent. The character's actions, which are an attempt to understand the meanings of words that are escaping their understanding, simultaneously produce consequences induced by those same words. At the end of Chapter 4, the grandfather's inquiry, "[w]hat was the idee [idea] of all them cops tarryhootin' round the house last night?" (168), points to another example of a twisted cycle of the logic: a means to solve the problem is the actual cause of the problem. It turns out that what broke into the house were not ghosts or burglars, but cops.

In these stories,[12] Thurber brilliantly shows the creative aspects of symbolic dimensions where action and language interact to generate unanticipated consequences. Thurber's comedy exploits a gap in the communication process. Characters wish to escape from a situation, but the situation itself is not objective or neutral: it is in the process of change as if the situation itself is escaping from characters' comprehension. Even in the mundane realm, there is no harmonious and stable wholeness within a situation upon which everyone in that situation can base judgments leading to mutual understanding. Any effort to establish order in a situation either complicates further or settles in an unexpected way.

Thurber's stories, therefore, consist not only of cosmic-mundane worlds, but also of physical-symbolic escapes. These chapters in the autobiography demonstrate that one of Thurber's comical devices is the semi-autonomous function of communication gaps.[13] While human characters attempt to judge the true meaning of a statement or event, they fail to fully grasp it. But, their failures can be made known to them and to the reader only in the narrator's retrospective, which organizes a sequence of miscommunications into a comic narrative. The reader may feel amused when these miscommunications elude factual grounding. While Bergson may point out that laughter at miscommunication has a "corrective" function calling for clear understanding, Alenak Zupančič, a philosopher

strong in Lacanian psychoanalysis, highlights another aspect of laughter in relation to excess language usage:

> [W]e don't laugh simply to mark and "correct" a linguistic fault or deficiency, we laugh at "miraculous" occurrence of the surplus-sense that was produced from that very failure or nonsense. We don't laugh because spirit or thought failed to be expressed, or didn't get through correctly, we laugh because a thought or spirit *did* emerge, materialize "out of nothing" (but words). (119)

This observation well explains Thurber's representation of the comic sequence because his characters obsessively and sometimes mechanically react to their presupposed or possible failures, ranging from miscommunication to the malfunction of machines. While the surplus sense seems a product of misidentification, this surplus sense of nonsense is a very significant element propelling Thurber to prefer a comic narrative to a logical explanation of irrationality and nonrationality in human relations.

3. Non-Dupes Err: *Let Your Mind Alone!* (1937)

The point of Thurber's comedy is that there is a moment or a space where unexpected surplus of meaning pops up because we are symbolic animals living in society. Just like the writing style of John Dos Passos reveals that there are too many motivations surrounding our mind, Thurber's comedy demonstrates that our rational attempt to know our reason by directly examining it is often paradoxical and turns out to be irrational. Thurber's *Let Your Mind Alone* (1937), a collection of popular mental science essays, examines the unpracticality of the logic in mental efficiency books whose purpose is to make the mind more efficient and practical for happiness. Thurber quotes Professor Walter B. Pitkin, a self-help book author, who argues that "all the external conditions required for

happy living were present…The only obstacle was a psychological one" (309). The professor, who calls his discipline the "Science of Happiness," thinks highly of scientific techniques applied to everyday life in an effort to "modernize" the mind to catch up with modern industrial society. As Thurber gives Pitkin and other advocates of mental efficiency, various names like "Success Experts," "Shaper of Success," or "inspirationalist," for terminological convenience I have chosen to use the designation "inspirationalist" to refer to Thurber's antagonists. Against inspirationalist like Pitkin, Thurber, who again appropriates a generic convention, this time critical essay, to his counterargument, proffers the thesis that "man will be better off if he quits monkeying with his mind and just lets it alone" (309). While Allen Tate in our Chapter 5 boisterously plays up "naturalism" of other thinkers, Thurber humorously demonstrates the illogicality or "excess" of the inspirationalists' emphasis of logical thinking, using illustrations of his experiences and quotations from self-help books. Kenneth Burke, who reviewed *Let Your Mind Alone!*, asserts that Thurber's book shows "many paradox" that "the study of mind has brought fore" and humorously treat those inspirationalists "who will expend his jocular enterprise to vindicate the judgments of common sense" ("Thurber Perfects" 221). As I argued above, Thurber affirms with a comic tone the inevitability of miscommunication and misjudgment, which literally and symbolically sets us on the run. By defending fantasy and redefining mechanical views in the age of electricity, his comic essays in *Let Your Mind Alone!* criticize errors in the inspirationalists' presupposition that miscommunication can be corrected with proper discipline.

Thurber holds that it is a lack of imagination that enables the inspirationalists to think highly of their techniques and to dismiss works of imagination. In Chapter 2, Thurber claims that "the problems they set up, and knock down, are in the main unimaginative and

pedestrian" (315). He pokes fun at the improbable situations assumed by these authors. Quoting passages by inspirationalists, Thurber picks out the unrealistic characterization of the obedient woman "who wept with delight when you gave her a smile, and trembled with fear at your frown" (315). He produces a counterexample of "a mentally disciplined husband with mentally undisciplined wife," Mr. and Mrs. Conner on whom their friend Bert Scursey plays a trick by "pretending to be, and imitating the voice of, a colored woman" (316) on the phone. Mr. Harry Conner is familiar with "a theory of logical behavior which he had got out of the Mind and Personality books" (317). Provoked by a prank call, Mr. Conner goes downstairs to talk to the hotel's assistant manager, Mr. Bent, who is also "a dabbler in psychological books" (319). Even though Misters Conner and Bent have learned human psychology from best-selling inspirationalist books, they fail to discern Bert Scursey's mimicry or Mr. Conner's trouble. Thurber implies a paradox that a consistent and efficient thought process is likely to obstruct its own consistency and efficiency. Instead of "the streamed mind," which is too confident in its own efficiency and consistency to admit its mistakes, Thurber cherishes the value of an "undisciplined mind:" "the undisciplined mind runs far less chance of having its purposes thwarted, its plans distorted, its whole scheme and system wrenched out of line. The undisciplined mind, in short, is far better adapted to the confused world in which we live today than the streamlined mind" (321). Thus, the discipline of a streamlined mind cannot handle the unpredictable occurrences resulting from technological advancements, such as the telephone or car. Chapter 4, "A Dozen Disciplines," and Chapter 6, "Anodynes for Anxieties," are Thurber's criticism against this sort of unpractical, if not impossible, discipline of streamlining the mind and to alleviate anxieties. Thurber applies concrete counterarguments to imperatives like, "[t]hink one hour a day about one subject exclusively"

(327), to insist on their unfeasibility.

Thurber's essays take issue with the binary opposition of reality and fantasy, and draw attention to the indirect profits of "unprofitable" daydreams or fantasies. He complains that the inspirationalists tolerate fantasy only if it has some kind of purposeful relation to reality:

> They allow you a certain amount of reverie and daydreaming (no woolgathering), but only when it is purposeful, only when it is going to lead to realistic action and concrete achievement….I have had a great deal of satisfaction and benefit out of daydreaming which never got me anywhere in their definition of getting somewhere. (322)

Thurber is skeptical of the "realist" view that a dream is to be made to come true. He gives an example of his personal experience when he was very annoyed with an official in a dog show whom he nicknamed Mr. Bustard. Irritated with Mr. Bustard's treatment of him, Thurber "fancied a much more successful encounter with Mr. Bustard." In a daydream, he "enraged Mr. Bustard," and "floored him with a beautiful right to the jaw" (323). If he were a realist and had made his daydream come true, he would have been beaten down and humiliated further since Mr. Bustard "outweighs [him] by sixty pounds" (324). While his daydreaming does produce physical or material profit, he suggests that the benefit is "to visualize a triumph over the humiliator so vividly and insistently that it becomes, in effect, an actuality (324). In other words, it is not a matter of actualizing the literal contents of a dream: daydreaming is effective even in fantasy. He does not impose upon the reader a purpose for daydreaming: rather, the imaginary narrative of his encounter allows Thurber to impress Bustard with "an enigmatic, triumphant smile, which must have worried him a great deal" (324).

Thurber's imaginative daydreaming and fantasizing is not simple make-believe that attempts to control personal mental status. He refers to another inspirational writer, Dorothea Brande, who gives "practical" advice for fulfilling a dream to go to Italy. Not only does Thurber poke fun at Mrs. Brande's "practical" advice, which demands too much effort and sacrifice to be considered "practical" at all, but he is also critical of Brande's imperative, such as "act as if it were impossible to fail" (325, 335), and of her realist distinction between reality and dream. In Thurber's view, however, the dream is not the ideal core around which an individual realistically or mechanically organizes his/her everyday life. While reality depends on imagination to visualize the impossible vividly and insistently, a dream need not be a practice serving for reality. This may sound paradoxical, but the visualization of impossibility—not of a dream that is possible, but of a dream that is actually unfeasible—is how fantasy contributes to actuality for Thurber. This does not mean that fantasy is voluntarist panacea or self-deceptive pretension. Indeed, Thurber does not accept any definition of imagination without reserve. Rather, he rehabilitates the strength of imagination by stealing back from the utilitarian definition of imagination celebrated by scientists including the inspirationalists in his essays. In Chapter 6, he ridicules efforts to employ imaginative activities as "anodynes for anxieties" (341). Far from a realistic solution, he argues, an imaginative conversation in the self with "a ghostly banker or industrialist is an escape mechanism calculated to take a man so far from reality he might never get back" (342). The type of make-believe which smothers the actual absence in reality is "wish fulfillment, fantasy, reverie, and woolgathering at their most perilous" (342). Imagination, in other words, can be bogged down in practical, realist aims to become "unpractical" wish fulfillment. Thurber uses his imagination to examine examples and imperatives of inspirationalists in order to uncover unexpected backdoors or

slippery gimmicks in the minds of the experts of the mind. And, this unexpected result is something at which we cannot directly arrive.

Therefore, while his strategic treatment of self-help books tirelessly translates logical thoughts of the mind into humorous illogic, his aesthetics revolve around the unexpected and inevitable short circuit or malfunction of a normal circuit. His comic strategy also pokes fun at the inspirationalists' confidence in their own reasoning by pointing to elementary mistakes: for example, a miscalculation in Dr. Murseel's "Pythagorean theorem" and a grammatical error in Dr. Shellow's sample intelligence tests (314, 361). For Thurber, trust of machines and rationality causes more problems than it solves, especially when intelligence makes individuals vulnerable to cracks in what they have thought of as well-ordered structures, varying from machine to society. There is a contrast between Harvey Lake, who experienced an accident that made him afraid of automobiles, and Marvin Belt, who is "not afraid of machinery, or of high places, or of crashes" (358). Marvin's trust of machines is, however, flawed because of his lack of trust in human conducts: "He was simply afraid that the pilot of any plane he got into might lose his mind" (358). Above all, Thurber's comic focus strives to enhance attitudes of frustration, irritation, dissatisfaction, disappointment, or embarrassment—all of the mental gaps which are inescapable symptoms of the electric age. That is why Aunt Kate Obetz is represented as alternative to inspirationalist and Marvin's distrust of human:

> She admitted failure; she had no code for removing irritations and dissatisfactions; she viewed herself as in a single mirror, directly; she lost her temper; she swore in the presence of subordinates; she confessed complete surrender in the face of a difficult problem…And yet her workmen and her family continued to love and respect her…. Her failure did not show up in my aunt's character; she was always

the same as ever. (338)

Thurber admires Aunt Kate for not changing herself despite all the negative consequences of machines. Aunt Kate does not imaginatively calculate the gains born of her failures. While his description may be criticized as nostalgia for small factory community, what Aunt Kate and Thurber share indicates that comedy is a strategy for admitting failures and still coming out unhurt. In other words, miscommunications, errors, and fallacy are not breaks in the human relationship, but rather missing links to the preservation of social interactions. His comedy is not meant to laugh at broken connections or to re-channel human relations into straight lines of organized logic. Every character in Thurber's stories makes mistakes in a way anticipated by that person as well as viewers/readers. His comedy moves as if something everybody missed appears for laughter. This "something" is always and already a by-product of our reasoning and expectation. But, this very by-product which can only be attributed to everyone's nonknowledge paradoxically makes us human and social.

Although psychoanalytical vogue in the 1930s produced sexual readings which Thurber denounced in his essays,[14] Lacanian psychoanalysis is helpful in allowing us to understand Thurber's denial of the practicality of imagination and Aunt Kate's actions. Slavoj Žižek emphasizes the importance of not working directly to reach a goal by using examples of attaining "respect" and "dignity:"

> If I consciously try to appear dignified or to arouse respect, the result is ridiculous; the impression I make, instead, is that of miserable impersonator. The basic paradox of these states is that although they are what matters most, they elude us as soon as we make them the immediate aim of our activity. The only way to bring them about is not to center our activity on them but to pursue other goals and hope

> that they will come about "by themselves." Although they do pertain to our activity, they are ultimately perceived as something that belongs to us on account of what we *are* and not on account of what we *do*. The Lacanian name for this "by-product" of our activity is *object petit a*, the hidden treasure, that which is "in us more than ourselves," that elusive, unattainable X that confers upon all our deeds an aura of magic, although it cannot be pinned down to any of our positive qualities. (*Looking Awry* 77)

Indeed, this is a very strange attempt since Žižek discusses that "elusive, unattainable X" which does not have "any of our positive qualities." Yet, I insist that Thurber's comic view preserves the provocative strength of "what we *are*" when most critics in his time were obsessed with "what we *do*" by presupposing that actions elicit intended (or unintended) changes and meanings. Thurber must be aware that the pursuit of efficiency and practicality to attain a goal is paradoxically inefficient and unpractical. Without recognition of failures and mistakes, inspirationalists miss the escape of *object petit a*, their uncontrollable "by-products."

4. The Big Other is Not Watching You: *Fables for Our Time* (1940)

Therefore, I argue that Thurber's persistence on comedy, even in hard times, brings back repetitively this non-knowledge that can be shared for the renewal of cooperative sense beyond practical gains. One of Thurber's literary strategies that have baffled his critics is his use of fable in *Fables for Our Time & Famous Poems Illustrated* (1940), a collection of fables published in eight issues of the *New Yorker* between January, 1939 and October 1940. Each issue has three or four stories in one or two pages. Critics, especially those who connect Thurber's fables with George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, agree

that his choice of the fable genre indicates his literary commitment to political action in the guise of stupid animals.[15] However, how his fables are political statements is not very clear when we consult his critics. There are 27 short fables, and 15 of them include the death of animal characters. In the rest of the fables, animals and some human characters avoid death but experience defeat, loss, and terror. Although it is the characters' behaviors that induce the failures resulting in negative consequences, and each fable concludes with a moral, it is very hard for the reader to learn from those failures and morals.[16] Norris Yates, for example, remarks that "since the animal kingdom can match the human race in showing an irrational urge to destroy itself…there is little consolation or wisdom to be found in the nonhuman world, except for the courage and tranquility of certain dogs" (291). The irrational behaviors represented by animals could be an object of derision without consolation. If this pessimistic and somber view in and toward Thurber is what Thurber intended, his political strategy is unconvincing to anyone and merely provides another example of cynicism. It is successful in dislocating our expectations by remaking old fables, but the fables do not recreate a standard of conduct. Only when we suppose a continuity of Thurber's comical technique from *My Life and Hard Times* to *Fables for Our Times*, does the close analysis of his fables reveal a symbolic strategy which restrains actions and disarms our unbelief on the verge of a catastrophe.[17]

As many critics have complained, the morals at the end of each of Thurber's fables are not unanimously acceptable to the reader, especially when one moral contradicts with another. In the issue of August 26, 1939,[18] there are four fables the morals of which the reader may have found difficult to accept after reading the stories. One of the fables is about a hen who decided not to fly to get across the road after seeing two flying geese shot down. Despite the fact that "[f]ive of her sisters and three of her daughters' husband were

killed trying to cross the road in one month" and that "an enterprising wood duck set up an airways service across the road" (487), the hen persuaded others not to fly. The moral is "[u]se the wings God gave you, or nothing can save you" (487). The first question that may occur to the reader is whether the hen's fault is disloyalty to her God-given nature. But, if we disregard the moral, the hen's problem might be interpreted differently: she does not recognize that her avoidance of danger and death is causing a new potential for danger and death. This ambiguity becomes obvious when we move to another fable in that issue. In the next fable, a goldfinch which bumped into a sheet of glass reasoned that "all of sudden the air crystallized on" it. When the goldfinch told other birds, including a sea gull, hawk, eagle and swallow, about it, all the birds except the swallow laughed at the goldfinch's reasoning and resolved to fly the same course. The three birds, which "use the wings God gave," all bumped into the glass and passed out. The moral is "[h]e who hesitates is sometimes saved" (489). Comparing these two fables, we cannot derive a principle of action from their respective moral lessons. If we want to be saved, should we make good use of our natural ability or hesitate to use it? When we understand that those who trust the hen's warning are killed and that those who doubt the goldfinch's report are knocked out cold, should we doubt or trust what others say? Or, is it, rather, possible that it is "sometimes" better to hesitate?

As it seems inadequate to reduce Thurber's fables to a series of moral lessons for the purpose of eliciting an immediate action, let us instead explore how the fables touch on the unrecognized relationship between intention and action. Harold John Blackham, who theorizes about the generic features of fable, argues that a "fable shows what it has to show, and leaves it open to reflection; it is not in the business of illustrating general propositions, although it may be used by others for that purpose" (176). Similar to Thurber's cosmic and

mundane forces as mentioned above, in Blackham's theory, there are "the poles of [its] sphere" such as "memorable illustration of the familiar and exposure of the unrecognized" (176). Blackham's theory resembles a critical comment of Thurber's critic, Richard C. Tobias, who argues that the fables "employ a standard comic technique of repeating a habit or custom beyond what is appropriate to the situation" (103). I accept Tobias' point with reservation: even though animals make wrong decisions and take inappropriate actions, I do not think that the position of reader reveals the appropriateness, or lack thereof, of a certain decision in a particular situation. From the perspective of human reader, who is familiar with highways, hunting, and glass, the animals in the fables appear repetitive, ignorant, and laughable. However, we cannot blame the animals for their inadequate knowledge to judge an actual situation and determine a proper course of action. We can hardly conceive what we should learn from their mistakes. If we maintain a safe distance from the animal characters (or the human behaviors represented by the animals), we will not notice "exposure of the unrecognized." In order to derive the unrecognized from the familiar, it is necessary for the reader to renounce the privileged position from which they may judge the appropriateness of characters' actions. This also means that the reader should not presuppose that some human characteristics or behaviors correspond to the characteristics or behaviors of "lower" animals. We can imagine an infinite number of situations where we, like the animals personified in fables, do not know what action is appropriate in a given situation. And, this sort of reflection creates an important juncture where the reader can stand. Rather than gaining a set of moral lessons through the failures of the animals in the fables, we should begin with the premise that our inadequacy of knowledge in any situation will affect our actions.

By implying that no choice is legitimate, Thurber's literary strategy prompts the

reader to find an alternative to blaming the inadequacy of others' knowledge. Each fable presents a character's choice, and the choice does not lead to an intended result. Moreover, it is dubious that any other possible choice would be correct, so we cannot determine the value of the reasoning that leads to the character's choice. Clear examples of this appear in the February 4, 1939 issue. There is a story of a "fairly intelligent fly" which is careful enough not to fall victim to a spider's web, but careless in judging that it can safely land on the place where other flies are. Despite the warning of a bee, the fly lands on flypaper. The moral is "[t]here is no safety in numbers, or in anything else" (453). The moral implies that the old saying, "there's safety in number," no longer serves to help us avoiding danger. Not only do Thurber's fables often represent a piece of conventional wisdom as obsolete, their morals simultaneously reject the existence "any" safe choice. Another story in the same issue is about a lion snatching wings from an eagle. The lion at first tells the eagle to lend him his wings in exchange of his mane. Though he plucks the wings, the lion keeps his mane; but, the lion could not fly because his "weight was too great for the eagle's wings to support, and besides he did not know how to fly" (455). The eagle takes his wings back, gets the lion's mane, and goes back to his nest. He ends up being shot by his mate "who was very nervous anyway…thinking he was a lion" (455). The moral is "[n]ever allow a nervous female to have access to a pistol, no matter what you're wearing" (455). Again, this moral has nothing to do with the exchange between the lion and the eagle. As long as "a nervous female [has] access to a pistol," this kind of incident could happen. The lion's mane is one of several factors that lead the nervous female to take up a gun. It is easy to detect that the eagle's prank, to "have some fun with her," only ends up producing an undesirable result.

No one in either fable could make a choice that allowed them to avoid danger.

Even though the fly recognizes the deceit in spider's invitation to its house, the fly is so confident in his judgment that it fails to see the truth of the bee's warning. The lion lies to the eagle in promising to exchange his mane for the eagle's wings, but actually the lion keeps the mane and snatches the wings. Although the eagle is being truthful when he says, "I bet you can't fly off the top of that great rock yonder" (455), the lion interprets it as a lie or challenge, and then fails to fly. At this point, the fable seems to repeat a conventional pattern in which the eagle's sagacity outwits the lion's pride. But the fable does not end at that point: the eagle is not sufficiently sage to anticipate the possibility that his mate would mistake him for the lion. As seen in the lion and spider characters, the fables seem to warn against unconditional trust in the words of others. At the same time, the fables also represent a situation where skepticism of the words of others prevents the characters from making "correct" choices. The fables do not tell when or which statements are reliable. Neither do they give the reader a practical solution for the misunderstandings or mistakes to which the characters of fables are liable. The moral lessons at the end of each fable cannot be generalized, especially when one moral contradicts another.

Thurber's fables show that the author does not commit himself to propaganda efforts, whose basic strategies are unmasking enemy propaganda and constructing counter-propaganda to consolidate supporters. In the fables as well as in propaganda, there are false statements, lies, pretensions, and disguises which exploit old sayings, conventional wisdom, popular beliefs, and social norms either deliberately or accidently. "The Very Proper Gander," another fable in the same issue as those of the lion and fly, not only reflects Thurber's concern over propaganda, but also reinforces the inconclusiveness of the moral lessons. As a gander sings, "[t]here is a very proper gander," a hen that overhears the song believes that the gander is engaging in propagandist activity. The

punning of "proper gander" with "propaganda" reveals the absurdity of the hen's accusation. However, false statements by the hen cause a rumor which situates the gander on the enemy's side with accusations of "Hawk-lover! Unbeliever! Flag-hater! Bomb-thrower!" (457). From the reader's perspective, the gander suffers false charges. But, the fable ends with the moral that "[a]nybody who you or your wife thinks is going to overthrow the government by violence must be driven out of the country" (457). This moral seems to justify the choice of driving the gander out of the country: the fact that the gander is thought to be a rebel by "you or your wife" might be enough cause for preemptive action. Conversely, the ostensible absurdity of the moral imperative makes the reader skeptical of Thurber's moral lessons: it induces the reader to be watchful for propagandistic elements in the accusatory phrasing, "overthrow the government by violence." Thurber's fables, therefore, are attempts to alert the reader to propaganda's abuse of wisdoms and norms rather than their own form of propaganda demanding certain immediate actions.

As discussed above, a previously unacknowledged reading of Thurber's fables indeed suggest the author's edgy insight into the social as well as literary predicament of the 1930s. Our examination of the fables reveals that Thurber's comical strategy appears to demonstrate communication gaps at least three levels, suspending the validity of the existing moral system. The first and the most distinct gap is, as critics have pointed out, at the content level where the inadequacy of a character's knowledge produces a gap between expectation and result. This involves the notion that conventionality or virtuousness is misused for the purpose of deceiving. The second gap is between the story and its moral. Morals are so obscure and mysterious that it is hard to conceive of them as new guiding principle; they are far from an insightful interpretation of the story. This fact reminds the

careful reader of the fable's generic component: a fable is an invented story whose generality produces flexibility calling for multiple interpretations. A short story does not necessarily include the moral lesson that would make it a fable. Thurber's enigmatic morals, therefore, mobilizes these critical awareness of the reader rather than forcing the reader to accept an interpretation stemming from each tale. The third gap is between the tales themselves, revealing a lack of consistency within what one would expect to be a coherent system of values collectively represented by fables. Often one moral contradicts another. No story exemplifies a correct decision or righteous act. One particular story, "The Hen and the Heavens," which is the last fable in the book version, epitomizes the absence of guarantors of truth. Based on Brothers Grimm's Chicken Little, in which a young chicken mistakes an acorn for a falling star and fears that the heavens are falling, Thurber's fable affirms that "the heavens actually *were* falling down" and ends with a moral, "[i]t wouldn't surprise me a bit if they did" (497). As the possible loss of the heavens implies the loss of conceptual support for the physical world, the gaps in these three levels of Thurber's fables may weaken the viability of values united in efforts to fend off propagandistic abuse of language. Thus, while the fables doubt the trustworthiness of various ethical principles and conventional wisdom, at the same time they recreate a relationship between human beings and language.

5. The Physics of Laughter: James Thurber and the 1930s

As we have seen in this chapter, Thurber finds it important to treat failures retrospectively in comical ways, but not to consider failures as bad examples which should not be imitated and repeated. His fables as well as his other comedies emphasize that fallibility is a basic human condition while laughter is an appropriate means to deal with

this fallibility. Fallibility comes from humankind's inability to control its own products, including machines, bodies, and language. Overcoming fallibility is not a matter of knowledge or rationality. *Fables for Our Time* repeatedly clarifies the notion that nothing can guarantee the definite outcome of an action, and this is made especially obvious in "Our Time" when the bloody confrontation among countries grows more intense. Due to our physical existence, there are infinite variations of the gaps between the intention behind an action and the result of that action. The infinite variations may discourage a belief in autonomous subjectivity and encourage tragic resignation to contingent doom. However, this is not the case in Thurber's comedy. His comedy nourishes the energy created through the absence of consistency between subjective intention and objective result. His comedy points to the absence of an omnipotent arbiter—or the big "Other"—which is supposed to distinguish right from wrong and to guarantee the consistency of a conduct's intention and result. His comedy translates this absence into the potential for conditions that allow us to renew our belief in a communal sense shared by others. It is not a positive principle expressed in words that a community. Again, a psychoanalytical theory of comedy can elucidate the basis of regenerating belief or "trust" in others through comedy: "trust is precisely what comes at the point of the lack in the Other, of the Other's inconsistency and inconstancy. The subject thus credits the Other precisely at the point where the latter escapes reciprocity and predictability" (Zupančič 84). In other words, comedy, including Thurber's, is an attempt to recover trust through the realization of gaps rather than to sneer at other's blind trust in words.

The analysis of Thurber's works enables us to see his efforts to found a new sense of "physics" in comedy. As Bergson emphasized, "any incident is comic that calls attention to the physical in a person when it is the moral side that is concerned" (27)—the most

significant attainment in Thurber's works is the reworking of physicality through comedy. In her book on comedy, Zupančič reminds us that there is always a smack of metaphysics in "realist" or humanistic proclamation and that it is necessary to admit human flaw because human existence is physical and finite. Zupančič calls the supposition of human limitation "metaphysics of the finite," and by contrast she defines comedy as "physics of the infinite" of which she gives a concise description: "*Not only are we not infinite, we are not even finite*" (53: italics in orig.). The refusal of the notion that we are infinite, or that our spirits, not bodies, are eternal, does not automatically resolve into a finite existence. The admittance of finitude paradoxically separates human beings from a place to believe the finitude firmly. We cannot fully grasp the range or numbers of finitude. Thurber's works reveal his awareness of this paradox, and his comedy stops before submitting to finitude and translates this physicality from a proof of alienation to a possibility of communal ties.

Readers of Thurber's comedy are exposed to the loss of objects of belief in order to regain trust in the human condition. However paradoxical this may seem, his comic treatment of inconsistencies or gaps forever separating the effects of action from intention, in the end restores our trust in communicability. In *I Believe* (1939), which Clifton Fadiman edited to present essays in which famous writers at that time made personal statements about their own beliefs, Thurber questions a clear opposition between belief and disbelief with his reading of Robert Browning's dramatic monologue *Bishop Blougram's Apology*. In the first part of the essay, he claims with exaggerating tone that human choice of abstract reasoning over instinct has caused "the loss in sagacity, balance, co-operation, competence, and purpose which Man has suffered since he rose up on his hind legs" (297). The environment is not plastic and abundant enough to meet rational expectation while a

product of intellect such as "Art" "brings us to God and Heaven" (299). Thurber confesses "[t]he Dignity of Man and the Divine Destiny of Man are two things which it is at the moment impossible for me to accept with wholehearted enthusiasm" (299). His disbelief in religious immortality or anthropocentric reasoning is, however, constitutive of belief. Citing Blougram, Thurber insists that "[i]f it is hard to Believe, it is just as hard, as our poet's Bishop Blougram points out to the cynical Mr. Gigadibs, to 'guard our unbelief'…and we are safe once more in our conviction that there can be no God watching over this sorrowful and sinister scene, these menacing and meaningless animals" (300). With this view, belief is not at odds with disbelief; rather, disbelief is ancillary to belief in the sense that you have to believe in yourself who do not believe. Thurber's comedy is devised to entice the reader to renounce their blind trust and to renew trust through the recognition of miscommunication, inconsistency, and inhumanity. And only laughter can recover a communal sense from fallibility.

Notes on Chapter 4

[1] A quote from Thurber's "The Saving Grace" in *Lanterns & Lances* (124).

[2] For arguments on cynicism, see Riesman and Smith. For a more detailed analysis of the shift from propaganda analysis to democratic education in the fight for cynicism, see Cmiel.

[3] Originally published in 1943. The essay is reprinted in Merton's *The Social Theory and Social Structure*.

[4] Consulting Peter Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* which distinguishes kynicism from cynicism, Slavoj Žižek emphasizes that a cynical distancing from social norms is also an ideology which prevailed in post-ideological society.

[5] For a general view toward Thurber's life and works, I am indebted to Morsberger and Tobias. And. The important critical essays are included in Holems. Although not many people deny that his values in terms of the history of American comedy are comparable to Chaplin and Marx Brothers, he is rarely mentioned in critical discourses after the sixties and seventies.

[6] Although caricatured middle-class Little Man characters had developed through the nineteenth century, the Little Man in *t*he *New Yorker* represents literate and college-educated men whose intellectual abilities does not exempt them from being hoaxed.

[7] On the humorous and the aesthetic, see Morreall. His emphasis on incongruity in humor echoes Burke's concept of "the perspective by incongruity" that we discuss in Chapter 5.

[8] Although I deal with three different works by Thurber, all of them are included in The Library of America version of *James Thurber: Writings and Drawings*, which I will cite in this chapter.

[9] See Burton Bernstein, *Thurber: A Biography* (223-36). And Thurber's book review on Granville Hicks, *Proletarian Literature in the United States*, in "Voices of Revolution," in *New Republic* (March 25, 1936). He does not acknowledge any literary significance in that anthology except Dos Passos' "The Body of an American." Thurber saw the difference between Dos Passos and other writes in Dos Passos' attention to the reader and thus "the literary effects" (200).

[10] According to Bluefarb, the escape motif has been dominant in American literary tradition. He analyzed the escape motif in literary works after the closing of the frontier which expanded westward by about 1880. Writing in 1972, Bluefarb went back to Mark Twain to trace an escapist heritage leading to the Beats and hippies. Thurber denied Twain's influence over his works. It is Henry James who Thurber asserts influenced him.

[11] One of Burke's counterstatements is this barren accusation of "escape" for aesthetic discussion. In *Let Your Mind Alone,* Thurber claims that "[e]scapism means the activities of anyone who is not a leftist critic or writer" (225).

[12] Other chapters contain structural form. Any effort to correct miscommunication is also doomed to fail: a pursuer is caught as an escapee. In Chapter 2, "The Car We Had to Push," the family members tried to correct misunderstanding of Uncle Zenas by following Zena's illusory story, only ending up the family members are ones who act strangely. In Chapter 5, the father thinks that his children have gone crazy when they wake him up in the night and say something beyond his comprehension. He wakes his wife to witness their eccentric behavior, and it is he, in turn, who is incomprehensible to his wife.

[13] There are many miscommunications between a servant and his family member in Chapter 6, Miscommunication with servants in "A Sequence of Servants," with a dog in "The Dog That Bit People;" with automobile (198-99), microscope (188), football player (190-91), governmental document and doctor (203).

[14] For example, Chapter 8, "Sex ex Machina." As its title suggests, his criticism is especially directed at a pan-sexual reading of psychoanalysis. With the spread of electricity, contact between machines and humans becomes more vital and unpredictable. It is as if a person encounters a stranger without any shared language. Thurber refers to his past experience when a short circuit causes an automobile horn to sound at one o'clock in the morning (357). In the electric age, mechanical devices are not fitted to the logic of mechanism, the causal logic. Even though Thurber understands that a short circuit is the cause of the unexpected incident, his anxiety is not alleviated. Machines are excessive in this sense, and the psychoanalytical terminology of sexual repression or the unconscious on the side of human cannot dispel this excessiveness.

[15] From 1940, Thurber contributed a column twice a week to *PM*, an antifascist daily newspaper established by Ralph Ingersoll, his former colleague at the *New Yorker* (*The Years with Ross* 105). Also, he initiated a critical review of John Steinbeck's novel, *The Moon is Down* ("What Price Conquest?" 370). Even though Thurber was distancing himself from any "ideological" tendency in his writing, his critics claimed that his fables and other writings during the war time were imbued with his political views.

[16] The critics have noticed Thurber's comic exploitation of the traditional fable form. They can say that he is against conventions, clichés or propaganda, but they also criticize his pessimism. For example, Pack Carnes states that Thurber's fables "cannot help or really instruct, save to tell us that there is no real help to be found in past human experience" (14).

[17] For other accounts of Thurber's fables, see Carnes and Triesch.

[18] Even though I refer to a specific issue of the *New Yorker*, for referential convenience the page numbers for this citation are from the Library of America version of a book. The book version allows me to more easily specify stories because the *New Yorker* groups two or three stories together on one page. Also there are no titles in the magazine version.

Chapter 5

Aesthetics of Medium in Literary Criticism:

Close Reading as a Collaborative Strategy

The necessities of history are the "villain" that makes the total drama go
---Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes toward History*

1. Redefining Literariness

Before the 1930s, there were two main tendencies, humanist-formalist "criticism" and historical-philological "scholarship," within academia. As the 1930s witnessed various attempts to comprehend cultural dynamics and social relationships, much effort was devoted to establishing the principles of literary criticism outside the academic field.[1] As we saw in Chapter 2, new academic disciplines such as the history of science and communication studies were fairly quick to develop their own interpretative frameworks. In comparison to those disciplines, university departments of literature were rather slow to inquire into their own modes of textual interpretation. Discussions of 1930s American literary criticism often depended on the categorization of many different groups, and, consequently, shared aims or flexible interactions among these groups were obscured. Alfred Kazin's *On Native Grounds* (1942), Robert E. Spiller's *Literary History of the United States* (1948), and Floyd Stovall's *The Development of American Literary Criticism* (1955), for example, divided critics into categories such as "Humanist," "Formalist," "Marxist" and so forth, and drew attention to their hostile attitudes toward each other. As "New Criticism" was widely implemented in American universities after World War II, even those categorizations of literary debates were pushed into oblivion. Even New Criticism came to be considered as having a particular set of characteristics, principles, and political interests—and this description of New Criticism is

still alive today. According to Geraldine Murphy, who criticized New Criticism's contribution to the Cold War ideology in 1988, New Criticism "emphasized tradition, craftsmanship, the autonomy of the work of art and the impersonality of the artist. The profound sense of cultural crisis which Eliot's generation experienced led to the conviction that order and harmony were available only in the realm of aesthetics" (740). While some recent research, like Murphy's, has reconnected New Criticism with proper historical and political backgrounds, it tends to presuppose that New Criticism, but not "deconstruction," can be replaced with a set of characteristics and historical interest.

It is a great loss that the rich diversity of the critical debates of the 1930s were obscured by the tirelessly repeated argument that New Criticism only accepts autonomous and ahistorical aspects of literary works and embraces critical objectivity and neutrality in perceiving them. The foremost misunderstanding of New Criticism is its treatment of "history,"[2] which we will examine later. Also the term New Criticism seemed a strange label to those who were thus categorized. A quick glance at the discussion held in 1951 about New Criticism for *The American Scholar* allows us to realize the difficulty in defining the newness of literary criticism in the '30s. In the discussion, the participants can neither extend the definition of New Criticism beyond "*explication de texte*" nor agree on a list of member of *the* New Criticism. Malcolm Cowley, for example, explains the pedagogical origin of "*explication de texte*" in France and implies that it is not as "new" as post-war American academicians want to assume. Allen Tate shared this view and asserted that "it began as *explication de texte*, and from there people went in many different directions" (97). For them, it was not "the" New Criticism; rather it was simply a variety of individual writers who tried to devise a critical standard to evaluate contemporary literary works. Tate continued that there was not "any definite purpose" in "communication among critics" (220) while Kenneth

Burke, another participant in the discussion, insisted the contrary. This conflict is crucial for our argument in this chapter because Burke saw in the literary critics something common which Tate could not see. The comparison of Burke to Tate allows us to observe their theorization of errors, and the consideration of errors is not only a step toward "newness" in literary criticism but also a social advantage for defense and cooperation.

The change in literary studies during the 1930s would have been impossible without interdisciplinary perspectives that attempted to determine the historical and social place of "literature" in the larger context of modern culture. As we saw in Chapter 2, it became necessary to assess even the effects of scientific knowledge and technological development within larger social and cultural contexts especially after the First World War. Literary studies were also sensitive to the influences of the progress of science and technology. This progress, as we saw in other chapters, had a tremendous impact on American culture, especially the cultural values of language. When the "aesthetic" dimension is stressed in the new trends of literary criticism of the interwar period, the aesthetic is like a hermitage which shelters fugitives such as bourgeois selfhood, communal tradition, and anything excluded from modernization. The contemporary scholar, Catherine Gallagher, in her 1997 article "The History of Literary Criticism" assumes that modernist/new critic's "sentiments about modern society were translated into a critical practice by letting the 'integrity' of the literary work stand in for the 'integrity' of all forms of endangered specificity" (134). For Gallagher, untranslatability and ambiguity in the discourse of New Criticism are strategies employed to protect this "endangered specificity" from the destructive process of modernization. I do not disagree that writers of the interwar period like Dos Passos, Hemingway and Thurber, worked out literary techniques to confront mass culture and to compromise with, if not give in to, commercial-practical interests. Yet, too much emphasis on the formalistic approaches of "the"

New Criticism has obscured critics' historical and sociological concerns about the purpose of literature, reading, and imagination.

As I have pointed out in previous chapters, the aesthetics of the 1930s were not limited to personal, subjective tastes, but rather open to efforts to cooperate with the audience and to reveal the unique characteristics of a communicative process of literature. Writers did not hesitate to refer to useful insights of natural and social sciences either to incorporate into or to distinguish from literary studies. Like the rise of theories, which provided a language to compare and contrast different disciplines and to reestablish each discipline in the 1980s, intellectual exchanges among academic disciplines as well as "little magazines" also helped establish new inquiries that led to new disciplinary fields in the 1930s.

Kenneth Burke and Allen Tate are two crucial figures who contributed to the literary debates of the 1930s. Even though their approaches seem different and remote—they only mention each other in passing—they dealt with the same subject: the gist of aesthetic experience derived from reading poetry and fiction. Their aesthetic concerns were not limited to literary forms and to pleasure principles. Both referred to the findings of other disciplines, especially the "scientific" use of language, and to the historical development of human society and culture. Scientific discourses and utilitarianism have recreated the conception of language in terms of efficiency, practicality and unmistakability: under this pressure, the aesthetic aspect of language is considered either ornamental or hortatory. In other words, the aesthetic was marginalized as a meaningless trace of individuality, and in revolt it furiously adjusted to a practical standard and developed into a social gesture meant to provoke immediate actions from others. Through a close analysis of Burke and Tate's discussion of literary forms, this chapter demonstrates that they not only recreated literary forms into a communicative platforms rather than personal styles, but also integrated the inevitability of

errors into the aesthetic discourse. Even though they exhibit two different attitudes toward science—Tate opposes it while Burke accepts it—they agree on the benefits that reading can impart to society without directly demanding immediate and direct actions in return for those benefits.[3]

2. Allen Tate: Agrarian Dialectical Materialism

Frederick A. Pottle, one of the earliest critics of New Criticism, claimed in 1953 that "[a]ll varieties of New Critics unite in strong antipathy to what is called the historical method of studying literature; that is, to the method of approaching a poem, a play, or a novel as something having historical and relative, rather than metaphysical and absolute, existence" (15). While this dichotomy between historical-relative and metaphysical-absolute is dubious, Pottle's investigation of the concept of history in New Criticism provides a better outline of New Criticism than does the stereotyped view that New Critics prefer the absolute to the relative. Pottle introduces two representatives of New Criticism: Allen Tate as a theoretician and Cleanth Brooks as a practitioner. Tate is known as a central advocate of what New Criticism stands for, along with I. A. Richards and T. S. Eliot, but he would not like that designation. Tate was known for his boisterous stance, often attacking any distinguishable schools of thought besides his own. Once Kenneth Burke remarked that Tate "is more given to pursing the enemy, thus tending not to let the enemy's thoughts develop, and rather visiting upon them such scorn as would quickly cause them to pine and wither" (132).[4] Never satisfied with the causal logic or what he calls "naturalism," Tate insists on a poetic knowledge different from the knowledge provided by scientific discourse or everyday conversation. This insistence on poetic knowledge is challenged by Gerald Graff's well-articulated analysis of the difficulties that New Critics, especially Tate, confront:

> Outside the mediating categories of rationality, logical relevance, and truth of correspondence, "experience" becomes nothing more than the chaotic flux of an infinite, undifferentiated subjectivity, and the theorist is obliged to concede a poetic "truth" to any mere dramatic exhibition of the flow of consciousness. (*Poetic* 17)

When Tate withholds causal logic in order to free literature from the domain of factual information, he is confronted by the "chaotic flux" and left with only an alternative of the autonomous realm of poetry which may be much closer to heaven than to the earth. If Tate's poetic knowledge is merely a by-product of such detachment from rationality, it would not be worthwhile to piece together his insights from the offensive tones of his articles. Yet, by assigning each conceptual word a position set by other words rather than identifying the definition of an overall concept, his support of poetic knowledge does not seem reactionary to modernization. His insight in connecting religion with history and style challenges the conception of language and the literary value of his contemporaries, and attempts to generate a realm, however paradoxical, where we can admit both success and failure. When language is understood within this paradoxical realm, we realize that an excess of words is not due to misuses, but rather is the very possibility that the qualities of words reside in both their successes and failures to in-form the real.

In order to comprehend Tate's complicated lexicon, we first need to clarify the terms Tate uses in his works and construe the foundation which his argument is based upon. What probably perplexes the reader of Tate's work is that "religion" and "history" are not contradictory terms. In conventional wisdom, religion is timeless whereas history assumes the flow of time. For Tate, rather than opposing one another, those two terms oppose "naturalism," which is a tendency for reasoning that presupposes unconditional and concrete foundation in the objective world. In his response to New Humanists' call for "ethical

imagination," Tate endorses "religious imagination." Where "ethical imagination" helps to place historical events into successive and logical order, religious imagination adheres to the concreteness of historical events. In "The Fallacy of Humanism,"[5] Tate argues that

> [c]oncrete, temporal experience implies the existence of a temporal past…the only way to think religiously is to think in time. Naturalistic science is timeless. A doctrine based upon it, whether explicitly or not, can have no past, no idea of tradition, no fixed center of life. (146)

Contrary to the common presumption that religion strives for the eternal and timeless, Tate maintains that religious imagination is necessary for concrete, temporal experiences whose relations to the past and tradition can become a "fixed center of life." However, just because he requires "religious imagination" for concrete experiences, it does not necessarily follow that he idealizes the past or asks others to recover the social structure of theocracy or of the antebellum South, for example. He builds a foundation of human reason in religious imagination rather than ethical imagination because the "historical method" of New Humanists turns out to "de-temporize" the past in an effort to "contemporize" it (147). Here, interestingly, Tate's arguments are in an opposition to the usual accusations against the New Criticism of practicing "de-temporization."[6]

Tate criticizes the New Humanists' "ethical imagination" because they place human reason above nature and simultaneously assume the function of reason to be naturalistic in the sense that it operates according to a certain set of predetermined laws. Tate points to the paradox of New Humanists who "cannot have reason checking the natural and still keep it natural" (139). If human reason can distinguish the natural from the un-natural or control nature within and without, as Tate implies, where is the origin of such reason or how is it created? Without a proper explanation beyond that of "nature," reason alone cannot validate

the correctness of its own judgment. This is why Tate sees New Humanist logic as "another instance of naturalism trying to unnaturalize itself" (141). To be sure, Tate acknowledges that New Humanists would not accept Tate's criticism of the very naturalism which they themselves were criticizing. It is also clear that the New Humanist conception of "tradition" aims at solving this issue of reason or "will" as a means to control nature. Yet, Tate argues that the foundation of "ethical imagination" is too obscure to be distinguished from Romantic "imagination," which is based on human instinct—"nature."

If the presupposition of human nature is a method of "de-temporization," Tate's use of "religion" had to avoid the naturalizing tendency of taking a view overlooking other historical situations. For Tate, religion is something that mediates between value and experience. This conceptual configuration is meant to denounce empiricism, which supposes that the immediacy of an experience minus the intervention of preconception or prejudice can guarantee its true value. Religion as a medium, severing experience from value, is to avoid solipsism as well as metaphysics, including naturalism. The problem is that he does not give positive definitions to religion lest the characterization of religion privileges a certain set of characteristics while repressing others. It is easy to conclude that his avoidance of a definition simply makes this medium seem mysterious and idealistic. For Tate, however, religion operates as something that could touch upon the significance of style. He was dedicated to saving the concept of "style" from the cliché that style is mere ornamental wrapping around values. In response to the claim that "style merely dresses [moral values] up," he asks,

> how can there be abstract results apart from the means—apart from the medium which, under *temporal* conditions, fixes the values in experience? Style—the way values are apprehended—is the technique for validating them. (159)

Religion is, in a sense, another name for style, or "the means of creating and preserving

[values]" (160), and style has temporal dimensions not only in its generation but also in the mediating process between value and experience.

By emphasizing the mediating process to "fix the values in experience," Tate surpasses a conventional division between Quantity and Quality—a division between scientific abstraction and its residual excess, which Romantics and New Humanists have attempted to quantify by paradoxically using abstract words. He explains that religion is "experience, immediate and traditional fused—Quality and Quantity—which is the means of validating values. Experience gives the focus to style, and style is the way anything is done" (163).[7] Religion here is another name for the experience of a combination of the past and the present. If he only insisted on the immediacy of experiences, his argument would be nothing more than empiricism on which knowledge of his opponent "naturalism" was based. However, Tate is not a promoter of objective or disinterested views for knowledge production. Detours to style and religion are necessary when a mutual relationship between experience and style is highlighted: experience is the giver of a focus to style and style is a technique for affixing values to experience. In his argument of religion as a medium, there is a sense of dialectical movement between reader's experience and writer's style. As will be clarified later, the relation between experience and style in Tate's mind is similar to Burke's terminological interchangeability between situation and motive. We have also seen Lovejoy's ideas acting in a fashion similar to Tate's style.

Although Tate himself does not associate his language with the philosophical concepts of other thinkers, the term "religion" in his lexicon is translatable into "ideology" in Marxian terminology. This indicates that Tate considers style a significant component of our experiences and values. For example, in his "Remarks on the Southern Religion" in *I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition* (1930), Tate seems to designate "religion" as

a criterion of values. The utilitarian criterion, by which things are evaluated in terms of functionality and serviceability, is “a religion of how things work, and this is the American religion” (157). Our experiences cause us to perceive that value is not limited to utility. On the other side of this utilitarian criterion, there is another religion, aestheticism, which “asserts nothing works” and supposes “an infinite object” which “you cannot predict” (158). The utilitarian criterion abstracts specific properties from material things: the utilitarian style allows us to appreciate usefulness as valuable. As long as the utilitarian criterion is dominant, counterarguments end up celebrating the utility of unpracticality. Tate finds fault with the infallibility of utilitarian logic: “the cult of infallible working is a religion because it sets up an irrational value; it is irrational to believe in omnipotent human rationality” (158). While this line of argument is similar to what Thurber depicts throughout his works of fiction, Tate here treats “religion” as interchangeable with “cult” and insinuates an “irrational” criterion or false consciousness. He assumes that his view of religions is distinguishable from “the cult of infallible working,” and he can take the position of being able to predict both the success and error of each religion.

Referring to a rough history of the idea of rationality, Tate traces the framework of modern reasoning and its development. The men of the Renaissance “[t]hrow over the spirits and symbols, which are irrational anyhow, not rationally necessary, and find those quantities in nature which will *work*, the quantities that are barely necessary for work” (164; italics in orig.). Here the concept of work is split into the italicized verb *work* and non-italicized noun work. The former indicates that only scientifically rational quantities that work for human beings are valuable, while the latter implies that the rational is not necessarily related to what has been thought of as “work.” This split shows the turning point where a particular criterion for values— the “utilitarian” criterion—becomes the general foundation of all values.

Similarly, to Merton in Chapter 2, Tate describes this turning point with a master-servant analogy and the personification of quality and quantity.

> The Western Church established a system of quantity for the protection of quality, but there was always the danger that quantity would revolt from servitude and suppress its master….Once reason ceased to be the instrument...it began to see the natural setting as so many instances of quantity; that is, nature began to see the practical possibilities of knowing herself. (165)

Reason is transformed from a passive instrument into an active agent which actually "sees the natural setting as so many instances of quantity." Thus, the contemporary religion of utilitarian "work" constitutes experiences by turning the partial value of practicality into the whole value of humanity. When Tate counts reason not as an access to the truth but as a model of thoughts peculiar to Western Europe,[8] it is likely that he follows a procedure similar to ideological critique, which betrays the craftiness of a finite thought disguised as a universal thought.

Tate's main concern is to determine ways to save Tradition—that is, elements considered irrational from the scientific-utilitarian perspective but considered indispensable to constitute value judgments. However, he obstinately refuses to specify the characteristics of an ideal figure for this purpose because he has denounced any abstraction which can elicit action. His concern is rooted in the very framework of his argument: he was cautious not to reinforce utilitarian values of language by making his words and definitions elicit actions. Even the American South is not the embodiment of the ideal figure for Tate. The South has never developed a southern religion, and the absence of religion will not change if the South identifies itself in the utilitarian criterion or what he relabels Protestantism. He pointedly complains that "[b]ecause the South never created a fitting religion, the social structure of the

South began grievously to break down two generations after the Civil War; for the social structure depends on the economic structure, and economic conviction is the secular image of religion" (168). It is important to emphasize that economic structure and economic conviction in this quotation sound close to base and superstructure in Marxian terminology. Tate is especially interested in the super-structural elements necessary for agrarians to imagine an alternative life. However, at the end of his essay, Tate renounces all the possibility of "boring from within" by establishing "a fitting religion" and supports "boring from without"—a method that is "political, active, and in the nature of the case, violent and revolutionary" (175).

As his goal of saving Tradition by creating religion persisted in his literary and cultural criticism throughout the thirties, Tate continued to resist the temptation to define Tradition and religion. It would not be difficult to dismiss his refusal of definitions and practicality as inadequate for social change. But, for him, the separation of politics from art preserves the potential for art to make groundbreaking achievements. Tate understands I. A. Richards' endeavor to fend off the utilitarian pressure on readings, but criticizes him for subordinating his argument to scientific assumption.[9] In his 1934 essay "Three Types of Poetry," Tate claims, "his desperate efforts to make poetry, after all, useful, consist in justly reducing its 'explanations' to nonsense, and salvaging from the wreck a mysterious agency for 'ordering our minds'" (190). Tate rejects any definition of poetic language that includes complements such as "nonsense" or "pseudo-statement" because Richards paradoxically affirms the practicality of art by renouncing any social or cultural meaning. Given Tate's concern over style and experience, he might have acknowledged Richards' intention for "salvaging from the wreck a mysterious agency"[10] and sought a different way to validate "the mysterious agency" beyond claiming the value of "pseudo-statements." While neither

man presupposes a distinction between science and art, Tate categorizes those who let the whole to be explained by a part and who pretend to control nature by making it intelligible as "allegorists."

> The allegorist had before him no standard by which he could measure the extent of his failure to find the right abstractions for the control of nature. He could spin out his tales endlessly in serene confidence of their 'truth.' But by the end of the eighteenth century his optimism had waned; it had passed to the more efficient allegorist of nature, the modern scientist. (180)

The modern scientist is more efficient at imposing their will on nature by rendering it abstract for practical purposes. The problem is that neither the allegorist of the Renaissance[11] nor the modern scientist can "measure the extent of his failure." Again, Tate highlights aspects of failure and error which are constitutive of the totality of poetic experience: "The fusion of human success and human error in a vision of the whole of life, *the vision itself being its own goal*, has almost disappeared from the modern world" (188; italics in orig.). For Tate, the totality of poetic experience disappears when values are thought of in terms of success according to the utilitarian criterion.

While Tate considers the outcome of the loss of symbols and myths that men of science have thrown away since the Renaissance, he asks for a reading strategy different from an allegorical reading—a reading which allows an understanding of the fusion of success and error. He criticizes the "perpetually modern impulse to *allegorize* poetry, to abstract for use those features that are available for immediate action, and to repudiate the rest" (*Essays* 195). In other words, allegorization translates the contents of literary works into factual knowledge or information whose ostensible neutrality paradoxically instigates for practical action. The problem with reading literary works as political statements or historical fact is that it renders

us blind to other possible readings—that is, the “Great Refusal” in Tate’s words (*Essays* 152). Because “we no longer…believe in literature,” as Tate claims, we are “translating [knowledge of literary forms] into an analogy derived from the science” such as psychology, economic, and sociology (150). In other words, we tend to justify the correctness of our reading of literary works by referring to scientific findings. In “Literature as Knowledge,” he tries to demonstrate how the sciences, including semiotics, have failed to articulate the aesthetic and settled on the conclusion that “[s]ince the language of poetry can be shown to be not strictly relevant to objects and situations as these are presented by the positivist techniques, poetry becomes either nonsense or hortatory rhetoric” (90). Because science imposes a realm of value onto art in order to secure the realm of fact, science cannot explain how values are interpreted. Consequently, the realm of value—literature as knowledge—is mere excess, which emotivism considers personal interest. Against this characteristic opposition between science and art, fact and value, Tate identifies two forms of interaction between mind and Nature; these two ways are antinomic, and only poetry reconciles that antinomy. Tate quotes Richards’ argument to support his own point. Richards asserts that “[i]t is the privilege of poetry to preserve us from mistaking our notions either for things or for ourselves. *Poetry is the completest mode of utterance*” (*Coleridge* 163). This statement, however it may seem to idealize poetry, relays to us an important vision that Tate and Richards had. Knowledge of poetry is the irreducibility of actual notions to material thing or ideal will—that is, un-transformability. Because knowledge of poetry cannot be put into other forms to convey its full values, only mistakes through reading experiences can make that knowledge intelligible. Although an organic model, which presupposes the integral relationship between parts and the whole, was implemented as a metaphor in readings of New Criticism in the post-World War II period, organism was not a contender for Tate’s model of

poetic knowledge.

Therefore, the reading with which Tate replaces an allegorical reading is the converging point of style and experience and simultaneously the diverging point of notion from “things” and “ourselves.” These points, in other words, are colored by encounters with conflicts and mistakes, which split the mind into two—one before and the other after an encounter with the text. The reading does not call on the reader for certain actions. Nor does the reading treat the literary work as an object itself to be examined as a natural scientist would. The wholeness of art means not logical but formal coherence in literary works. As he clarifies in his criticism of his own poem, “[s]erious poetry deals with the fundamental conflicts that cannot be logically resolved: we can state the conflicts rationally, but reason does not relieve us of them” (597). It is here that form animates words to stylize an experience full of conflicts. With a form, a feeling becomes an experience dramatic and intelligible for the reader, including the poet him/herself who participates as the medium of the form. “What was previously a merely felt quality of life has been raised to the level of experience—it has become specific, local, dramatic, “formal”—that is to say, *in*-formed” (598; italics in orig.). Form is a way to elevate conflicts into knowledge, and a closer reading allows the reader to create a distance from his/her notions.[12] Examining Tate’s agrarian dialectical materialism in this way shows how the critic struggled to generate a meaningful literary criticism different from the mainstream of the 1930s, which he considered a neglect of the literariness of literature. Tate’s reading differentiates itself from New Criticism, and a close study of it reveals layers of rich critical practices at the time.

3. Kenneth Burke: The Propagandist of Folk Criticism

None took more important role in affecting a variety of literary and cultural

criticisms in the 1930s than did Kenneth Burke. Not only did Burke incorporate discoveries of many disciplines into his critical theories, but he also actively dedicated himself to eliciting productive discussions among different social groups and political camps. He was personally acquainted with Tate: there were no doubt rich intellectual exchanges between them. It is very interesting to observe that it was Burke who became aware of agrarian radicalism and sought cooperation, which no intellectual of the proletarian movement did. In 1931, Burke claimed, "it is among the farmers, the only surviving American conservatives, that a radical anti-industrialist movement must be fostered" (*Counter-Statement* 118). Even though this view is often judged as pragmatism or optimism, Burke's approach to literary as well as social issues is to find similarities in what has been considered different. Avoiding any polarization including that between art and propaganda, he argues for the inevitability of propagandistic aspects of art in his famous speech of 1935, where he appealed for the symbolic replacement of "the worker" with "the people:"

> Insofar as a writer really is a propagandist, not merely writing work that will be applauded by his allies, convincing the already convinced, but actually moving forward like a pioneer into outlying areas of the public and bringing them the first favorable impressions of his doctrines, the nature of his trade may give rise to special symbolic requirements (Hart, *American* 88-89).

By "propagandist," Burke means that writers should convince a different group of people to share in their opinions, and a "special" symbol "must embody an *ideal*" to induce ambitions to changes rather than sympathies for suffering. Even though Burke was addressing Marxist critics in his speech, he hesitated to use the term "propaganda" "to denote literature characterized by specific types of didactic maneuvers" (Foley, *Radical* 132); his emphasis on "propaganda" urges writers to revel themselves as "alive to all the aspects of contemporary

effort and thought" (Hart, *American* 90). And he did exactly what he demanded in the speech. Unlike Tate, who tenaciously unmasked naturalism in his opponents' thoughts, Burke negotiated with different opinions rather than debunking them by exposing contradictions. He did not waste energy in convincing those who were already convinced, but drew upon other contemporary thoughts to create a cooperative alternative view toward "all the aspects" of life within a decaying moment of capitalism. Traversing historical periods and crossing disciplinary boundaries, Burke attempted to make countless "methods" of interpretations communicable to each other by establishing "methodology."

Refusing to start from a scientific discourse of language, which presupposes a distinction between art and science, Burke analyzes aesthetic aspects of the scientific use of language. While Tate refutes scientific prejudice against artistic style or form and shows the necessity of form—or "in-form," in his words—for literary experiences, Burke displaces the art-science dichotomy, repositioning it as a psychological distinction between form and information in *Counter-Statement* (1931). Through the nineteenth century, Burke argues, "[t]he seeming breach between form and subject-matter, between technique and psychology…is the result…of scientific criteria being unconsciously introduced into matters of purely aesthetic judgment" (31). The dominance of scientific discourses not only changed that which had authority to judge truth, but also influenced our concept of language and aesthetic judgment. The distinction between form and information points to the recognition that literary form gradually stops catering to the tastes of an audience and begins providing psychological information: "the great influx of information has led the artist also to lay his emphasis on the giving of information—with the result that art tends more and more to substitute the psychology of the hero (the subject) for the psychology of the audience" (33). For example, common literary methods for "maintaining the interest" of the audience under

the influences of science became “surprise and suspense” (37). Moreover, the audience’s reading style also changes as a writer’s methods change: “The contemporary audience hears the lines of a play or novel with the same equipment as it brings to reading the lines of its daily paper” (37). Because the “aesthetic value of information is lost once that information is imparted” (35), the aesthetic value of form that endures repetition is downplayed. These changes in both writing and reading reveal the influence of science on taste.

By clarifying the contesting ground for art, Burke proclaims the defensiveness of the aesthetic against utilitarian pressures on language usage. Tate tries to weaken the utilitarian pressure by dismissing causal logic as reductive and praising experiences as exceeding literal expressions. Burke engages himself in s similar argument with a different twist: “When the appeal of art as method is eliminated and the appeal of art as experience is stressed, art seems futile indeed. Experience is less the *aim* of art than the *subject* of art; art is not *experience*, but *something added* to experience” (77). As Tate turns to “style” for a dialectical relation to experience, Burke’s discourse divides the aesthetic into experience and method. Method, like style in Tate, is essential to signification. Without this kind of split of the aesthetic, art seems meaningless because what is imaginatively experienced in art is considered to be the same as a dream, which is less than an actual experience. Method is an indicator which separates art from dream. What Tate only implies, Burke makes explicit: the audience is constitutive of a method to create form. Challenging psychoanalytical critics who identify both art and dream as subjective experience, Burke insists, “whereas a dream is wholly subjective, all competent art is *a means of communication*, however vague the artist’s conception of his audience may be” (73; italics added). In the sense that a literary form inevitably encompasses its reader, the aesthetic is not an autonomous field from which artistic genius shuts out practical concerns about society and politics. Rather, the aesthetic motivates one to touch others.

Burke argues that even those who are considered advocates of the autonomy of the aesthetic, such as Gustave Flaubert, Walter Pater and Remy de Gourmont, have social aspects of their art and art criticism. Burke's readings of their apologies recover evidence that their arguments of art for art's sake cannot simply be attributed to a bourgeois standard of art. By "struggling to alter the moral code in keeping with the changes brought about by science and technology," "the disciples of Art for Art's Sake" are to serve for "the bourgeois interests, though the bourgeois public was prompt to resist them" (67). In addition, these disciples are not destroyers of all conventional habits, but "the preserves of older standards which the bourgeois themselves were attempting to discredit" (67). In other words, art for art's sake is not a bourgeois preference that suppresses the social function of art.

Burke's "counter-statement," therefore, opposes the dominant presupposition of the division between art and propaganda by enhancing aesthetic attention to methods of "communication" with the audience. Here communication is not an "efficient" exchange of ideas from one mind to another through language. Instead Burke thinks that while the standard of a technological society leads to the perception of art as unpractical and luxurious, art, in fact, saves the realm of democracy by being inefficient. Inefficiency is a fundamental of the democratic government system whose legitimacy is "based upon the fear that central authority becomes bad authority" (114). By reevaluating the socio-communicative significance of method, form, and style, Burke provides new ground of theoretical debates without falling into the art-propaganda dichotomy.

It is reasonable that Burke originally intended to title his next book *Permanence and Change* (hereafter *P&C*) which he wrote in 1932-33 (but published in 1935), "Treatise on Communication." At the beginning of *P&C*, he brings up several theories of recognition in order to set a standard for evaluating those theories to determine a (always failed) process of

communication. What Burke does here is to interpret our interpretations. In establishing an interpretative framework of many distinct understandings, he does not base his judgment on true-false or right-wrong polarities. He presupposes the possibility of various interpretations of a single event, and then illuminates the reason why one person's interpretation of the event seems a misinterpretation of it to another person. Burke does not presuppose that there is a "correct" understanding of events, rather he inquires about why an individual has misunderstood the meaning of the event. Contrary to the critical tendency to debunk opponents with denunciatory vocabulary including "scapegoat mechanism," "rationalization" or "escapism," Burke asserts that any interpretative framework creates a blind spot which another interpretative framework considers an instance of misinterpretation, "rationalization" or "scapegoat." He explains, "[o]ne adopts measures in keeping with his past training—and the very soundness of this training may lead him to adopt the wrong measures. People may be unfitted by being fit in an unfit fitness" (10). Our fitness in particular situations may disturb our propensity to adjust to different or new situations. There is no all-encompassing interpretation to comprehend all details of every situation.

In addition to the lack of an absolutely correct universal interpretation, Burke renounces the notion that interpretation originates from either the internal mind or external world, thus avoiding the opposition between idealism and materialism. For him, the very terms that we utilize in our explanation of the motives of an action are already parts of the very situation which motived the action: "Any given situation derives its character from the entire framework of interpretation by which we judge it" (35). In contrast with Tate's convergence of style and experience, which we have already discussed, Burke highlights the mediating function of the interpretative process to erode the boundary between a subjective motive and an objective situation. In other words, our interpretation of a situation depends on

the concepts, “which select certain relationships as meaningful” (35), we apply to that interpretation. But, we do not usually recognize the process of “interpretation” without a conscious interpretation of interpretations: we only recognize that it is *the* situation. Thus, it is not advisable for Burke to judge someone’s misinterpretation in terms of psychological “motive.” An interpretation actualized in action always has a social aspect.

Burke’s aesthetics dissects intentional as well as unintentional ways to “select certain relationships as meaningful” through a metaphorical-analogical operation, or what he calls “perspective by incongruity,” which is also a title of the second part of the book. There are no natural relationships waiting for an objective perspective in order to be captured meaningfully. Interpreters metaphorically or analogically relate one thing to other things while the linguistic, historical and social elements restrain the range of personal choice. Burke introduces poetic elements into the cognitive process: we read a metaphor or an analogy in literature as well as in everyday lives. Thus, “perspective by incongruity” is “taking a word usually applied to one setting and transferring its use to another setting” and “violating the ‘proprieties’ of the word in its previous linkages” (90). The word “perspective” itself is already a metaphor which can be used to describe the invisible relationships between abstract concepts. Human reasoning involves abstraction, classification, and expectation, and these are also products not of logical reason, but of analogic and metaphorical linkages. For example, we have considered ourselves “at different eras in history…as the son of God, as an animal, as apolitical or economic brick, as a machine, each such metaphor, and a hundred others, serving as the cue for an unending line of data and generalizations” (95). As his title *Permanence and Change* indicates, our dependence on “perspective by incongruity” is for Burke the *permanent* element of historical and conceptual *change*. Curiously, Burke uses a bodily metaphor for the sociality of our being: “the fact that man’s neurological structure has remained pretty much of

a constant through all the shifts of his environment would justify us in looking for permanencies beneath the differences, as the individual seeks by thought and act to confirm his solidarity with his group" (159). This refers not only to the permanency of biological facts but also to our bodily existence, the limitations of which unexceptionally force each of us to rely on "perspective by incongruity" to interpret reality and on metaphorical relations to other interpretations to cover up incongruity.

Arguing for the blind spot of any interpretative framework and the presence of "perspective by incongruity" in our process of understanding the world, Burke emphasizes that there are "byproducts" of interpretation. He delineates the dialectical relationship between change and permanence in two ways. On one hand, from a cognitive view, our mind rationalizes the world only through a perspective by incongruity. On the other hand, from a socio-historical view, he also states that "the mind is a social product, and our very concepts of character depend upon the verbalizations of our group" (173). Also technological developments in modern times renew circumstances so quickly that new demands for an interpretative framework are incessant. These socio-historical changes have established the concept of modern science as a pseudo-permanent component in an effort to withhold circumstantial changes. Yet Burke does not renounce the scientific presupposition of hidden principles in nature as other literary critics often do in an effort to give unique significance to art. Whether or not the mind is determined by a permanent biological mechanism or by the invisible principle, both cognitive and socio-historical views share the conclusion that interpretations are destined to change. Because any interpretative framework made of analogical linkage cannot produce perfect order in our comprehension of the world, a certain set of interpretations fosters unexplained residues or inconsistent excesses as its "by-products," and this eventually disturbs the very framework. The accumulation of by-products demands

another cooperative endeavor to initiate a new interpretative framework. The following long quotation epitomizes Burke's dialectical crossover of history and biology:

> the externalizing of [the] biologic patterns will bring forth by-products that raise important demands in themselves. And these by-products may eventually attain such proportions that a new set of interpretations must be invented to handle them, because the accumulation in its advanced stage either frustrates the same biologic need as it satisfied at an earlier stage, or frustrates other biologic needs equally important. *But* the new patterns of interpretation will also take their shape from biologic, or non-historic factors. Historic textures can be said to "cause" our frameworks of interpretation in the sense that they present varying kinds of materials for us to synthesize—*but* the synthesis is necessarily made with reference to non-historic demands, the genius of the human body as projected into its ideological counterparts. (228-29; emphasis added)

The two occurrences of "but" in this paragraph reveal Burke's acceptance of historical materials as important for the making of interpretations, and simultaneously refuse to reduce that making to mere historical materials. His theory leaves open the possibility of "biologic, or non-historic factors" without privileging the non-historic factors over historical-material factors. It is here that Burke strings "materialism, idealism, and dialectical materialism" together into "dialectical biologism" which underscores, "in accord with science, *the need of manipulating objective material factors as an essential ingredient to spiritual welfare*" (230; italics in orig.).

Not assuming that the oppositions between science and art, and between materialism and idealism are inexorable, Burke anatomizes the constituents of interpretations and determines the "purpose" of interpretations, that is, their "metabiology." While Burke admits

that every interpretation has its own purpose, he abstracts a kind of meta-purpose preserved in the act of interpreting itself from his study of interpretation. Interpretation is an act of faith, which has both personal and social aspects. The assertion of one's interpretation is a social act which inevitably takes on ethical dimensions and implicitly hinges on a faith in the cooperative nature of human beings. If the classic argument about nature has circled around idealism and materialism, Burke replaces this idealism-materialism dichotomy with two fundamental interpretations of human nature, such as "combative" or "cooperative." He admits that it is impossible to determine the "real purpose" of human beings because we cannot ontologically know the truth of the world. But Burke believes that "good, rather than evil, lies at the roots of human purpose" partly because "by no other fiction can men truly coöperate in historic processes, hence the fiction itself is universally grounded" (236). It is essential to Burke's argument that, to the extent that interpretation has a social dimension, any interpretation can strive for "good," motivating interpreters to share their interpretations with others. Paradoxically important in this argument is that interpretation always creates byproducts that devalue the "good" purpose. Therefore, with a faith in cooperative acts, Burke claims that it is the purpose of "dialectical biologism" both to pay attention to the interpretative framework and its byproducts and to recreate the interpretative framework to fit our nature into historical moments.

Burke's discussion of the interpretative framework and its byproducts develops into his next book *Attitudes Toward History* (hereafter *ATH*), which "hinges about a particular perspective by incongruity, 'the bureaucratization of the imaginative' (a formula for the imperfections that arises in human societies when ideal ends are translated into material means)" (*Counter-Statement* 216).[13] In *P&C*, Burke proclaims his faith in human goodness and a cooperative attitude. In *ATH*, he articulates a process of transition from one

interpretative framework to another in order to prepare for the "byproducts" of cooperative attitudes, or what he calls "bureaucratization." From the first part of *ATH*, Burke deepens his scrutiny of bureaucratization through analysis of poets' strategies to articulate their situations. Burke uses the phrase "framework of acceptance" instead of "interpretative framework" to emphasize active elements in recognizing and describing situations. As long as we recognize something, we actively accept our relationships with certain norms (or symbols of authority, in Burke's words). The rejection of norms always comes after our acceptance of our relationship to the symbol of authority; if there is no acceptance, rejection is not possible. Thus, Burke argues that there is no complete discontinuity between acceptance and rejection: "'Rejection' is but a by-product of 'acceptance'" (21). This asymmetry in the relationship between acceptance and rejection indicates that any poet inevitably works on accepted norms of the historical moment to make his/her rejection intelligible to him/herself and the audience.[14] Here he implies conditions of literary and cultural criticism whose debunking strategy often ignores its reliance on the framework of acceptance, which it rejects.

In order to further map this human process of reading, Burke names conflicts, "the bureaucratization of the imaginative," which demands both a new framework of acceptance and a process of change within that framework. Burke equates any individual with an artist-poet who refashions his/her vision with materials and symbols. It is impossible for anyone to materialize their exact vision: the artist-individual has to give a form to the vision while a form makes the vision communicative but simultaneously downgrades it. This process of giving form is "bureaucratization," and it occurs "when [imaginative possibility] is embodied in language and habits, in the property relationships, the methods of government, production and distribution, and in the development of rituals that re-enforce the same emphasis" (225). The vision that would imaginatively solve a social conflict or mental

conflict may materialize within social organization or law, and thus is accompanied by "byproducts" which are related to the stylization of a vision rather than to the vision itself. *ATH* applies "bureaucratization of the imaginative" to a diachronic explanation in the second part of the book and a synchronic explanation in the third part. As we discussed in Chapter 4, striving to observe the frame of acceptance and its by-products, such as rejection or error, is a comic attitude. The comic attitude "cherishes the lore of so-called 'error' as a *genuine aspect of truth*, with emphases valuable for the correcting the present emphases" (172) on truth or enemy, for example.

Moreover, Burke proposes to establish "folk criticism" by associating acceptance of errors with "popular vocabulary" utilized in politics, business, crime, and proverbs. This vocabulary, taking over the specialized terminology of academia, are to "name the relationships, or social situations, which people have found so pivotal and so constantly recurring as to need names for them" (173). The interconnection of lexicons separated by specific domains enables the reader to pay more attention to problems and opportunities involved in "the bureaucratization of the imaginative." By sharing vocabulary, errors can be perceived not as grounds for a polemic, but as grounds for a cooperatively restructuring the frame of acceptance.

Although his proposal for "folk criticism" identifies cognitive and communicative advantages in "popular vocabularies," Burke performs a close analysis of the synthetic constituency of literary works to the extent that any agreement on textual meaning seems impossible. He claims that "[s]ince the work of art is a synthesis, summing up a myriad of social and personal factors at once, an analysis of it necessarily radiates in all directions at once" (199). The "myriad" cannot lessen while deflections and convergences of "radiation" are as various as numbers of theoretical concepts. Burke is not saying that critics can

objectively criticize literary works in order to elucidate their "formal" features. However, literary "strategy" in stylization like "bureaucratization" is worth attention partly because the strategy shows its relationship to the frame of acceptance and its by-product, or, more accurately, to the "shift in allegiance to the symbols of authority." Through this way of learning from strategies of the past and from art-work, literary analysis can influence social change, without presupposing enemies or scapegoats. As Burke briefly suggests when he writes, "necessities of history are the 'villain' that makes the total drama go" (343), our "folk criticism" can aim to grasp the "villain" in the historical currents.

Overall, Burke restores an appropriate value to further discussion of the aesthetic when the dominant aesthetic discourses designate either personal taste or propagandistic exploitation. His continuous attention to the aesthetic from *Counter-Statement* (1931) to *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941) allowed him to cross disciplinary boundaries and to translate criticism of literary forms into social forms without subordinating literary works to a social and historical "cause". As Burke demonstrates by employing Medusa as an analogy in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, the aesthetic is considered "appealing" and "sinister" at the same time. Against this aesthetics, he stresses the defensive nature of art, especially poetry: "poetry is produced for purposes of comfort….It is undertaken as *equipment for living*, as a ritualistic way of arming us to confront perplexities and risks. It would *protect* us" (*Philosophy* 61). However, we cannot directly obtain a total set of this "equipment" to protect us from dangers. Just as Perseus uses a mirror to confront Medusa with an "indirect reflection," we need to consider the poet's style as form, going through "the sublime" and "the ridiculous" in order to delineate "the aesthetic" (61). This characteristic makes it difficult for critics, including Burke, to define and defend the protection of this "equipment" because defense does not change a situation but rather "encompasses" it, and we cannot be sure how

successfully the equipment is encompassed. Only a sense of errors, or by-products, points to deficiency. That is why we need aesthetic strategies, the value of which can be evaluated in a style and the by-products of which can be described within the vocabularies of critics. It is Burke's aesthetic that every style is a strategic action, determining and assuaging a situation by reaching the audience and constructing a new frame of acceptance. This protective but elusive side of the aesthetic was, and still is, necessary for literary theory—especially in the age of capitalism when "[r]evolution is avoided by making revolution the norm" (134).

4. Media Aesthetics and Close Reading

Taking account of Tate and Burke's arguments on the concept of literary forms in relation to a socio-political dimension, we can acknowledge different values of close readings of literary forms, and develop theories and lexicons of the aesthetic. For Tate and Burke, close readings were not just pedagogical tools imported from France and fitted to modern universities. They examined the relationship between "critical" reading and society, and established their own aesthetic discourses on communication with other disciplines. While Tate argues for the particularity of aesthetic experience in opposition to anything logical, Burke develops his "communicative" aesthetics in an effort to bridge the gaps between modern departmentalized disciplines. Tate's "religion" and Burke's "perspective by incongruity" are two concepts, which reveal their efforts to interpret the process of interpretation. For Burke, the motivation to bundle various interpretation together is what he saw in new emphasis on literary form and criticism. It may be more appropriate to consider Burke's rehabilitation rhetoric rather than aesthetic, but the crucial point is that both rhetoric and aesthetic were never left intact with Burke and Tate's contemplation. Language is not all about a beauty which guarantees the universal perceptual means of the human body or the

particularity of autonomous selfhood. Neither is language all about rhetoric in the sense that its values reside in practicality and utility, as it incites someone to act.

When Tate and Burke cannot but situate literariness in larger social and historical contexts, we should not ignore their suggestion that the cultural value of science has a great deal of influence over our preconception of language. According to Tate, rationality makes a part of an experience intelligible only by drawing out serviceability and functionality without attention to the judgment of such characteristics. Linking up with scientific-technological discourses, utilitarianism privileges descriptive and referential language over poetic language, which strives for invisible and conflictual materials. Burke shares with Tate an idea that experiences attained through logical thoughts are not the whole of our daily life. As Burke clarifies, analogy, metaphor, and expectation are also viable parts of our experiences and symbolic strategies to deal with situations. Furthermore, it is very interesting to observe that when Burke discusses "symbolic action," he tries to connect language not only with visual perception, but also with other bodily organs. He argues that we are apt to forget our bodily existence as language loses its voice:

> Our gradual change of emphasis from the spoken to the documentary (with many symbols of mathematics and logic having no tonal associations whatsoever, being hardly other than designs) has made increasingly for a purely ocular style….Paradoxically, [the essayistic styles'] great accuracy, from the standpoint of mimesis, is in their very absence of [heard poetic speech], for by this absence [the essayistic styles] conform with our sedentary trend from the bodily to the abstract." (*Philosophy* 16-17)

For our linguistic concept presupposing a division between signified and signifier, which only marks a difference to other signifiers, Burke's theory of relationships between language and

body or between thought and medium of language is not entirely agreeable. If language can be more rational and descriptive without sound or voice, our rationalization paradoxically forgets our bodies.

Moreover, Tate and Burke do not discount the importance of fallibility in our experiences. While abstract and logical thoughts regard errors and failures as things that should not be repeated, Tate and Burke emphasize close readings not for organic totality or formal consistency, but for the coexistence of conflictual forces or multiple layers of meanings. Tate never tires of pointing out that the problem of rationality is its indifference to its origin, presumption, and ignorance. When he calls for "religious imagination," it demands that we conceive of a literary work as a concrete crystallization of traces from history and society, but not as a partial example of History or human nature. Burke's explanation also makes it clear that any interpretative framework is not fixed; it always inherits by-products. At some point, these by-products necessitate a different perspective (through incongruity) to comprehend a (new or confusing) situation. Also, Burke asserts that, paradoxically, only a close reading distances us from a literary works and allows us to perceive the configuration of the writer's terms and various layers of meanings.

As a final point, I would like to defend what Tate and Burke had difficulty defending, namely the social purpose of a close reading. Tate believed that there is in literature a kind of knowledge different from scientific or practical knowledge. Burke also insisted that literature is the equipment of living which protects rather than propels. We usually presuppose the power of language only in human actions visible for observation and dismiss other effects of language as purposeless or dissolute. From this perspective, a close reading is secluded passivity that can cry for the hardship of reality but do nothing to change it. But, the truth is that immediate actions do not necessarily mean better actions. The value of an utterance or

articulation is not limited to actual and immediate changes in thought or circumstance. If reading, whether close or not, from the first absolves us from the potential misunderstandings or chaotic flow, how can we prove absolution, especially when it is invisible and "naturalized?" Recently, due to modern literary theories, we have been improving at criticizing the natural as unnatural, but we cannot perceive or believe that our very act of criticism is freer than a stay in reading. Burke reminds us all that "'[a]bsolutes,' strangely enough, means 'freedoms'" (229).

Notes on Chapter 5

[1] For a more detailed discussion on academic journals and little magazines, see Jeffrey Williams, "The Rise of the Theory Journal."

[2] In his famous "Criticism, Inc." John Crowe Ransom stated "language and history are aids" and "cannot be the end itself" (339). This statement is often cited as proof of New Criticism's neglect of history. Marx Jancovich is right that Tate "did not deny the social and material relations which constitute individual identity" (47).

[3] The personal relationship between Burke and Tate, which started in Greenwich Village, New York in 1924, was partially mentioned in Selzer. According to Selzer, they often exchanged the letters, and Tate commented on Burke's *Counter-Statement*. Tate thought that Burke embraced an aesthetic conception of art as autonomous. Burke, opposing this view, emphasized social and rhetorical aspect of literature through the personal letter. Their intellectual exchanges continued throughout the 1930s in personal letters as well as academic journals and critical-literary magazines. Also, the other book-length study of Burke by a collaborative works of Selzer and Ann George can visualize Burke's relationship with several different schools of thought during the thirties. For other discussions about Burke's influences on literary critics, see Tell, Burks, and Wander. For general views of Tate, I am indebted to Singal and Janocovich.

[4] See Burke, "Key Words for Critics."

[5] Originally published in *Commentary* in 1928 and republished in *The Critique of Humanism* (1930).

[6] Even Pottle alerts us to the fallacy created when New Critics' "de-temporize" their own perspectives in order to judge literary works in the past. (22)

[7] Tate refers here to Norman Foerster's division between Quality and Quantity. Foerster means the realm of Quantity to be degree and that of Quality to be kind.

[8] According to Tate Reason is "the way of discovering historical "truths" that are true in some other world than that inhabited by the historian and his fellow men: truths, in a word, that are true for the historical method. (*Essays* 299)

[9] Tate's criticism of I. A. Richards' distinction between "aesthetic" and "practical," which had inherited from Immanuel Kant, changed as Richards himself clarified his theoretical arguments. Recently, Joseph North argues that New Critics mistakenly thought that they inherited the Kantian distinction supported by Richards even though Richards himself was against that distinction. In my argument, Tate was also critical of that distinction. If we can count Tate as a southern on the New Critical camp, the difference between Richards and "New Criticism" is not as considerable as North argues it is.

[10] Tate refers here to John Crowe Ransom's argument. See "A Psychologist Looks at Poetry," *The World's Body* and Tate's "Literature as Knowledge."

[11] From our perspective, scholars of the Middle Ages have read the Script as a simple allegory. But Tate argues that they read the Script as a religious allegory which means they read it as both factual and moral.

[12] This very distancing opens the backdoor to smuggling back moments of elitism. If this distancing is considered "quantitatively" measurable—that is, there is an appropriate distance between a notion and things or ourselves—the perspective which can measure that distance is privileged over perspectives produced from other readings. This privilege may provoke a sense of elitism which some cultural criticisms use as a reason to castigate the literary canon and close reading.

[13] This citation is from "Curriculum Criticum," which was added to *Counter-Statement* in its republication in 1953.

[14] This is related to Burke's famous analogy of "unending conversation" in "The Philosophy of Literary Form" (111). See Less and Letrincchia.

Conclusion: Aesthetize History

Literature would seem to depend for its existence on a certain loss or distancing of the real, and this absence is vitally constitutive of its presence. The same could be said of the human subject known to psychoanalysis. It is as though the work seeks to compensate for this loss of the real, one which is a condition of all symbolic practice, by repossessing it even more intimately in language.
---Terry Eagleton, *The Event of Literature*

It's ironic the same set of people who say God lives in the sky is the same set of people who criticize me anytime I get high. And they even have a problem with my drinking. And I say fine, but if Jesus had a problem with drinking, would he turn water into wine? I am ready for a new religion
---Tanya Stephens, "Sunday Morning"

Though the definition of modernity is far from being satisfactorily fixed—as if the lack of stability and coherence were the very definition of such phenomena—the aesthetic domain in modernity is either idealized or marginalized as well as either neglected or feared. In the capitalistic process of commodification, the aesthetic is translated into a surplus value that increases the quality of commodities without touching on criteria for the use value, and this surplus value both fabricates a new object of desire and reproduces that desire by partially satisfying it. In the face of this aesthetic translation, modernism as an aesthetic undertaking attempts to secure a place for the autonomy and disinterestedness of artists. Some avant-garde artists and conservative academicians shared the aesthetic discourse to fend off the utilitarian imperative of being meaningful, useful, and salable. Because of capitalistic subordination of the beautiful to its own reproduction, any alternative calling for communal resistance strikes a code similar to the utilitarian exclamation, "believe and act!" It is not surprising that few intellectuals are willing to admit that they manipulate their creative acts to "persuade" others for the purpose of insinuating a belief into their minds and

instigating them to act. From a different perspective, this unwillingness reveals a fear of art's excessive attraction, which either controls human affects or channels our attention away from "real" issues. Astradur Eysteinsson, who overviews several conflicting definitions of modernism, highlights a paradox where "the theory of aesthetic autonomy frequently appears to coexist with that of cultural subversion, or a questioning of the very foundations of the reigning social order" (16). The aesthetic domain is negligibly marginalized to maintain an autonomous harmony away from the chaotic realm of commodities, but at the same time the utility of arts in capitalistic reproduction, political propaganda, and cultural industry proves the competence of the aesthetic elements in our everyday life.

The safest way to avoid tension between art and politics, or, to put it in dismissive tones, between the ivory tower and propaganda, would probably be to renounce the pursuit of beauty altogether and to instead debunk the abuse of beauty in socio-political realm. Arthur Danto, an art critic who discusses the avant-garde influence on aesthetics, calls this repression of beauty "kalliphobia," which means "a fear of beauty." Danto points out that kalliphobia's questioning of beauty came from "members of the Zurich-based Dada movement at the time of the First World War, who decided to suppress beauty as a gesture of contempt toward a society responsible for a war in which millions of young men were slaughtering one another" (25). If we forget this gesture, which was meant to provoke preventive conduct against the potential loss of beauty in modern warfare, and accept that loss as a part of the human condition, the gesture of Dada movement is deprived of the edge of contempt and construed as the opposition to beauty. While the kalliphobic attitude helped to break down a norm of beauty confining the aesthetic discourses, the new trend of aesthetics arising after the 1930s prized the seriousness of the arts in the modernist impulse of ambiguity, tension, and subversion. I agree with the notion that aesthetics do not have to be

entirely about a sense of beauty, but too much emphasis on subversion or the modernist categories of “newness” and groundbreaking, misses what the discourse of beauty traditionally considers. James Thurber captures this shift of aesthetics in terms of humor. In 1961, he wrote “I am worried about the current meanings of the word ‘funny.’ It now means ominous, as when one speaks of a funny sound in the motor; disturbing, as when one says that a friend is acting funny; and frightening, as when a wife tells the police that it is funny, but her husband hasn’t been home for two days and nights” (“The Future, If Any, of Comedy” 41-42). Our “modernist” enjoyment is to ascetically melt anesthetic effects of all things solid.

This dissertation has discussed several strategies of argumentation, theorization, organization and narrativization to promote cooperation rather than isolation and competition. It is perhaps safe to say that these strategies share a basic principle that introduces a rupture between belief and conduct. Personal or collective belief is only part of the motivation to act in a certain way for a particular purpose. It is too crude to assume every action is at its core embedded in an actor’s belief, whether the belief is conscious or unconscious. Debunking methods precisely aim at the subjectivity of such belief and nurture a concept of emotivism which reduces an evaluative judgment, whether moral or aesthetic, to a personal preference and private taste. Conduct, including the utterance of certain words, is not dependent on the actor’s belief for its real significance. An actor, including a critic or writer, cannot be autonomous in the sense that he/she can control the significance of his/her works and take full responsibility for their consequences. Literary studies acknowledge this kind of gap between action and meaning with the term “the death of the author,” but often overlook the fact that rather than an “authority” to judge the ultimate meaning of an act, there may be a “conductor” who simultaneously leads the audience and is mediated by audience. In short, conduct is possible in collaboration with an audience in order to bear meaning and material

effects.

Discussing the rupture between belief and conduct, the representation of temporality marks significance in strategies of the writers and critics mentioned in this dissertation. Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* trilogy represents temporality on the content level as well as in four different literary modes. On this level, Dos Passos illustrates a new middle class and different speeds in communication media including physical transportation and disembodied information. The differences in modes raise our awareness to the fact that each medium requires the adaptation of our perception. By withholding the description of the personal motivation of characters, or even obscuring personal commitment with use of the "Camera Eye" point of view, Dos Passos' behavioristic narrative prioritizes the repercussions of conduct over a correspondence between personal belief and the results of actions. This may be considered the representation of History propelled by the dynamism of capitalism. Yet, what Dos Passos clarifies in his work is that History is revealed through cracks in the communication process as if it resides in the consequences of our misrecognition. New communication technology increases the possibility for misrecognition and thus separates the initial meaning of an action from its actual consequence, which none is entitled to expect or create. Those in power may be in a position to receive some privilege from such misrecognition; nonetheless, they too are powerless to its effects. For Dos Passos, art is not noun which can be treated as an object and contrasted with politics. His works train us to retrieve senses from insensible forms of documents.

Dos Passos' multi-layered but behavioristic narratives and Merton and Lovejoy's historiography betray their feelings of inadequacy of the linear and progressive narrative of temporality as the emergence of different media captured their attention to the influences of form in conveying messages. As objectivity loses its foothold in supporting knowledge about

nature and society, Merton and Lovejoy incorporate historical/temporal elements in their discussions of epistemology rather than building up “objective” descriptions of cognitive properties. Temporality involves many irrational factors—for example, emotions, misunderstandings, dreams, and errors—which the scientific concept of knowledge has excluded. Their histories reveal that these factors, conventionally assigned to the aesthetic domain, are actually necessary ingredients for the growth of our civilization. Their admittance of these “irrational” factors of knowledge, however, does not invalidate that knowledge. Instead, the knowledge produced is a set of actual reactions to certain historical moments and influences, and thus possesses some traces of true humanity or nature. Again, as Merton’s term “unanticipated consequences” indicates, those reactions may be based on belief but may not end up as part of what has been believed. Yet, their historiography with mediating concepts such as “idea” and “institution” allows us to anticipate the semi-autonomous capacities of those media rather than to attribute definite responsibility to some actors.

Hemingway, who actively adopted different media ranging from motion pictures to speeches during the 1930s, must have been aware of the difficulty in conveying intended messages under the fear of propaganda and deception. Hemingway portrays a war situation in which the threat of espionage meant that taking someone’s word literally could have fatal consequences. Only an internal distance to words as well as political slogans could make war the situation bearable to the participants. However, the intervention of the uncanny voice in Jordan’s monologue allows us to see culpability in the disjunction between action and belief. The voice, as the psychoanalytical theory of superego elucidates, takes nourishment from guilty feelings of those who recognize the gap between belief and action. The more the characters follow external order in an effort to shut their eyes to the fact that they are acting

against what they believe, the more they are stuck into a cycle of guilt and action. Without the support of evaluative judgments which can subsume the effects of media such as Merton's institution and Lovejoy's idea, the consequence of every action becomes a burden on the shoulders of soldiers at the frontlines. Hemingway's work does not resolve how to relieve the burden of this superego-like voice except, with John Donne's bell.

Thurber exploits for his comedy what Hemingway tries to demonstrate ominously with war. Thurber derives laughter in the quick development of expectations to unexpected results. In Hemingway, practical concerns push away the matter of correspondence between belief and action and this ends up generating feelings of guilt. Thurber makes another turn of the screw and transforms guilt into laughter, and non-knowledge into a platform of the sharable. Since we are "social" being tangled with "mundane" and "cosmic" forces, it is not easy for us to settle in one place and observe another. Through his comedy, we can see irrationality and nonrationality more rationally, if not intimately, and the recognition of unexpected event with a touch of surprise—though sometimes traumatic—make our non-knowledge precise and humane. That is a moment of grace. Protecting common sense from the insipirationalist discourses on the mind, Thurber shows how practical thoughts can actually be short-sighted and unpractical. Laughter is the very strategy necessary to dodge the derision of superego by allowing us to admit our failures and to stay intact.

Under the contemporary currents of literary strategies, literary criticism has attempted to establish aesthetics that locate the basis of literariness in society at large. Both Tate and Burke realized the audience as an active participant in the production of knowledge and art-work. Not only has propaganda, which exploited the sympathetic attitudes of its audience, confirmed reading as an action performed by both the writer and the reader, but the audience is also no longer a homogenous group of readers who passively accept what writers

want them to do. Thus, their aesthetics pay serious attention to communication and its failure. While there are many conflicting and competing arguments, misunderstandings, prejudices, and discords, there are also many movements that intend cooperation with others. What Michael Denning calls the “Cultural front” points to this tendency toward cooperation. Even though this dissertation focuses on the theoretical and artistic developments of individual thinkers rather than on cooperative movements, I believe it shows that these thinkers deal with errors, fallacies, and mistakes from rationality and temporality, with the common understanding that intention or belief not necessarily match (results of) action.

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