

**Sula and Caddy: Intertextual Resonances
between *Sula* and *The Sound and the Fury***

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1

Toni Morrison's master's thesis, completed at Cornell University in 1955 and entitled, "Virginia Woolf's and William Faulkner's Treatment of the Alienated," naturally invokes intertextual resonances between Morrison and her modernist predecessors, Woolf and Faulkner, for the word "the Alienated," an equivalent of the concept of "pariahs" which Morrison uses in her interview (Tate 168), cannot fail to direct our attention to the long history of black people alienated racially and socio-economically in America, the black people who are the main subject of almost all of Morrison's works. Indeed, John N. Duvall, for instance, as Lisa Williams and Gurleen Grewal also do, deals with Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and Morrison's *Sula* (1973), analyzing the same kind of intimate relationships between Clarissa Dalloway and Sally Seton in the former and Sula Peace and Nell Wright in the latter, while considering the conspicuous kinship of Septimus Warren Smith and Shadrack, both traumatized World War I veterans: "Clarissa/Sula, a woman for whom a man can never be as fully intimate a companion as the woman from her youth; Septimus /Shadrack, the veteran obsessed with death and suicide"(Duvall, *Identifying* 52).

As regards intertextual reverberations between the fictions of Faulkner and Morrison, two important books have already been published so far: one is *Unflinching Gaze: Morrison and Faulkner Re-envisioned* (1997), a collection of fifteen critical essays, and the other, *What Else But Love: The Ordeal of Race in Faulkner and Morrison* (1996), written wholly by one Faulkner scholar, Philip M. Weinstein, with its main focus on both authors' representation of race.¹⁾ If it is true, as Weinstein explicates, that "Quentin Compson, of both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*, serves as her major focus in the Faulkner discussion" of her master's thesis (Weinstein 218), then we can further study the intertextual dialogue in the works of Faulkner and Morrison. For we can detect some connections between *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Faulkner's modernistic masterpiece, and *Sula*, Morrison's second novel, in terms of novelistic visions, themes, or devices—connections that careful analysis would illuminate with fascinating revelations to assist our better understanding of *Sula*. Nonetheless,

the critical works mentioned above do not endeavor to search for those connections, though Duvall explores Morrison's "anxiety of Faulknerian influence" and Weinstein considers the representation of "Fathering" in *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Bluest Eye*. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to study the structural and thematic correspondences between *Sula* and *The Sound and the Fury*, exploring their innovative, deconstructive character in terms of those structural and thematic dimensions.

2

Firstly, *Sula's* idiosyncrasy of employing dates as chapter headings, deserves examination: Part One and Part Two of the novel each contain five chapters: the chapters in Part One are entitled 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, and 1927; the chapters in Part Two are 1937, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1965. These numerical representations, suggestive of the nature of a loosely knit chronicle, indicate the author's strong concern with time, a concern specifically shared by Woolf and Faulkner whom Morrison discussed in her master's thesis. A chronicle usually tries to make a chronological recording of events or episodes, as is shown, for example, in Faulkner's Snopes trilogy—*The Hamlet* (1940), *The Town* (1957), and *The Mansion* (1959)—which the author identifies as "the thirty-four year progress of this particular chronicle" in a brief preface to the last volume. This triptych as a whole chronicles the vicissitude of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha country and its people, the ups and downs of their lives on the micro levels, which in turn give the feeling of being ultimately generated and affected, on the macro levels, by the flow of time beyond the environmental forces.

Morrison's *Sula* as an entity, however, naturally does not offer such a grand, panoramic view of changes in the history of a community as does Faulkner's Snopes trilogy. Yet, although its chronology is relatively fragmentary and elliptical for a chronicle, *Sula* surely conveys to the reader the sense of the inexorable force of time, namely, the *chronos* which Frank Kermode explicates, as against *kairos*, in *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*.²⁾ For the novel's major concern, that will be made clear later, seems to be to impress the reader with the loss and absence of a black community called the Bottom, a solid community Morrison calls a "neighborhood" (Stepto 11) and cherishes most as a sustentative environment. In this sense, *Sula* shares the same consciousness of time as *The Sound and the Fury*. It is true, as Barbara Johnson argues, that "While the chapter headings promise chronological linearity, the text demonstrates that lived time is anything but continuous..." (Johnson 81), but the numerical chapter headings cannot fail to intimate the ruthless, insidious

flow of time behind human lives, the ruthlessness which will be revealed markedly in varied modes of loss and absence delineated in the text. In such a direction is *Sula's* narrative structured and dramatized, as with *The Sound and the Fury*, engendering rich intertextual reverberations.

3

It is not accidental that both *Sula* and *The Sound and the Fury* open with references to the golf course, for Morrison, as well as Faulkner, takes the intrusion into the property, communal or private, of the golf course as "the archetypal symbol of white suburbia" (Gillespie and Kubitschek 88), an emblem of the irrevocable loss of something indispensable as a consequence of a flood of forces of modernization.³⁾ In both novels, the emergence of the golf links can be metonymic in the same way, though to a lesser degree, as Leo Marx' s view of the machine as a vanguard of modern technology and industrialism invading the pastoral, an interpretation splendidly explored in his classic master-work *The Machine in the Garden*. Benjy Compson's moaning at the golfer's calling, "Here, caddie" (1), described at the beginning of *The Sound and the Fury*, is symbolic of the theme of the whole work. The golf link, surrounded by the fence along which Benjy is rambling with his black caretaker Luster, turns out later in his brother Quentin's interior monologue to have been originally part of the Compsons' property, which used to be Benjy's pasture and was sold to finance Quentin's education at Harvard (216).

Similarly, at the beginning of *Sula*, Morrison presents the transformation into a golf course of a land belonging to the community called the Bottom as a symbolic loss and absence:

In that place, where they tore the nightshade and blackberry patches from their roots to make room for the Medallion City Golf Course, there was once a neighborhood. It stood in the hills above the valley town of Medallion and spread all the way to the river. It is called the suburbs now, but when black people lived there it was called the Bottom. (3)⁴⁾

Here, the author seems to be suggesting through a nationally pervasive and emblematic phenomenon of the construction of a golf course some radical change which took place in the flow of the history of the black neighborhood. In an interview with Robert Stepto pointing out the "extraordinary sense of place" in her works, Morrison acknowledges that, as a child and a young woman, she "felt a very strong sense of place, not in terms of the country or the state, but in terms of the details, the feeling, the mood of the community, of the town" (Stepto 10).

Also, she admits that "there was this life-giving, very, very strong sustenance that people got from the neighborhood"(Stepto 11). Indeed, she has shown her conspicuous tendency to focus on such a strong feeling of community in her oeuvre through *Paradise* (1998), especially in her first two novels, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Sula*. In that sense, *Sula* is surely an expected continuation and development of *The Bluest Eye*, for both novels center on the close interrelatedness of the community and its individuals. We also should recall here, then, that in the last section of *The Sound and the Fury* portraying the black church full of exaltation, the author throws light on the solidarity of the black community to emphasize the breakup of the Southern rural aristocracy epitomized in the decay of the once respectable Compson family. However, the solidarity of the Bottom collapses at the end of *Sula*, and it implies Morrison's dual vision which we will discuss later.

It can be imagined from the above argument that both *Sula* and *The Sound and the Fury* refer to the golf course to make it a thematic emblem of the loss and absence to be rendered in the main body of the narrative. And that thematic emblem is closely related to the central female figures, Sula Peace in the former, and Caddy Compson in the latter: Both authors take advantage of the two women's rebellious nature as a figurative hub of the novel's structure to create the polyphony of the loss and absence, a web of resonances brought about by those girls' interrelatedness with the other characters around them.

In an interview with Jean Stein, Faulkner defined *The Sound and the Fury* as "a tragedy of two lost women: Caddy and her daughter" (*Lion in the Garden* 244). Caddy's premarital pregnancy, her hurried marriage with Sidney Herbert Head, an Indiana banker, to conceal that disgraceful fact which "in those days in Mississippi was a scandal" (Williams 406), his divorce of her on discovering it, her ostracism from the family with her daughter Quentin left in its custody, and her final career as a Nazi officer's mistress, an astounding transformation, as we know from "Appendix: The Compsons, 1699-1945," which the author wrote in 1945 for *The Portable Faulkner*—this series of incidents revealing her intrepid way of life, indeed, justifies the description of her as "lost." Traditionally, she can be considered a promiscuous woman, and also a nonconformist against the conventional social framework of marriage and motherhood.

Similarly, Morrison regards Sula as lost at the end of her life: "She, Sula, put her grandmother away [in an old people's rest home] . . . That is considered awful because among Black people that never happened. . . . That's more unforgivable than anything else she does, because it suggests a lack of her sense of community. Critics devoted to the Western heroic

tradition—the individual alone and triumphant—see Sula as a survivor. In the Black community she is lost" (Koenen 68). In addition, Sula has sex with her friend Nel's husband, Jude, and ruins her friend's matrimonial home; though by sheer accident, she has also drowned a boy, Chicken Little, when she was swinging him around in a circle and he slipped off her fingers and into the river. As the author explains in the text, "In a way, her strangeness, her naïveté, her craving for the other half of her equation was the consequence of an idle imagination... And like any artist with no art form, she became dangerous" (121). Morrison, in fact, categorizes her as one of "the dangerously free people", just like Cholly Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye*, Guitar Baines in *Song of Solomon*, and Ajax in *Sula* (Tate 164).⁵⁾

John T. Matthews calls Caddy's behavioral pattern of defiance of family and community "audacious independence", which, I argue, is equivalent to what Morrison's phrase "dangerously free" and her view of Sula's life as "an experimental life" (*Sula* 118) suggest. However, as Sula and Nel realize in 1922 when they were twelve that "they [are] neither white nor male, and that all freedom and triumph [is] forbidden to them" (52), it is needless to say that Sula's situation is restricted by the double constraints of racism and sexism, a situation quite different from that of Caddy, who is shielded by the social privilege of a once respectable white middle class family. Still, we should bear in mind that both Sula and Caddy had to live in the age dominated by the "'cult of true womanhood' that reached its peak in early 20th century America" (Bouson 53). Driven by their wild temperament and probably the irrepressible desire nurtured by their environment to seek the outer world, they must become "a ship," to borrow Morrison's favorite metaphor, instead of the "harbor"⁶⁾ embodied typically by Nel and Caddy's mother, Mrs. Compson. Thus, Sula, like Caddy, chooses to leave town as an outcast with the stigma of "a community outlaw", which Morrison differentiates from "a legal outlaw" (Tate 169).

Thus, we find that, metaphorically, Sula's presence functions as a magnifier of the conflicts and selfishness suppressed in the heart of the people for the benefits of the community or their family. In the same way, Faulkner's Caddy helps to magnify the psychological, narcissistic turmoil of each of her brothers, the inner storm of their rage, grief, and struggle. In addition, both Sula and Caddy become in the text a tricksterlike⁷⁾ presence to defamiliarise the traditionally binary concepts of good and evil, the feminine and the masculine, chastity and promiscuity, filial obedience and individual freedom, the patriarchal and the matriarchal, the communal solidarity and each member's independence, or fatherhood and motherhood. Both women are disruptors of the conventional cultural discourse of their society where its

hegemonic values have been more often than not blindly reproduced and internalized by its inhabitants in many domains.

4

It is important that Sula comes back to the community in 1937 after ten years' absence, while Caddy is almost permanently rejected by the family after being allowed by her brother Jason only a glimpse of her daughter Quentin in Jefferson. In the author's eyes, Sula's return to Medallion should be considered not "a defeat" but "a triumph"(McKay 151). We may understand this paradox, if we pay due attention to Morrison's determination to take the side of black culture's values and outlook: "In *Sula*, I'm interested in what it means to be an outlaw, who an outlaw is, by our definition, not by somebody else's " (Koenen 71). She elaborates further on her strategy of employing not Western civilization's criterion but her own race's in looking at the concept of the pariah or of evil:

In fact, the concept of the black in this country is almost always one of the pariah. But a community contains pariahs within it that are very useful for the conscience of that community.

When I was writing about good and evil, I really wasn't writing about them in Western terms. It was interesting to me that black people at one time seemed not to respond to evil in the ways other people did, but that they thought evil had a natural place in the universe; they did not wish to eradicate it. They just wished to protect themselves from it, maybe even to manipulate it, but they never wanted to kill it. . . . It's because they're not terrified by evil, by difference. Evil is not an alien force; it's just a different force. That's the evil I was describing in *Sula*. (Tate 168)

Here, Morrison contrasts the attitude of black people toward evil with that of people living in the framework of "Eurocentric learning" (*Playing in the Dark* 7). Concerning the Deweys, Shadrack, and Sula who appear to be enigmatic characters to the reader not familiar with the black culture's epistemology, the author notes that "they are all variations of the pariah" (Tate 169), figures not to be excluded from the community but to be included in it as "useful for the conscience of that community." In *The Sound and the Fury*, Mrs. Compson takes the idiot Benjy's birth to be "a judgment" on her (4,12) and orders Dilsey, a black servant to the Compsons, never "to speak that name [Caddy] in her [Caddy's daughter Quentin's]

hearing" (247), because Benjy and Caddy, both "variations of the pariah," become the stigma of the family.

5

From what we have argued so far, we may grasp Morrison's desire to deconstruct or "de-center" (47), to borrow Timothy Powell's word, the Western epistemology of the universe, or, at least, to counteract it. As to Faulkner at the time of his composition of *The Sound and the Fury*, Donald Kartiganer approves of the author's attempt at "decreation" (22), his straining to achieve a profound innovation of traditional modes of novelistic creation. We may easily imagine, then, what Morrison's response might have been when she started writing *Sula* toward the end of the 1960s, with much knowledge of the audaciously experimental qualities of Faulkner's masterpiece which she treated for her master's thesis. For she emphasizes in her important essay the fact that "*Sula* was begun in 1969, while [her] first book was in proof, in a period of extraordinary political activity" ("Unspeakable Things Unspoken" 221). Her reminiscence intimates that, driven to some extent by the era's fervor of such political and ethnic upheavals as the Black Power Movement, the Women's Movement, and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, she became more conscious in *Sula* than in *The Bluest Eye* of the blackness of the text: When she said at the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference held in 1985, "it was important for me as a writer to try to make the work irrevocably black" ("Faulkner and Women" 299-300), she virtually declared her intention to hold on to the viewpoint of the "civilization of black people that lives apart from but in juxtaposition to other civilizations" (Tate 168), and her statement suggests, conversely, a covert intention of hers to deconstruct the hegemonic Western outlook and values, especially "what she calls 'mythologies of blackness'" (Fussell 282)⁸, which accords with her observation that "the concept of the black in this country is almost always one of the pariah."

Morrison's deep concern with her black identity, her ethnicity, may have something to do with her specific attention to Faulkner's regionalism. Morrison contends in an interview with Thomas LeClair: "Faulkner wrote what I suppose could be called regional literature and had it published all over the world. It is good—and universal—because it is specifically about a particular world" (124). By referring to the great Southern writer's stubborn regard for his locality, Morrison seems to be eager to justify her own allegiance to her ethnic background. This attitude alone, she believes, can create a universality out of her literature. Therefore, she can dare to say, "I am very superstitious. . . . In *Sula* the people are like the people I have

always known who may or may not be superstitious but they look at the world differently. Their cosmology is a little bit different. Their relationship to evil is what preoccupied me most throughout the book" (Parker 61-62). This superstitiousness of Morrison's is one reason why the novel is full of "the black cosmology" (McKay 151), as well as characters resembling those from Gothic novels or the fiction of magic realism, like the three Deweys, Ajax's sorceress-like mother, "an evil conjure woman" (126)⁹, or Tar Baby.

Indeed, the black cosmology is used in *Sula* as a literary apparatus for deconstructing the Western logocentric vision. Even *The Sound and the Fury* introduces such a tool to make Benjy's wailing and moaning take on a symbolic meaning: For example, the superstitious Roskus Gibson, Dilsey's husband, asks, "Can he [Benjy] smell that new name they give him? Can he smell bad luck?" (109), or he asserts, "They aint no luck on this place. . . . I seen it at first but when they changed his name I knowed it" (35). Faulkner wants us to detect a cosmic sense in such a description of Benjy's meaningless voice as "It might have been all time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant by a conjunction of planets" (359), or "the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun" (395). Also, the author tries to show through Quentin's interior monologue a sensibility of black people that is hardly understandable for white imagination, a monologue conveying a superstition that "Niggers say a drowned man's shadow was watching for him in the water all the time." (111). These examples indicate Faulkner's concern with something beyond a logocentric understanding of the world. Morrison goes far beyond Faulkner's attempt in order to foreground the irrational as a means of undermining Western culture's high esteem of the rational, that is, as Linden Peach observes, to resist "a hierarchy of values: for example, reason over imagination; mind over body; work over leisure" (Peach 55).

6

Needless to say, however, Morrison does not take the side of black culture over Western culture to claim vainly the superiority or healthiness of the former but simply wants to offer a different vision from the dominant Western epistemology so that we may see the truth or at least become aware of the mental or cultural malaise of bias in the representation of black people. To be sure, Morrison in *Playing in the Dark* makes her political stance clear by critically demonstrating the traumatic impact of an internalized image of blackness, "Africanism," to use her term, "in the wholly racialized society that is the United States" (xiv). In her definition, Africanism means "the fetishizing of color, the transference to blackness of

the power of illicit sexuality, chaos, madness, impropriety, anarchy, strangeness, and helpless, hapless desire" (80-81). Yet, despite her sharp indictment of the dominant racial ideology in American society, she does not hastily demand the complete banishment of the "Africanist presence" (5) from American literary creation. For she is firmly convinced that "race has become metaphorical—a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological 'race' ever was" and that "the metaphorical and metaphysical uses of race occupy definitive places in American literature, in the 'national' character" (63). In addition, we find an interview conducted abroad conveying her strong propensity for retaining a double vision even in the midst of the political upheavals of the 1960s: in the interview she confesses, "I was not in favor of integration" (Lester 51).

Morrison with such a solid dual vision presents a sarcastic description of Nel's husband Jude's jaundiced "observation that a Negro man had a hard row to hoe in this world," namely, "a whiney tale that peaked somewhere between anger and a lapping desire for comfort" (103). Also, we notice Morrison's mocking tone in this delineation: "With her he was head of a household pinned to an unsatisfactory job out of necessity. The two of them together would make one Jude" (83). As Missy Dehn Kubitschek argues, "Jude considers that the institution of marriage will make him a whole man Neither he nor Nel apparently considers what the institution will make of Nel" (68), and Jude's self-pity as a victim of racism proves to be ultimately self-destructive in making him blindly rely on, as it were, a cocoon of the institution of marriage, a sanctuary that is expected to heal his stress and damaged masculinity in American society structured and hierarchized by the fraudulent idea of "whiteness as privileged place in the evolutionary ladder of humankind" (Morrison, "Unspeakable" 216). Jude's desire for compassion from Nel functions as a sort of masochistic opium for him.

The most typical manifestation of Morrison's dual vision is the episode of the disaster of the tunnel which takes place in 1941 toward the end of the novel, a tragedy foreshadowing the disintegration of the neighborhood. Ironically enough, on January third which Shadrack, one of the two devils in the Bottom (117), identifies as National Suicide Day to dispel the fear of death and chaos, a significant part of the Bottom starts the parade, forming "a pied piper's band behind Shadrack" (159), only to be engulfed by the collapse of the tunnel, a symbol of the dark tunnel of the burden of history black people have to go through. Begun as an expression of their rage at the social and economic injustices, the tragic parade seems so much a self-destructive deed and even a ritual of collective suicide that it is conceivably intended to

take on a parodic overtone by illuminating a similarity, though exaggerated and twisted, between Shadrack's piper's band and a considerable part of the black people in the Civil Rights Movement led not merely by the heated ethnic anger of 'Black Power' but by the black nationalist slogan, "Black is beautiful." For we can sense Morrison's ironic gaze in this decription of the people who participate in the band: the deceptive hope "kept them convinced that some magic 'government' was going to lift them up" (160) from the predicament confronting them.

Thus, if we recall the sentence, "The death of Sula Peace was the best news folks up in the Bottom had had since the promise of work at the tunnel" (150), the tunnel catastrophe seems to be a divine punishment upon those people who celebrate Sula's death, or a consequence of their sin of having forgotten the law of nature that "In their world, aberrations were as much a part of nature as grace. It was not for them to expel or annihilate it" (118). Cyrus Patell, then, is quite right in saying, "What the Bottom fails to realize, however, is that Sula's presence has served as a catalyst for the renewal of the community's familial and communal bonds" (Patell 165). In fact, Sula's death ironically leads to the attenuation of the solidarity of communal spirits of the Bottom as is revealed in such a passage as "Without her mockery, affection for others sank into flaccid disrepair. . . . Now that Sula was dead and done with, they returned to a steeping resentment of the burdens of old people" (153-54)¹⁰.

7

In the last scene of *The Sound and the Fury*, we can perhaps witness Faulkner's firm resolution to conduct a metaphorical rite of mourning for the decline of the Compson family as a symbol of the last remnant of the old Southern culture's glory. There Jason, head of the family now, manages to recover his idiot brother Benjy's fragile sense of order, as well as suppress his intractable roaring, by driving in the customary counterclockwise direction. This scene shows the author's dual vision, because Jason, whom he regards as "completely inhuman" (*Faulkner in the University* 132) like Flem Snopes in his fiction, emerges as "The first sane Compson since before Culloden and (a childless bachelor) hence the last" (Faulkner, "Appendix" 716), performing at least the role of "a grotesque father figure" (Bleikasten 128) and assuming "the entire burden of the rotting family in the rotting house" ("Appendix" 717). Indeed, he is a triumphant figure in terms of the 'reality principle.' In this sense, the last scene is a dramatization of Faulkner's own conflicting attitudes toward the South: "to draw a savage indictment of the contemporary scene or to escape from it into a makebelieve region of

swords and magnolias and mockingbirds which perhaps never existed anywhere" (Faulkner, "An Introduction" 158). In other words, it is a metaphoric spectacle of the battle between the narcissistically innocent Benjy, a prisoner of past memory, and the rigorous realist Jason, enslaved to mammonism the Southern agrarians should consider an ugly pinnacle of "a frantic struggle for material possessions" (Twelve Southerners xii).

The Sound and the Fury stands in Faulkner's oeuvre as a turning point in that it strangled with finality the remainder of his own desire to romanticize the old glory and valor of the South which we feel in its predecessor, *Flags in the Dust* (*Sartoris*, 1929). After this consummate work of revolutionary novelistic experiment, he became able to explore the dark side of Southern history, an exploration which, though itself proceeding in a counterclockwise direction, is to be fulfilled in a search for the true identity of his region, as in *Light in August* (1932), *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), or *Go Down, Moses* (1942).

The same is true of *Sula*, for Morrison explains that, unlike *The Bluest Eye* whose story is set in her hometown, Lorain, Ohio, Medallion in *Sula* was "wholly fabricated" (Step 12) to prepare a "threshold between the reader and the black-topic text" (Morrison, "Unspeakable" 221) to facilitate his/her understanding of the nature of the Bottom, the black neighborhood. It is such "a sustaining environment even for a woman who is very different" (Tate 169) that Morrison cannot help emphasizing nostalgically the significance of "a cohesiveness" (Step 11) it once retained. It is no wonder that she was tempted to romanticize the neighborhood, while lamenting its demise, when she started to create *Sula* at the very end of the 1960s, a period of the rise of vehement black nationalism. In that sense, the creation served for her, I argue, as an act of mourning to make a new beginning. In fact, in her next novel, *Song of Solomon* (1977), the protagonist Milkman travels in search of his black identity, just as Son in *Tar Baby* (1981) declares, "I am going counterclockwise" (2), to make a long quest for his ethnic roots. Thus, in Morrison's literary career, *Sula* is the very novel that has enabled her to try to delve into black history, the long ordeal of black experiences, without any risk of falling into anachronism.

Notes:

- 1) We can add here one more book, *Producing American Races: Henry James, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison* by Patricia McKee (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), that focuses on the pre-eminent issue of race in the current study of American literature. Duvall, well aware of contemporary Woolf criticism which interprets "the lesbian subtext of *Mrs. Dalloway*," proposes that "the issue of passionate female friendship in *Sula* needs to be approached carefully, especially in light of Morrison's insistence on the heterosexuality of her novel" (*Identifying* 52), and Morrison seems reluctant to see the lesbian elements in *Sula*, judging from her observation in an interview: "Now if

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you have a friend that you love somebody will think that you are lesbian or homosexual. So what's left?" (Koenen 73)

- 2) Kermode explains: "*chronos* is 'passing time' or 'waiting time'—that which, according to Revelation, 'shall be no more'—and *kairos* is the season, a point in time filled with significance, charged with a meaning derived from its relation to the end" (47). In short, *chronos* is the inhuman mechanical time suggestive of the cosmic external forces behind humanity, and *kairos*, the affective human time we psychologically give meaning to in individual human activities regardless of the regular passage of time.
- 3) Benjamin G. Rader comments that "In 1913 there were 742 links in the entire nation; by 1930 the number had leaped to 5,586, an eight-fold increase. Golf, in the early days, had been the exclusive sport of the upper 'Four Hundred,' but in the 1920s it became the sport of the upper 'Four million'. . . . In some social circles the ritual of the Sunday morning foursome became as rigid as church attendance was in others." (226). In the opening paragraph of the chapter entitled "The Return of the South" in *Origins of the New South 1877-1913*, C. Van Woodward notes: "At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century the South looked back upon fifty years of isolation and impotence in national politics. Southerners could boast of the recovery of agricultural, commercial, or industrial power, but not the recovery of political power and prestige. Politically the South remained humbled, and its half-century of abasement was nowhere more evident than in its paltry share of place and power" (456). In the sequel to Woodward's volume, George Brown Tindall mentions that "Half a century of Southern political isolation ended with the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson on March 4, 1913" (1). In this sense, the date of Quentin's suicide, 1910, in *The Sound and the Fury*, symbolizes the approximate date of the emergence of the New South.
- 4) Morrison recalls how she invented Medallion: "I used something that my mother had said to me when I was young, about her living in Pittsburgh when she was first married—how all the Black people lived in the hills and all the white people lived in the valley because the land was rich. Later on, when they had the blast furnaces, all the smoke came down there, and so they sort of flipped it" (Bakerman 39).
- 5) It may be worth marking Morrison's self-revealing observation that "I always liked that part of myself, the part that other people didn't like. I have to trust the uncontrolled, wild parts of myself, it's really dangerous." (Russell 45). We can imagine that the author interjected into the characterization of Sula some of her "uncontrolled, wild parts." Similarly we can sense Faulkner's empathizing impulse for the creation of Caddy in his comment: "To me she was the beautiful one, she was my heart's darling. That's what I wrote the book about and I used the tools . . . to draw the picture of Caddy" (*Faulkner in the University* 6).
- 6) Cf. Taylor-Guthrie, 102, 135, 138, 161.
- 7) Suggesting that "*Sula* needs to be seen within the context of African literary traditions as much as European ones," Linden Peach interprets Sula as "the trickster figure" (57) and thinks that she "destabilises the impulse toward harmony which counters the unpredictability and volatile nature of life in Medallion. Her behaviour on one level may appear to expose the hypocrisy of the community" (59).
- 8) The traditional "mythologies of blackness" are analyzed in great detail by Frantz Fanon in his classic *Black Skin, White Masks*. Morrison examines thoroughly the literary representation of these mythologies as "Africanism" in *Playing in the Dark*.
- 9) Morrison regards Ajax's mother as one of the "women who know medicine and roots, root-workers" (Koenen 81). She appears negative about the term "magic realism" when she answers in an interview, "It was a way of not talking about what was in the books. If you could apply the word "magical," then that dilutes the realism . . ." (Davis 226).
- 10) Morrison explains the structure of *Sula*: "If you go back to the beginnings, you get pushed along toward the end. This is particularly so with *The Bluest Eye*. *Sula* is more spiral than circular" (Tate 163). Madhu Dubey explores the author's characterization of *Sula*: "As opposed to the tightly

closed circles that structure *The Bluest Eye*, the circular movement of *Sula* is accumulative rather than exactly repetitive. . . . This circular movement, spiralling back to transform past incidents and to add new layers of meaning, resolves, at the level of narrative structure, the novel's thematic opposition between past and present" (84). Dubey's consideration may be applicable similarly to the structures of *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*. We may call the latter's structure "more spiral than circular."

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