

# **EPISTEMIC MODALITIES IN LEGITIMATION PROCESS: A STRATEGIC RESOURCE IN TONI MORRISON'S *SULA***

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## **Abstract**

*The knowledge we have, originated from our different cultural background and are so deeply rooted in us that almost nothing can change it. There is apparently a divine thing behind any culture. In a nutshell, one is the product of his culture; that is culture can restrict paths, thoughts and behaviors. Thus, in a cross-cultural argumentation in Toni Morrison's Sula, each character will rely on essential features of his culture to oppose others' view.*

*So, resorting to persuasive devices including epistemic modalities like 'know that' or 'believe that' can be sources of conflicts. Hence, the necessity of legitimating one's ideas via diverse strategies.*

*This paper led therefore to the discussion of moralization, rationalization and authorization as resources in the process of argumentation. With it, the expectation is to exhort people that cultures should be relative. Each culture has its truth. Consequently, high awareness of enunciation should be at stake because in enunciation the speaker is embedded in his speech. What is displayed by a speaker is accurately understandable when we take into account the speaker himself and the discourse circumstances.*

**Key words:** argumentation, culture, enunciation, epistemic, legitimation, modality.

## Résumé

*La connaissance que nous avons vient de nos différentes cultures et elle est tellement profondément enracinée en nous que Presque rien ne peut l'altérer. Il y a apparemment quelque chose de divin derrière toute culture. En somme, nous sommes le produit de notre culture. C'est dire que, la culture peut restreindre et tracer le chemin à nos pensées et comportements.*

*Ainsi, dans un processus d'argumentation transculturelle dans Sula de Toni Morrison, chaque personnage comptera sur les traits essentiels de sa culture pour s'opposer aux points de vue des autres.*

*Aussi, en recourant aux tactiques persuasives comme les modalités épistémiques telles que 'savoir que' et 'croire que', nous montrerons qu'elles peuvent être des sources de conflits. D'où la nécessité de légitimer à travers diverses stratégies les points de vue. Cet article discutera des sources de légitimation. Nous espérons ainsi exhorter les hommes à relativiser les cultures. Chaque culture a sa vérité. Par conséquent, une haute connaissance de l'énonciation est en jeu parce que le sujet est au cœur de son énoncé. De plus, ce qui est dit ne peut être bien compris qu'en tenant compte du sujet lui-même, des circonstances du discours et de la culture.*

**Mots clés:** argumentation, culture, énonciation, épistémique, légitimation, modalité, relative.

## Introduction

Epistemic modality is a sub-type of linguistic modality that deals with a speaker's evaluation of the degree of confidence in, or belief of the knowledge upon which a proposition is based. In other words, epistemic modality refers to the way speakers communicate their doubts, certainties, and guess their ways of knowing. More technically, epistemic modality may be defined as (the linguistic expression of) an evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring, or has occurred in a possible world which serves as the universe of interpretation for the evaluation process...

In other words, epistemic modality concerns an estimation of the likelihood that (some aspect of) a certain state of affairs is true (or false) in the context of the possible world under consideration. This estimation of likelihood is situated on a scale going from certainty that the state of affairs applies, via a neutral or agnostic stance towards its occurrence, to certainty that it does not apply, with intermediary positions on the positive and the negative sides of the scale.

Being a sub-type of linguistic modality, epistemic modality can be approached in a

number of ways. That is, epistemic modality can be found through the divergent points of view in Toni Morrison's *Sula*. Interactions between Nel and Sula for example display a great use of that modality. What can be learnt from these interactions is that epistemic modality is oriented toward argumentation.

Thus, some underlining questions have been raised to account for the situation. What are the discursive strategies of legitimation used in Toni Morrison's *Sula*? To what extent does epistemic modality comply with argumentation process? In a work divided into three parts, it has been seen the way epistemic modality is linked to ethical conversion.

## I. Moralization in epistemic modality

Epistemic modality can be sized under multiple ways like modal verbs and adverbs or even other specific items. They can be seen as techniques of moralization when carefully examined. As put by Olga Lavrusheva (2013:59) "Moralization legitimation is legitimation by reference to certain values". In Toni Morrison's *Sula*, some discussions involving moral values and the often unstated will to bring one's interlocutor on the right way are recurrent. This is what has been made clear in the following examples through verbs and adverbs.

### 1. Modals in moralization process

Epistemic modalization can be observed via modals in the process of moralization. It simplistically means that one can rely on modals to restore moral values. In the following example, it will be made clear.

1) Sure I do. But he still a pain. **Can't** help loving your own child. No matter what they do. (*Sula*:57)

Answering Hannah's question, Rudy's mother acknowledged the pain that she was undergoing. That pain is caused to her by her son Rudy. But where moralization lies, is the fact that she cannot but love him. The paradox lies in the opposite connective 'but' meaning that the two things cannot match. That is normally one will get rid of things or persons that wild you. The teaching to draw in this context is as state Rudy's mother stated 'you can't help loving your own child'. It can be glossed as 'it is unavoidable, I love Rudy in spite of what he does'. What would have seemed un-understandable has become obvious. There is no exception to that. One can learn it from the sequence 'No matter what they do'<sup>1</sup>. It is clear that the utterance in the

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<sup>1</sup> In Gouro homeland, it is said commonly: "Never throw your knife even if it cuts you".

context in which it is cited would be taken as an invitation to support children, not to reject them even if they misbehave. It goes alike in the second example.

1) Well, Hester grown now and it **can't** say love is exactly what I feel (Sula: 57).

In the use of the modal phrase 'can't say', the conviction that Hannah has about the feeling of love is confirmed and it is really something that she can't explain. In fact, the way mother Hannah loved her daughter Sula Peace, it is the same way mother Hester is still loved by her mother. The problem was stemming from their misconception of love. The two mothers thought that the degree of love they have for their children will decrease as the children grow older. With this in mind, the opposition connective will merge in an additional one. The connective 'and' means, it is true that Hester has grown; it is also true that her mother love her. The shift from love to like has failed to happen. Her trouble is conveyed in the discourse marker 'well'.

It then teaches that love for children should not diminish with age. The accuracy hedge 'exactly' sheds light on the mother's trouble. To be honest, it is love that is felt. For having understood that Hannah repaired the utterance by putting what follows:

1) Sure you do. You love her, like I love Sula. I don't just like her. (Sula:57)

Here, Hannah is being taught the difference between 'love' and 'like'. The verb 'Like' is indeed of lower degree than love.

Moralization is also present and even heavily marked in examples 4, 5 and 6.

2) They did not **believe** doctors could heal — for them, none ever had done so (Sula:90)

3) They did not **believe** death was accidental — life might be, but death was deliberate. (Sula:90)

4) They did not **believe** Nature was ever askew — only inconvenient. (Sula: 90)

As one can observe, epistemic modality starts with the recognition of expressions like 'believe that'<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, this opinion displaying verb has systematic properties that can be amenable to formal study. It is therefore not astonishing to see it complying with its Greek etymology "episteme" meaning knowledge as recalled by Marciszewski (2013:217). With 'believe that' one can read black people's mind. In fact, in the mind of black people, doctors were not able to heal them because black people were accustomed to using the concoction of the traditional medicine to cure

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<sup>2</sup> Or 'know that' or 'think that'

themselves. Their contrast in seeing things led Chloe Anthony Wofford<sup>3</sup> mockingly state that “What was taken by outsiders to be slackness, slovenliness or even generosity was in fact a full recognition of the legitimacy of forces other than good ones.” (Sula: 90)

In this context, there is an attempt of moralization, of ethical conversion. Moreover, “ethical conversion is perceived as a tool of persuading people” as expressed by Andréa Zenobio Gunneng (2006:38). The intention not stated is that they have imprisoned themselves in that wrongness. This conclusion is imposed on by the bracketing of the sequence that follows:

5) Without ever **knowing** they had made up their minds to do it. (Sula: 90).

A sound approach of the way social position influences worldview led Mikhail Bakhtin (1981:289) to mention that “The language of a class or social position is potentially a prison-house, ‘a sealed-off and impermeable monoglossia’”. In the words of Benjamin Lee Worf (1956:11) “Language determines one’s entire way of life, including one’s thinking and all other forms of mental activity”.

As Jaakko Hintikka (1962) put it, “a belief is not necessarily true but rather probably true, possibly true, or likely to be true, we must modify our approach to the semantics of belief appropriately”. In the preceding examples, it has been seen that what is described to be believed by black people is but mere likeliness. Moralization is contained in examples 8 and 9 via modals ‘must’ and ‘can’.

6) Such evil **must** be avoided, they felt and precautions **must** naturally be taken to protect themselves from it. (Sula:89)

7) Anything I **can** do for you (Sula: 138).

Sula displayed in this utterance her capacity to help her friend in predicament.

Discussing the syntax of Hidatsa, Matthews G. H (1965:100), noticed that: “it is not possible to make what we might call an “unmodalised” statement at all”. He reached the conclusion that “English too, has ways of expressing degrees and kinds of commitment by the speaker, most obviously in the use of the so-called ‘modal verbs’”. Through verbs, we have seen how moralization can be displayed. Another way of displaying moralization is with adverbs.

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<sup>3</sup> The original name of Toni Morrison.

### 1. Adverbs in moralization process

Adverbs are displayed when one is witnessing obvious facts. It can be seen in the example below.

8) Hannah **simply** refused to live without the attention of a man. (Sula:61)

The adverb ‘simply’ implies the absence of debate around the fact. That is living without a man. Hannah couldn’t picture it. Consequently, she rejected it sharply. Obviously, un-manned life is not positive. Loneliness brings weakness<sup>4</sup>. The way she has managed the period following her refusal to be without man is not much edifying but at least she has succeeded in indicating that a lady should not live alone. After the death of Rekus, her husband, she had a steady sequence of lovers, mostly the husband of her friend and neighbor. (Sula: 61).

9) Just ‘cause you got it good **now** you think it was **always** this good? (Sula: 68).

Playing is good but not at anytime. Things should be done in their time. Mother Hannah is thus moralizing her daughter Sula about the righteousness and discontinuity of playing. If presently, it is positive, nothing will guaranty that tomorrow it will be so.

Epistemology lies in the fact that what Hannah did in (10) and advised in (11) are nothing but what she thought in harmony with moral value. It could have been turned explicitly as: what **I know** is that a woman cannot live without the attention of a man (10’). **I believe** it is just because you got it good now you think it was always this good (11’).

As put by Benveniste (1974:82) “The individual act of appropriating a language inserts the speaker into his speech act. [...]This situation is evidenced by specific items whose function is to place the speaker in a constant and necessary relationship with his enunciation”.

The same idea is worded by Dietz (2008:240) “On the standard truth-conditional approach, epistemic modals are taken as devices of making truth-valuable statements of epistemic possibility/necessity”. The idea is that Hannah has displayed what she judged well.

Obviously, epistemic modality shows the status of Hannah’s understanding or

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<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes 4: 9-11. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to that is alone when he falleth, and, and hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one be warm alone?

knowledge and her degree of commitment to the truth of what she said and involves her assumption or assessment of possibilities. It would then sound fair to state that discourses are most commonly legitimated through moralizations. Another way to catch epistemic modality in legitimation process is under the prism of rationalization.

## **I. Rationalization strategy**

Rationalization is legitimation referring to the utility of specific practices, as well as of actors. Common sense is the foundational basis for this legitimation strategy, along with the specialists who deliver aspects of knowledge, which can be utilized in the legitimation process. It clearly points out what the speaker finds rational.

### **1. Evidentiality indicators**

When Sula and Nel were children, they were real tied. But as eyes were opened on reality, on their culture, reasons separated them. The narration goes as follows:

- 10) Their friendship was as intense as it was sudden. [...]Sula<sup>5</sup>, who could hardly be counted on to sustain any emotion for more than three minutes. (Sula: 53).

Indeed, Sula's best friend Nel who represented the white community seemed to have lost confidence in her friend because the way Sula managed with things did not pleased her. This loss of confidence was achieved by the unfaithfulness of Sula about their friendship because Sula Peace has got sexual affairs with Nel's husband Jude.

From here it is possible to say that everyone knows that everyone knows that everyone knows, that it is not rational to have sex with someone who is not yours. That it is common knowledge. It leads straight forwards to loss of confidence whatever previous friendliness was. That misbehavior of Sula is a clear indicator of evidentially.

Obviously one can realize that language is not just a medium for the expression one's ideas; it also colors the perception of the world in which we live. That is "we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages" as indicated by Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956). In other words, when we communicate we do not just convey information; we rationally and emotionally relate ourselves to what we say and hear. This is what modality is: the attitudes of the communication subjects towards the dialogue and its subjects and objects. One can guess that Nel, would have never behaved so, that is having sex with a best

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<sup>5</sup> Perhaps because Emotion is blackness according to Senghor. «L'émotion est nègre comme la raison est hellène» Senghor, 1939:295)

friend's partner. Rightly, Bang and Døør (1998:28) put it "every description and any indication is always — also at the same time a self-description and self-indication".

In fact, something is rational for someone, nothing is rational for the sake of rationality. For having understood it, Bach (2011:4) put that: "Just as a chair cannot be comfortable without being comfortable for someone, so a state of affair cannot be epistemologically possible without being epistemologically possible for someone".

Example 13 shows it unambiguously.

- 11) I always **understand** how you could take a man. Now I **understand** why you can't keep one (Sula: 143).

Nel successfully established at the end of the day the bridge between Sula's taking a man and the loss of that one. This is where rationality lies. Understanding complies with capacity to explain it soundly. For Gumperz (1982:4) "We know that understanding presupposes the ability to attract and 'sustain others' attention". Guillaume (1984:69) worded it as follows: "we can explain to the extent that we have understood. We can understand to the extent that we have observed". Sula, on the contrary, for whom, Nel's understanding amounts to nothingness put the following question:

- 12) Is that what I'm **supposed** to do? Spend my life keeping a man? (Sula: 143)

'Supposed to' in Sula's question complies with high expectation, in other words, it complies with rationality. Similarly, the verb 'understand' just like 'think' shows a cognitive activity of the speaker. "It is among the linguistic means that a speaker uses to express his or her epistemic stance" according to Capelli (2007:104). In other words, understanding leads to evidentiality. From that verb, we can draw that a deduction from a previous fact has been made. This past has now appeared rational to Nel.

Nel criticized the loneliness of Sula who seems to enjoy being lonely. According to her, she is the one who decided to be like this and that the contrary to the case of Nel is not happening through force of circumstances. Then, Nel deduces from that the reason why Sula cannot keep a man. In fact, Nel and her mother Helene Wright show their volition to be absorbed onto the main stream of American culture by denying their africanity. This goes unsaid that at the end of the day problems will emerged between Nel and Sula stemming from world vision.

For Nel, a woman should behave in a way that will hold a man. A good woman has knows what family life is. Consequently, Sula should not enjoy being alone. Since she strongly disagreed with with Nel's assumption, she needs reasons that can make Nel's understand her. The following verbal interaction points out the relevance of rationalization.

15) - I **sure** did live in this world.

- **Really?** What have you got to show for it?

- Show? To who? Girl, I got my mind. And what goes on in it. Which is to say, I got me. (Sula: 143)

The adjective 'sure', in Sula's turn and the adverbs 'really' in Nel's turn prove a rationality emanating from the speaker's. It shows a high value of certainty about the truth of the situation. In other words, there is a paramount degree.

Sula thinks she has surely left her mark in the society she is living in. she can assess such things since she is aware of her deeds which were not applauded by people around her. She also knows all the polemics she has been engaged in. this leads her assert such claim.

We can notice a quest for arguments expressed in the adverb 'really' and a 'wh' question. The adverb shows there is a doubt in the mind of the speaker which need some explanatory statements. The 'Wh'question expressed the will to know the reason that brought her co-speaker to produce such assertion.

Another example stated:

16) - You think I don't know what your life is like just because I **ain't** living it? I know what every **colored** in this country is doing.

- What's that?

- Dying. Just like me. But the difference is they dying like a stump. (Sula: 143)

The verb 'to know' in association with personal pronoun "I" is a clue carrying the mark of subjectivity. It also expresses the fact that the device of the speaker's mind is in motion. It calls for remembrance, knowledge and experience. It is part of the "mental state predicates" just as expressed by Capelli (2007:53).

The epistemic verb 'know' appearing in Sula's utterance conveyed her high awareness of the state of affair. It is that awareness which permits her to make use of epistemic modality and states her point.

Sula asserted she was aware of all the women movements. However, what she knew is unknown by Nel. The knowledge on the basis of which she argued is not known to the discourse protagonist. Then, a curiosity will arise from the addressee.

Hence the question “what’s that”? Which requires the blossoming of arguments to meet the lack of awareness of the ignorant person who is Nel. As such, Sula meant that what colored people were undergoing in the state needed not to be personally experienced. It has become so ordinary that none can pretend to ignore it. Here again evidentiality is at stake.

When evidentiality is not strongly assumed, it is indicated by items like ‘maybe’. Example 17 makes it relevant:

17) - **Maybe. Maybe** he was just sanitary.

- Sanitary?

- Well. Think about it. Suppose Shirley was all splayed out in front of you? Wouldn’t you go for the hipbone instead? (Sula: 97)

As mention, ‘Maybe’ is an adverb denoting a lack of certainty. It has an epistemic content, it “expresses uncertainty about the reality of the proposition” according to Pik, Furmaniak (2012:16). Then, we can notice that in this case, the speaker does not trust the information he has or he does not know a great deal about the content of his utterance.

Sula is giving some possibilities that may justify the deed of the man they are talking about. She is not sure of what she is saying since she wasn’t present when the fact was occurring hence the use of “maybe”.

The repetition of the word “sanitary” through an interrogative modality implies the speaker wants to understand more.

18) - You say I’m a woman and colored. Ain’t that the same as being a man?

- I don’t think so and you wouldn’t either if you had children

- Then I **really** would act like **what you call** a man. Every man I ever knew left his children

- Then I really would act like what you call a man. Every man I ever knew left his children

- Some were taken

- Wrong, Nellie. The word is ‘left’. (Sula: 142)

Sula believes that being a woman is just like a man. However, Nel does not think so and tells Sula she would have not said it if she was a mother. The adverb “really” is used by Sula to express a high degree of the realization of a stance of affair. She is sure even if she gave birth she would have behaved like men who abandoned their children. Then, “really” is an epistemic tool she uses to vehicle her subjective point of view about the sameness of women and men. The recourse to autonymic modality

‘what you call’ is a clear indicator of rationality.

Another way of seizing rationality is through personal pronouns and this is going to be covered in next section.

## **2. Personal pronouns**

Being a strategic choice of the legitimacy, rationality can be seen in the use of personal pronouns.

19) **You** can’t do it all Sula. **You** a woman and a colored woman at that. **You** can’t act like a man. **You** can’t be walking around all independent-like, doing whatever **you** like, taking what **you** want, leaving what **you** don’t (Sula: 142).

The personal pronouns referring here to Sula, means that it is not rational not only for woman, but chiefly for colored woman to walk around independent-like. The repetition of this pronoun can witness it. Another indicator of rationality cues is the presence of the negator ‘not’ which revealed Sula’s limits. The repetition has been rightly observed by Sula who said it clearly to Nel.

20) You repeating yourself.

Aware of her likely wrongness, Nel used a verb of propositional attitude.

21) **I** don’t **think** so and you wouldn’t either if you had children. (Sula:142)

The modal ‘can’ is used as an “epistemic modal” as mentioned by Halliday (1994:362) to show a low degree of certainty toward the realization of a fact. It refers to a logical possibility or a weaker possibility as the greatest one to link to ‘May’. So ‘can + not’ mean uncertainty about the realization of a state of affairs but not a total one.

In fact, the interactions displayed Sula’s pride according to Nel. Otherwise, Nel thinks Sula is too proud and tells her she does not have to behave as if she can manage all alone. The use of the modal ‘can’ teaches that she is not totally sure about that but there is a logical assumption about Sula’s impossibility to deal with everything alone.

Through the reaction of Sula, it appears she does not share the point of view of Nel and ask for explanations. By means of the “why” question, she asks the reason that can justify the belief of Sula. The question stems from the fact that their opinions about what female can do largely differ.

One can therefore retain that rationalization, as a strategic choice to change the type and amount of legitimacy people possess, is the most prevailing type of all legitimation strategies. Nonetheless, authorization which can be part of legitimation

process deserves attention too.

## II. Authorization in legitimation

In the word of Lavrusheva (2013:48), “Authorization is legitimation by reference to authority.” For Gunneng, “Enunciative modalities are described on the basis of various positions a subject occupies in relation to the discursive relations practiced in order to speak of the object.” Gunneng (2006:47). The key question to answer in this section is “Who speaks?” as put by Gunneng (2006:47). In other words, “Which group of individuals have the right to speak, ability to understand, lawful and immediate access to the group of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decision, institutions, and practices?” Gunneng (2006:47).

Authorization can be assume with devices like these ones:

### 1. A specific grammatical element

Some specific items are carriers of authorization indices.

For examples:

**22)** It is called the suburbs now, **but** when Black people where lived there it was called the Bottom (Sula: 3).

The same place, two names. Why? Because of the authority of white people. It displays their power over black people. Moreover the autonymic modality involved in the parallelism: ‘It is called’ opposed to ‘It was called’ makes it clearer. The oppositive connective ‘but’ showed the debasing status of the place and the way authorization got fossilized.

**23)** Twenty-two years old, weak, hot, frightened, not daring to acknowledge the fact he didn’t even know who or what he was --- with **no** past, **no** language, **no** tribes, **no** source, **no** address book, **no** comb, **no** pencil, **no** clock, **no** pocket handkerchief, **no** rug, **no** bed, **no** can opener, **no** faded postcard, **no** soap, **no** key, **no** tobacco pouch, **no** soiled underwear and nothing nothing nothing to do... (Sula: 12)

Black people are considered as having no culture and custom in the eyes of white men. One can see in that description the reducing of black people to nothingness in this world.

It is debasing to describe someone like that in reference to one’s own culture and to one’s authority. To quote Foucault’s point of view, power relations are present in all forms of social interaction. In his terms, “power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” Foucault (1976:93).

24) Didn't **I** tell you? I'm all right. Go on now. (sula: 47)

Plum is reassuring his mother. Authority is contained in I.

25) "Your **maman** tole you to stop eatin' snot, Chicken," Nel hollered at him through cupped hands (Sula: 59).

Authority is embodied by Maman. Therefore, a simple reference to her would have prompted action.

26) Oh, they'll love me all right. It will take time **but** they'll love me (Sula: 145).

27) After all the old women have lain with teen-agers, when all the young girls have slept with their old drunken uncles **then**, there'll be a little love left over for me (Sula:145)

The use of the conjunctions 'but' and 'then' by Sula, in her interaction with Nel is not innocent. It rather displays her high awareness of evidentiality. As a matter of fact, Sula's behavior which Nel qualified as bad led nobody bothers in calling her or paying her visit. In spite of all this distantiation, Sula still expresses a certainty through her prediction of people's love for her.

There is authorization because the faith she is displaying is likely to entice people to believe her. She showed the reason why people will come to her. As knower of the reality and the people of that place, she certified that there **will** be love towards her. Sula's discourse here pairs with power, which power is generated by her deep knowledge. Seemingly, Foucault echoed it when he wrote: "Discourses produce power and [i]ndeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" Foucault (1976:100)

Thereafter, she falls into the argumentation process as if what she has stated was not sufficient.

Foucault insisted on the truth telling as power. For him, "there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" Foucault (1980:92-93).

28) 'nigger' (Sula:10) is an offensive term used to call black people "kind of colored folks). The **nigger** get the hilly ...look down on the white folks.

## 2. Reference to Supreme being

By Supreme Being, reference is made here to God. In Toni Morrison's Sula, God

has been regarded sometimes as the source of legitimation.

In the interaction between mamma and Sula the former, almost failing to convince her daughter Sula, referred then the Supreme Being.

29) I want ...I want to be...wonderful. Oh, **Jesus**, make me wonderful.  
(Sula:29)

Nel is resorting to Jesus as the authority to restore her when she to had to leave for the first time in Medallion.

30) **Bible**<sup>6</sup> say honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land thy God giveth thee (Sula: 93).

Seeing that conviction is not yet total, mama continued:

31) Pride goeth before a fall<sup>7</sup> (Sula: 93)

This verse quoted by mamma draws the attention on the necessity of being humble. It means that one has to be tender and the reason is clear: Lord lifts up those who have that quality. On the contrary, he resists those who are arrogant. The power in this turn comes from the fact that the doer is not a person but the Lord himself as the Supreme Being.

## **Conclusion**

The first category of modalization appears through moralization. That is moral evaluation in legitimation by reference to certain system of values, setting ethical foundation for legitimation in the social context, such as etiquette and humanity.

The second category is that of rationalization. Rationalization is legitimation by reference to the utility of a particular widely accepted social practice or general beliefs within the particular social environment. The third category is authorization. That is, legitimation by reference to the relevant authority as subject, which can be both personal and impersonal. To any of these cases corresponds appropriate modality expressions. Thus, Toni Morrison's *Sula*, has appeared as the microcosm where legitimation process have been revealed through the struggle between black community with the white community in Ohio relying on epistemic modalities

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<sup>6</sup> Exodus 20: 12

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 16 :18

ranging from verbs of propositional attitude to reference to Supreme Being.

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