

With these phrases of love and concern, she is directly involved in the daily needs of the Compsons which stand in striking contrast to Mrs. Compson's self-pitying remark: "Look at me, I suffer too" (*SF* 171). Since Jason counts every egg, Dilsey buys a cake with her own money for Benjy's birthday. Mrs. Compson interprets Dilsey's kindness as ignorant laziness: "Do you want to poison him with that cheap store cake" (*SF* 50). To the new baby, Miss Quentin, Dilsey responds with "Who else gwine raise her cep me?" (*SF* 170) while Mrs. Compson who is incapable of giving love to her own children would thank God if Miss Quentin could grow up "never to know that she had a mother" (*SF* 171).

Furthermore Dilsey is the only person that points out to Jason his own ruthlessness: "You leave her [Miss Quentin] alone now, Jason . . . She gits up fear breakfast ev'y week mawnin, en Cahline lets her stay in bed ev'y Sunday. You knows dat" (*SF* 239). "I hear you . . . All I been hearin, when you in de house. Ef hit ain't Quentin er yo maw, hit's Luster en Benjy. Whut you let him go on dat way fer, Miss Cahline?" (*SF* 239) and "Tain't no sense in him being so bad tempered he got to make Quentin git up jes to suit him . . ." (*SF* 239).

The solid presence of Dilsey with "her myriad and sunken face," "as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts, and above that the collapsed face that gave the impression of the bones themselves being outside the flesh, lifted into the driving day with an expression at once fatalistic and of a child's astonished disappointment" (*SF* 228), presents the moral center of the novel. In the midst of the turmoil of the Compsons; Benjy bellows, Mrs. Compson whines, Jason complains, Quentin commits suicide, Caddy becomes a whore, Miss Quentin runs off with a bigamous pitchman, and the nihilistic Mr. Compson drinks himself to death, Dilsey never loses her fortitude:

*My name been Dilsey since fore I could remember and it be Dilsey when they's long forgot me.  
How will they know it's Dilsey, when it's long forgot, Dilsey,  
Caddy said.  
It'll be in the Book, honey, Dilsey said. Writ out.  
Can you read it, Caddy said.  
Won't have to, Dilsey said. They'll read it for me. All got to do is say Ise here. (SF 49)*

She made the same response to each event, a response of love, self-sacrifice, compassion, and pity. Dilsey is humble enough to know her limitation: "I does de bes I kin . . . Lawd knows dat" (*SF* 274). If we borrow the words of Isaac McCaslin in Faulkner's *Go Down Moses*, Dilsey embodies "the heart's truth," by which she knows, "the men who wrote his Book for Him were writing about truth and there is only one truth and it covers all things that touch the heart." Dilsey fulfills all the fee He [God] asked: "pity and humility and sufferance and endurance and the sweat of his face for bread" (*GM* 257). Furthermore, Dilsey does not make a fuss over a clock that is three hours late, and still she arrives to church on time. Her ability to make sense of the clock is simply one aspect of her ability to make sense of past, present, and future.

In the New Testament the most noteworthy term for time is *kairos*. Tillich explains *kairos* "the moment at which history, in terms of a concrete situation, had matured to the point of being able to receive the breakthrough of the central manifestation of the Kingdom of God," "the fulfilment of time" (*STIII* 369), as opposed to chronological time which is Quentin's time concept, for he thinks of time as something to be measured by a clock:

Its [*kairos*] original meaning—the right time, the time in which something can be done—must be contrasted with *chronos*, measured time or clock time. The former is qualitative, the latter quantitative. In the English word "timing," something of the qualitative character of time is expressed, and if one would speak of God's "timing" in his providential activity, this term would come near to the meaning of *kairos*. . . . In the New Testament it is the translation of a word used by Jesus when he speaks of his time which has not yet come—the time of his suffering and death. (*STIII* 369)