Divisions and mixing in "Go Down, Moses" by William Faulkner

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DIVISIONS AND MIXING

IN GO DOWN, MOSES BY WILLIAM FAULKNER

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the divisions and boundaries made by the mechanisms of separation that authorize a false perception of land, animals, blacks and women as commodities in William Faulkner’s *Go Down, Moses*. Asserting that *Go Down, Moses* describes mixing as well as divisions, this study demonstrates that the dichotomous boundaries imposed upon nature and humans repeatedly fail to function. Wilderness and plantation land can never be separated as they exist in mixture. And the racial boundary between whites and blacks is destabilized and blurred by characters like Lucas Beauchamp and Tomey’s Turl, who engage in resistance against the society whose foundation is based on the right to property which is allowed for whites as an exclusive attribute.

Chapter 1 posits that wilderness and plantation land exist only in mixture. Although Isaac McCaslin desires for a state of things before divisions, differences, and dominations, he promotes the division between his sacred land of wilderness and the cursed McCaslin plantation land. His idea of Godly nature of wilderness, however, can only be defined as something that is opposed to the coded plantation land, as the concept of “nature” is always invented through the human perception and recollection as something that is opposed to civilized space. Chapter 2 explores the entangled relationship between blacks and whites, a relationship symbolized by Lucas Beauchamp who contains blood from both black and white lines. Being vigorous, tough and rigorously self-assertive, he denaturalizes and confutes the racial difference created in a society that favors divisions and boundaries. Chapter 3 considers characters that slip away from binary organizations, and examines the potential failures of dominant white male characters over slaves and women. By escaping and fleeing from the violent cliché binary system, they reveal that
the divisions and borders are rarely achieved successfully in the novel. Even though the white narratives struggle to achieve the divided world that authorizes a master’s power over slaves and women, these characters blur and destabilize the divisions and borders of race and gender. As figures of transgression, they present images of mixing and dysfunctional divisions.
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Introduction

Is *Go Down, Moses* (1942) a novel, or a collection of short stories? Critics have been puzzled by this question for quite a while, because the book straddles the border line between a novel and a short story collection. They have described the book as: “a remarkably unified novel”¹, “a single novelistic structure,”² “a loosely constructed novel,”³ “if not exactly a novel, then, at least a narrative which begins, develops, and concludes,”⁴ “a collage, a pastiche of dissimilar pieces.”⁵ The question, however, does not need to be answered as an either-or choice, since it is “a hybrid: a loosely jointed but ambitious novel masking as a collection of short stories”⁶. It is somehow both a novel and a collection of short stories at the same time. In fact, the obscurity of the style speaks volumes for its rich content that is full of ambiguities with images of mixing and dysfunctional divisions.

*Go Down, Moses* is, indeed, “nothing but mixing” (Snead 191). Although there are mechanisms of separation that authorize a false perception of land, animals, blacks and women as commodities, the divisions made by the mechanisms repeatedly fail to function in normal way. Wilderness and plantation land exist always in mixture, despite the persistent thrust that calls upon the boundary to be stabilized. The boundary between blacks and whites is also indistinct, especially with the unstoppable progress of miscegenation. As it is shown in the McCaslin family tree, blacks and whites exist like “two threads”⁷ tightly entangled together.

This thesis examines the intertwined relationships between wilderness and plantation land, and blacks and whites, showing how the mechanisms of separation function in the society that favors divisions and boundaries. The first chapter focuses on the relation between wilderness and plantation land, considering Isaac McCaslin as a
notable character since he situates wilderness as the sacred land and the McCaslin plantation land as the locus of divisions and boundaries that are “shame and wrong.” The second chapter explores the relation between blacks and whites, focusing on Lucas Beaucham who resembles old Carothers, the founder of the McCaslin plantation land, even though he is black. Lucas shows how the social system of the plantation land functions by creating racial divisions and borders. The third chapter discusses the failures of dichotomous boundaries in the novel by paying special attention to characters that slip away from the binary organizations. By escaping and fleeing from the violent cliché binary system, these characters reveal that the divisions and borders are rarely achieved successfully in the novel. It is their impenetrability that allows them to slip out and flee from the presumed categories and boundaries, by preventing them to be categorized and narrated. Even though the white narratives struggle to achieve the divided world that authorizes a master’s power over slaves and women, these characters blur and destabilize the divisions and borders of race and gender. As figures of transgression, they present images of mixing and dysfunctional divisions.
1. Plantation Land and Wilderness in “The Bear”

The environment is a pivotal figure in Faulkner’s imagination—one that almost takes the form of a persona at times. Indeed, my objective in this chapter is to examine the depictions of the environment in Faulkner’s “The Bear” since Go Down, Moses, and especially, “The Bear,” overflows with Faulkner’s focus on man’s relation to his surroundings. In “The Bear,” the surrounding world is divided into two spaces by the main protagonist, Isaac McCaslin, who is confronted with “his time and place,” a time and place that shape his consciousness with “shame and wrong.” These two spaces are the plantation land and the wilderness, both of which Isaac constantly narrates as two opposed lands: one is “cursed,” while the other represents the sacred land of God. In other words, the McCaslin plantation is a closed space which is codified, gridded, and historicized, while the wilderness is open, “markless,” and “timeless.”

The concept of space developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari is helpful here. For them, there are two kinds of space: striated space and smooth space. They claim that striated space is capturable, describable, reducible to language, measurable, restricting movements, while multiple movements are allowed without impediment in smooth space.

Smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects, more than one of properties. It is haptic rather than optical perception. Whereas in the striated forms organize a matter, in the smooth materials signal forces and serve as symptoms for them. It is an intensive rather than extensive space, one of distances, not of measures and properties....A Body without Organs instead of an organism and organization. Perception in it is based on symptoms and evaluations rather than measures and properties. This is why smooth space is occupied by intensities, wind and noise, forces and sonorous and tactile qualities, as in the desert, steppe, or ice. The creaking of ice and the song of the sands. Striated
space, on the contrary, is canopied by the sky as measure and by the measurable visual qualities deriving from it. (Thousand Plateaus 479)

Striated space is a place constituted in terms of space and time, laws, principles, and linguistic representations while smooth space is not constrained by any of those features. It is a space of openness, multiplicities, and freedom without concern for the basic oppositions between thought and action, history and geography, and mind and body, which are linguistic concepts. In sum, smooth space is “markless.” In “The Bear,” we can see these two spaces. As striated space, the McCaslin plantation “produces an order and succession of distinct forms,” naturalizing the various boundaries (nature/culture, white/black, slave/master and property/owner) which are legalized by laws and principles (Thousand Plateaus 478); whereas the wilderness occupies territories without striating them. It is a place where time, the racial patterns, and any codings of Man can be disappeared as the wilderness is repeatedly represented as “timeless,” “markless,” and “impenetrable.”

At first, however, this concept seems to enforce the dichotomy of spaces. This circumstance led Slavoj Žižek to criticize the duality of Deleuze and Guattari’s thought as “ultimately overdetermined as ‘the Good versus the Bad’” (Žižek 25). It becomes clear, however, that his criticism misses some points, because Deleuze and Guattari pronounce that “the two spaces in fact only exist in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space” (Thousand Plateau 474). Thus, the point of “the striated and smooth” should not be to halve the space, or to erase the one or the other, but to encourage a lively flow between the two. Similarly, Faulkner’s text does not remain as
the pure space of smoothness or as the pure space of striation, but rather, they both intertwiningly exist together in a state of changing and becoming. In fact, the boundary between the land and the wilderness is repeatedly blurred and destabilised by Faulkner, for the wilderness is open for striations and translations, moving and changing its status, and the plantation land attempts to use its force to intervene into the territory of the wilderness. This chapter investigates the intertwined relationship between the plantation land and the wilderness in Faulkner’s “The Bear.”

The plantation land

There is resonance between Deleuze’s focus on the concept of “root” and a root which aims to “root man” within a “world order” in the McCaslin plantation land (Thousand Plateaus 24). It “root[s] man” firmly in the history of the McCaslin plantation land which views the land and everything on the land as property and presupposes and struggles to perpetuate the white supremacy, while the “world order” in the McCaslin plantation land is based on the concept of ownership which has been acquired through invasion and conquest of the land, animals, and slaves. The McCaslin plantation land is--
The land has been translated into money, and then become a heritage to be bequeathed after the forced hard work done by the slaves whose right has been deprived by the total domination of the owner, old Carothers McCaslin, who is “the strong and ruthless man” with “a cynical foreknowledge of his own vanity and pride and strength and a contempt for all his get” (244). This plantation land, like striated space, is a site of power and domination where the “contempt” for the land, animals, and slaves is rooted.

It is Isaac’s cousin, Cass Edmonds, whose identity is stabilized by the territorial root, that sees the land as property to be conquered, claiming that “this plantation and all the life it contained was chattel and revokeless thrall” (246). Cass proclaims legitimate ownership of the land, tracing his origin back through a chain of ancestors, a tracing of a linear history which corresponds to the notion of a root identity whose features are “ratified by a claim to legitimacy that allows a community to claim its entitlement to the possession of a land, which thus becomes a territory” (Poetics 143). Cass asserts that the land must be tamed to be owned and preserved for future generations, valuing their ancestor’s efforts in clearing a wilderness, as they have “translated it into something to bequeath to his children, worthy of bequeathment for his descendants’ ease and security and pride to perpetuate his name and accomplishments” (245). For Cass, the land is “the legacy and monument” (245).

But then, how does this totalitarian root function to “root man” in the history of the McCaslin plantation land? In “The Bear,” it is through the succession and repetition of reading and writing the ledgers whose significance is incontestable, as the most intricate and magnificent chapter, chapter four, is dedicated to Isaac’s experience of reading the ledgers. In fact, reading and writing the ledgers function as the symbolic act of building
up and prolonging a root. Through the repetition of writing and reading the ledgers that prove the family history of appropriation of the land for generations to generations, the family history strikes root in readers’ mind while the ledgers legitimize the ownership of the land, and provide a historical consciousness. Indeed, the succession of material and spiritual legacy is performed by reading / writing the ledgers that are the attempts at the appropriation of the land by text.

In the commissary of the McCaslin plantation, a closed space which is codified, gridded, and historicized, Isaac McCaslin senses that his consciousness is being produced from his experience of reading the ledgers, which is “that chronicle which was a whole land in miniature…the entire South, twenty-three years after surrender and twenty four from emancipation” (280). The story of the ledgers merges into his consciousness while he discovers that the foundation of the McCaslin plantation is sinned by incest and miscegenation.

...looking down at the yellowed page..., he seemed to see [Eunice] actually walking into the icy creek on that Christmas day six months before her daughter’s and her lover’s (Her first lover’s he thought, Her first) child was born, solitary, inflexible, griefless, ceremonial, in formal and succinct repudiation of grief and despair who had already had to repudiate belief and hope that was all. He would never need look at the ledgers again nor did he; the yellowed pages in their fading and implacable succession were as much as a part of his consciousness and would remain so forever, as the fact of his own nativity: (259)

In deploying imagination, Ike blends the knowledge based on the ledgers (Eunice’ suicide) with his own emotional experience to produce a highly meaningful, personal connection with the history. As a result, the experience of reading the ledgers becomes
“his consciousness,” which becomes as strong as his “own nativity.” This historical consciousness forces Isaac to perceive the land, animals and slaves with “contempt” while he strives to escape from it by relinquishing the right to inherit the plantation land.

This totalitarian root which functions through the ledgers--“a whole land in miniature”-- cannot be undone, but rather, it continues to imprison the land and people, as a curse, in the world whose bedrock is built upon the concept of ownership. The power of this totalitarian root becomes clear in Isaac’s failures to “set at least some of His lowly people free” (248). 10

Isaac tries to release the land as a non-property by relinquishing the legitimacy to inherit the McCaslin plantation land as “[not] only the male descendant but the only and last descendant in the male line” of the McCaslin clan with his belief that the land is not something that can be owned, but rather, it is something which must be held mutual and intact “in the communal anonymity of brotherhood” (245, 246)11. However, the curse on the land is not lifted by Isaac’s act of relinquishment of the ownership. Rather, the curse comes back as stronger, after the right of the McCaslin plantation land is taken over by Roth Edmonds who repeats the same act of incest and miscegenation with “a doe...that walks on two legs” just as Old Carothers MacCaslin (321).

Isaac’s failure does not stop here. He fails to lift the curse on slaves. First, he attempts to end the enslavement of slaves by paying a thousand dollars, which was promised in the ledgers by Old Carothers McCaslin to his Negro son and his descendants. Isaac traces Tennie’s Jim who escaped on his twenty-first birthday before the thousand dollars can be passed on to him, however, Isaac lost Tennie’s Jim and failed to give the thousand dollars to him. Therefore, he traces Fonsiba the next, who embodies drowned
Eunice and Tomasina who died in child birth. This time, Isaac finds her and manages to put the money in a bank for her; however, when Fonsiba says “I am free” even though she is desperate, impoverished, and hungry, he realizes that he does not have a divinely mighty power “to set at least some of His lowly people free” (248). Her claim on ‘freedom’ trapped in the ruined lodge with “a farm only in embryo” exposes the “baseless and imbecile delusion” of freedom (266). It is clear that her freedom is only “in embryo”12 as Fonsiba is not technically a slave, yet her life is miserable with hunger and poverty. Here, Isaak confronts with the force of the totalitarian root that has been imprisoning everyone in “bondage” (161). In the plantation land where the totalitarian root is built, “no man is ever free” as the authorial relater insists (269). One must endure until the curse fades with time:

This whole land, the whole South, is cursed, and all of us who derive from it, whom it ever suckled, white and black both, lie under the curse? Granted that my people brought the curse onto the land: maybe for that reason their descendants alone can—not resist it, not combat it—maybe just endure and outlast it until the curse if lifted. Then your people’s turn will come because we have forfeited ours. But not now. Not yet. (266)

The wilderness

Foiled in the plantation land that imprisons everything under a curse, Isaac seeks redemption in the wilderness. Indeed, the wilderness stands for smooth space that is open, timeless, and markless. Deleuze explains: “Smooth space is a field without conduits or channels. A field, a heterogeneous smooth space, is wedded to a particular type of multiplicity: nonmetric, acentered, rhizomatic multiplicities which occupy space without “counting” it and can “only be explored by legwork”” (Thousand Plateaus 371). As opposed to the striated space that is full of laws and principle, smooth space is the space
in which movement is not channeled and directed or subjected to structures. There is neither border nor center in smooth space as if it were a free space to be “explored.” It is “a space of experience, not a space of language.” Indeed, the wilderness is “a place of experience,” as Isaac experiences to become a fully-trained hunter, while the wilderness gives him an experience to “explore” the woods where there are no striated signs or marks especially after he discards the gun, the watch and the compass that were the last traces of taints of striation. In addition, the wilderness is not reducible to language. It is “markless.” This “markless wilderness” (199) alleviates class and racial codes and all men become simply “hunters” in the woods, who are only required to be “humble and enduring” (185). Furthermore, there is no artificial human time in the wilderness. In the wilderness, time is eternal: the woods ”did not change, and, timeless, would not, anymore than would the green of summer and the fire and rain of fall and the iron cold and sometimes even snow”(308); time is tied to place by the passage of the seasons, while “town time” is ordered by artificial time and routines. But most significantly, the distinction between humans, animals, nature, and even the dead disappear in the wilderness as smooth space dissolves and coordinates the distinctions and grids, and creates heterogeneous multiplicities.

After the death of Old Ben, Sam Fathers, and Lion, the knoll that they were buried in becomes the very symbolic space of the wilderness. In the knoll, there is no dichotomous line between life and death, human, animal and the living organisms, but rather, there is the wholeness (yet myriad).

...the knoll which was no abode of the dead because there was no death, not Lion and not Sam: not held fast in earth but free in earth and not in earth but
of earth myriad yet undiffused of every myriad part, leaf and twig and particle, air and sun and rain and dew and night, acorn oak and leaf and acorn again, dark and dawn and dark and dawn again in their immutable progression and, being myriad, one: (313 emphasis added)

Here, the wilderness expresses a great intensity or depth that is beyond all the measures of the governed distinctions drawn rigidly in striated space of the McCaslin plantation land. Unfolding the hierarchical classification, the wilderness unites Sam, the human, Old Ben and Lion, the animals, and the outer world as one, yet “myriad” at the same time. It is that which transcends death, forms and any divisions of organisms and the moment of what Glissant calls “the poetics of relation,” which is never fixed but remains open, a constantly mobile totality eternally evolving relations with everything possible. Glissant claims that such a “poetics of relation” corresponds to the concept of *mita kuye oyasin* presented by Marty de Mortano: “We Are All Related”

*mita kuye oyasin* is a Sioux word that means “we are all related” or “all my relations.” It is widely used by many Native American people today and is used at the beginning and at the end of the day. It refers to the concept that not only are all people related, but that we are all related to the animals, the plants and the earth. *Mita kuye oyasin* is often used at the closing of a prayer instead of “amen.” (*Mississippi* 196)

“Poetics of relation,” then, is a concept that allows everything to relate to everything else as one, without stabilizing, excluding, or totalizing.

It is important, however, to clarify that smooth space is not something that praises the idea of totalitarian wholeness that eliminates all the differences, and that forces to achieve the fantasy of the sameness of all. But rather, it expresses the organisms as “the complex webs of forces known as ecosystems that have no centralized organization, no
climax or end point, but only continuous variation and rhizomes,” while it acknowledges the differences among them (Bonta 144). In other words, it shows the relations of all the organisms, dissolving the distorted and over-coded divisions created through mixing recollection and perception.

Deleuze questions the difference between nature and culture. In fact, his philosophy considers nature itself artificial, for there is no clear division between nature and civilization/culture. In the beginning of Anti-Oedipus, Deleuze writes:

we make no distinction between man and nature: the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man become one within nature in the form of production or industry...man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other--not even in the sense of bipolar opposites within a relationship of causation, ideation, or expression (cause and effect, subject and object, etc.); rather they are one and the same essential reality, the producer-product. (Anti-Oedipus 4-5)

The concept of “nature” is always defined as the opposite component of civilization or culture. It is impossible to draw a clear line between nature and culture, as they exist in mixture. David Evans makes the same point in his essay on “The Bear,” “Taking the place of Nature: ‘The Bear’ and the Incarnation of America.”

...the concept of the natural landscape is incomprehensible apart from the culture that defines it as its own opposite, which constitutes it by designating particular pieces of geography as noteworthy, investing them with symbolic significance, and enabling their social use or appreciation. Nature, that is to say, does not exist without culture, and does not exist otherwise than as a cultural category. (Evans 180)

The concept of “nature” is always invented through the human perception and recollection as something that is opposed to civilized space.
Just like Deleuze’s philosophy on nature, Faulkner’s wilderness does not correspond to the simple concept of “nature,” as it is full of ambiguities and amalgamation. For example, the very symbol of the wilderness, Old Ben, is not only described as Godly nature, but also as no less than a human man for he “in an area almost a hundred miles square had earned for himself a name, a definite designation like a living man” (185). But most interestingly, he is described as a machine—“locomotive-like” (228). In sum, he is all together an animal-bear, a man-bear, and a machine-bear. In fact, this hybridity and amalgamation seem to foreground the mysterious half-naturalness and partial linguistic constructedness of Faulkner’s wilderness. In Faulkner’s wilderness, there is no distinct boundary between Nature and civilization as Ike wishes there to be.

**Striated and Smooth in Mixture**

Deleuze usually offers an image of the sea or the desert as an example of smooth space, as there is no impediment for movements in multiplicity of directions in the sea or the desert. However, it soon becomes clear that neither of these places is as smooth as it seems to be at first, as smooth and striated spaces only exist in mixture:

The situation is much more complicated than we have let on. The sea is perhaps principle among smooth spaces, the hydraulic model *par excellence*. But the sea is also, of all smooth spaces, the first one attempts were made to striate, to transform into a dependency of the land, with its fixed routes, constant directions, relative movements, a whole counterhydraulic of channels and conduits. (*Thousand Plateaus* 387)

As the sea and the land are connected to each other, the sea can always be striated by the land, and the land can be smoothed by the sea. Similarly, the wilderness in “The


Bear” does not remain as smooth as they used to be. The smoothness of the wilderness becomes striated by being gnawed, and demolished by humans “who feared it.”

that doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with plows and axes who feared it because it was wilderness, men myriad and nameless even to one another in the land where the old bear had earned a name, and through which ran not even a mortal beast but an anachronism indomitable and invincible out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life which the little puny humans swarmed and hacked at in a fury of abhorrence and fear like pygmies about the ankles of a drowsing elephant; —the old bear, solitary, indomitable, and alone; widowered childless and absolved of mortality (185-6)

The wilderness is gnawed and striated by men with the brutal and vicious tools like axes and plows. And finally, the emblem of the smoothness of the wilderness, the bear with “furious immortality” (186), is destroyed by the ignorant and immature hunter, Boon Hogganbeck, who had no idea “when to shoot and when not to shoot, when to kill and when not to kill” (164), although the other hunters “did not even intend to kill” the bear (186).15 After he kills Old Ben, the striation of the wilderness becomes more and more severe, and the plantation land becomes more closed and immobile, as seen in “Delta Autumn” (fifty years later from “The Bear”): “This land...where white men rent farms and live like niggers and niggers crop on shares and live like animals (347), whereas the wilderness becomes less open as it is not “markless” anymore. It becomes “▽” (326). The balance between the wilderness and the plantation land is collapsed by the ignorant man by accident.

In “The Bear,” the plantation land strives to remain closed by digging up the ground and spreading a totalizing root, thus the wilderness is constantly being striated. However, even though the wilderness becomes smaller and smaller, the South can be neither the
pure smooth space nor the pure striated space. They both intertwiningly exist in a state of changing and becoming. Jonathan Maskit explains:

Space is always in a state of becoming. Old striations are replaced with new, what was severely striated becomes smoother, what was smooth becomes striated. If we wished, we could line up smooth space with the earth and striated with territory, but always only with the understanding that there is no pure earth, no territory that is not also earth, and no space which is not smooth, striated, and in transition. (*Philosophy and Geography Three*, 271)

Therefore, the point is not to halve the two spaces as “Good” and “Bad,” but to consider them as one, and to keep a balance of the flow between the two. It is tempting to interpret the plantation land as “bad” and the wilderness as “good,” just like Isaac completely rejected the idea of the plantation land and held on to the wilderness for the rest of his life; however, the point is to espy that they exist always in mixture, as Faulkner’s text exposes the intertwined relationship between the plantation land and the wilderness by moving back and forth between the two spaces, while the text suffers to encourage the flow between the two spaces.
2. Racial Divisions in “Fire and the Hearth”

In the McCaslin plantation land, perception is based on “measures and properties,” and it creates divisions, differences and borders. These divisions and borders function to maintain the society in the novel, the society that is built upon the importance of ownership which regulates the interpersonal relationship between whites and blacks, men and women, humans and animals, and humans and lands. These borders and divisions are naturalized and legalized by the law. While authority is given to white men in the novel, the law constitutes authority through the production of rules and customs, and racial codes. Crucially, this authority, the legal power given only to white men, lies in the ownership of property which is itself a legal construction.

Lucas Beauchamps, however, challenges and destabilizes the divisions and borders. Obsessed with power, he relies upon both legal and business words, such as “justice,” “Law” (with a capital “L” as his name “Lucas”), “money,” and “business” as Thadious Davis points out (Kinney 140), although his “legal” blackness constantly attempts to prevent his intentions to trespass the boundary and division. Interestingly, however, black Lucas is the one who most resembles the white founder of the McCaslin plantation. In fact, he is “more like old Carothers than all the rest of [them] put together” (114). Being almost like the reincarnation of the old Carothers McCalin, Lucas strives to acquire power, and challenges to intrude in and sabotage the divisions and borders imposed upon him.

This chapter focuses on Lucas’s challenges to break out of the imprisonment that the social system of the plantation land strives to maintain, while the complete breakout seems to be violently and recurrently impeded. In so doing, it must include the discussion
of how the borders, divisions, and differences are created through the distorted perception of things in the McCaslin plantation land, with emphasis on the boundary that separates blacks and whites, since it is the most significant and indestructible border in the novel. Second, this chapter reveals how the society in the novel functions, through Lucas’s attempts to gain power with his belief in manhood and the legitimacy of ownership, both of which are mostly formed out of the plantation system. Third, it moves to the discussion of how Lucas engages in a furious resistance in order to contest exclusion in ways that show the structure of the authorial power.

**How difference is “created”**

The plantation land is heavily coded and historicized, producing rules, customs, and the Law. It is the locus of the power’s domination, and the power, in *Go Down, Moses*, lies in white men, just as the novel is dominated by the presence of white male characters. At the same time, however, the boundaries, borders, and the power structure in the novel are recurrently destabilized and interrupted. In fact, a clear-cut boundary does not seem to exist in the novel as the text blurs the boundaries, divisions, and differences by bringing powerful characters like Lucas to challenge them. Yet, the complete freedom from the violent dichotomous boundaries can never be done in the novel, as it is only “in embryo” (265). The novel remains trapped in a land that the deep violence lies underneath, no matter how hard it strives to find a way out of its imprisonment by reversing and impairing the divisions and boundaries.

As a way to destabilize the boundaries, the text denaturalizes the differences. It shows how the differences come to be recognized, and how one comes to rationalize the
hierarchical differences. In fact, racial difference is not something that exists from the
beginning. It suddenly descends on characters as a curse that is stemmed from “the old
haughty ancestral pride” based on “an accident of geography” in Faulkner’s text.

From the story of Roth Edmonds who is the son of Zack Edmonds, the master of
Lucas Beauchamp, we see that there was no apparent border between the whites and
blacks in his infancy as they lived almost as “brothers”--“They had fished and hunted
together, they had learned to swim in the same water, they had eaten at the same table in
the white boy’s kitchen and in the cabin of the negro’s mother; they had slept under the
same blanket before a fire in the woods” (54). Furthermore, the two houses-White's and
Negro's-were “interchangeable,” even before Roth Edmonds was out of infancy (106).
After sometime later, however, the notion of difference comes into play as a custom. It is
imposed upon Roth as something that he needs to acknowledge as he grows older in his
social circumstance, which he calls a curse.

Then one day the old curse of his fathers, the old haughty ancestral pride
based not on any value but on an accident of geography, stemmed not from
courage and honor but from wrong and shame, descended to him. He did not
recognise it then. He and his foster-brother, Henry, were seven years old.
They had finished supper at Henry’s house and Molly was just sending them
to bed in the room across the hall where they slept when there, when suddenly
he said, “I’m going home.”....And he remembered how they walked that half
mile to his house in the first summer dark, himself walking just fast enough
that the negro boy never quite came up beside him, entering the house...and
into the room with the bed and the pallet on the floor which they slept on
when they passed the night here...Then he went to the bed and lay down on it,
rigid, staring up at the dark ceiling even after he heard Henry raise onto one
elbow, looking toward the bed with slow and equable astonishment. “Are you
going to sleep up there?” Henry said. “Well, all right. This here pallet sleeps
all right to me, but i reckon I just as lief to if you wants to,” and rose and
approached the bed and stood over the white boy, waiting for him to move
over and make room until the boy said, harsh and violent though not loud:
“No!” (107-108)
The next morning, it becomes “shame” for him to hunt, sleep, and eat together with a Negro Henry. From this day on, they never slept in the same room again and never again ate at the same table and he did not go to Henry’s house. However, as he tries to rationalizes the hierarchical racial difference, Roth suffers from an enormous amount of grief and fury as he slept “in a rigid fury of the grief he could not explain, the shame he would not admit” at the night when he refused to sleep with Henry (109). Although he certainly knew that it was not “shame” to see Henry as a brother but “it was grief and...shame also” to abandon Henry because of his racial status, he had no other choice than to cut Henry out of his life once he was cursed (109).

Once it has descended, the curse is indelible. Roth can never go back to where he was, as his table was forever separated from the table of Henry and Lucas who “ain’t ashamed of nobody...not even [themselves]” (110). Although Roth realizes later on that his cruel deed was wrong, “it was too late then, forever and forever too late” (109). In the world of Faulkner, this curse, “the old ancestral pride based not on any value but on an accident of geography,” remains forever despite the characters’ and Faulkner’s efforts to lift it.  

**Lucas’s “white” attitude**

As Wittenberg claims, Lucas has been highly affected by “the white colonizers’ attitudes toward property--both land and, under slavery, human beings” (62). These are evident not only in his obsession with material gain, but also in his patriarchal assumption that male lineage is superior, and his possessive attitude toward the women in
his family, whom he often treats as if they were objects of exchange. In order to gain power, Lucas absorbs this sort of thinking although acquirement of legal power is always prevented because of his racial code.

Born in 1874, Lucas Beauchamp is sixty-seven years old who becomes “the oldest living McCaslin descendant still living on the hereditary land, who actually remembered old Buck and Buddy in the living flesh, older than Zack Edmonds even if Zack were still alive” (39). As “the oldest McCaslin descendant even though in the world’s eye he descended not from McCaslins but from McCaslin slaves,” he has venerated the experience of his grandfather, Old Carothers McCaslin as accomplishments (36). He shares with Cass Edmonds, the view of ancestors who “saw the opportunity and took it, bought the land, took the land...no matter how, held it to bequeath, no matter how, out of the old grant, the first patent, when it was a wilderness of wild beasts and wilder men, and cleared it, translated it into something to bequeath to his children, worthy of bequeathment for his descendants’ ease and security and pride and to perpetuate his name and accomplishments” (245). Unlike Isaac, Lucas believes in man’s right to own the land with admiration of his ancestor’s effort to cultivate the wilderness into a plantation land.

With admiration for the work of his ancestor, Lucas’s sense of pride is rooted in his recognition of himself as a worthy descendant of Old Carothers whose white blood mitigates his race. He thinks that “himself and old Cass coevals in more than spirit even, the analogy only the closer for its paradox:--old Cass a McCaslin only on his mother’s side and so bearing his father’s name though he possessed the land and its benefits and responsibilities; Lucas a McCaslin on his father’s side though bearing his mother’s name and possessing the use and benefit of the land with none of the responsibilities” (44).
Even though he admits that he is only a nigger in the world’s eye, he has a staunch sense of manhood and pride as a worthy descendant of the white patriarch, Old Carothers McCaslin. Therefore, when the town sheriff thinks that “Lucas was just another nigger,” Lucas still feels dignified and thinks that “the sheriff was a redneck without any reason for pride in his forbears nor hope for it in his descendants” (43).

The most remarkable attitude of Lucas in terms of “the white colonizer’s attitudes toward property” is his obsession with power and legality. Lucas is perpetually on the make, and much like his grandfather, he trusts in the law and social practice of power. As the beginning section of the narrative introduction of Lucas is abound with legal terms, much of the sections deal with the questions of legal rights of ownership, business and money, and the law (they even go to the county courthouse for the divorce settlement). These words appear in the beginning section of the story where Lucas attempts to entrap his “competitor,” George Wilkins, in order to eliminate George’s interfere with his “business” of running a still that Lucas has managed to run carefully and discreetly for twenty years without being recognized by Zack Edmonds or his son, Carothers or Old Cass Edmonds.

Although the law never stands by his side because the law is “rich white lawyers and judges and marshals talking to one another around their proud cigars, the haughty and powerful of the earth,” he remains powerful in the society (70). Shrewdly knowing that he is never able to gain any kind of power, Lucas runs an illegal business that leads him to be financially more powerful than any of the Edmonds as “he already had more money in the bank now than he would ever spend, more than Carothers Edmonds himself” (34). Furthermore, Lucas controls situations with his keen objective knowledge
about how the social and power structures function as he manages to maintain his illegal business and eliminate his competitor by maneuvering his master, Roth, for legal assistance --“The report would have come from Edmonds, the white man, because to the sheriff Lucas was just another nigger and both the sheriff and Lucas knew it” (43).

It is true, however, that his power can never be legalized. Therefore, one might say that it is too credulous to celebrate his “powerful” attitude, as he is, in some way, still imprisoned in the slave system. However, I refuse to finalize Lucas as an oppressed character. As Patricia Williams claims in her essay, “On Being the Object of Property,” “in law, rights are islands of empowerment. To be unrighted is to be disempowered.” Williams says “Rights contains images of power, and manipulating those images, either visually or linguistically, is central in the making and maintenance of rights.” In other words, “the legal language of rights becomes a reminder of the possibility of imaginary empowerment” (Davis 132). Thus, Williams’ statement enables my next discussion that considers Lucas as a powerful character who cracks the poisonous legacy of legalized oppression based upon the matter of color.

**Lucas’ resistance**

Lucas is vigorous, tough and rigorously self-assertive. Lucas shares idiosyncrasies with Carothers that is the masculine will to power and dominance. The irony is, however, that the enactment of masculine self-assertiveness, which normally taken by the whites, is now expressed in a black. Through the force of Lucas to act against the tradition, Faulkner exposes the decay of the society whose foundation is based on the right to property which is allowed for whites as an exclusive attribute.
Lucas is an inheritor of double lineages of McCaslin substance as his father is a son of the white patriarch, Old McCaslin and his own slave daughter Tomasina. Therefore, Lucas contains blood from both black and white lines. He is the very symbolic figure of the McCaslin family tree whose black and white lineages are intricately compounded. Roth Emonds looks at Lucas, at

the face which was not at all a replica even in caricature of his grandfather McCaslin’s but which had heired and now reproduced with absolute and shocking fidelity the old ancestor’s entire generation and thought--the face which...was a composite of a whole generation of fierce and underfeated young Confederate soldiers, embalmed and slightly mummified--and he thought with amazement and something very like horror: He is more like old Carothers than all the rest of us put together, including old Carothers. He is both heir and prototype simultaneously of all the geography and climate and biology which sired old Carothers and all the rest of us and our kind, myriad, countless, faceless, even nameless now except himself who fathered himself, intact and complete, contemptuous, as old Carothers must have been, of all blood black white yellow or red, including his own. (114)

As old Carothers McCaslin was “the strong and ruthless man” with “a cynical foreknowledge of his own vanity and pride and strength and a contempt for all his get” (244), Lucas retains a contemptuous attitude toward blacks, whites and even toward his master. He never calls Zack as his master. As a child, Roth realizes that “Lucas always referred to his father as Mr Edmonds, never as Mister Zack, as the other negroes did, and how with a cold and deliberate calculation he evaded having to address the white man by any name whatever when speaking to him” (101). Not only does Lucas feel contempt for Edmonds who was descended by a female line and five generations back21, but also he rejects the validity of Zack’s authority over his property of the land.
Despite the fact of his inability to gain a legal right over a land, for Lucas, the land is his own field, as he is the one who had been cultivating, plowing, planting and working it for forty-five years since before Cass Edmonds was born. Even though the legal right belongs to Edmonds, Lucas shows no respect to Edmonds as the owner of the land. But rather, Lucas simply ignores whatever advice Edmonds gives to him. Furthermore, he ignores “not only the advice but the very voice which gave it, as though the other had not spoken even” (36). Ignoring the voice of authority, Lucas takes a control over the land by being conversant with it--“He knew exactly where he intended to go, even in the darkness. He had been born on this land, twenty-five years before the Edmonds who now owned it. He had worked on it ever since he got big enough to hold a plow straight; he had hunted over every foot of it during his childhood and youth and his manhood too” (36). This is how he manages to run the illegal business in this land without being detected by anybody.

His refusal to accept the name that was given as a slave shows his resistance to the white authority. As we are told in the fourth section of “The Bear,” his full name is Lucas Quintus Carothers McCaslin Beauchamp. However, he changes the name as the narrator of that fourth section ponders:

not *Lucius Quintus* @c @c @c, but *Lucas Quintus*, not refusing to be called Lucius, because he simply eliminated that word from the name; not denying, declining the name itself, because he used three quarters of it; but simply taking the name and changing, altering it, making it no longer the white man’s but his own, by himself composed, himself selfprogenitive and nominate, by himself ancestored, as, for all the older ledgers recorded to the contrary. Old Carothers himself was (269).
By changing his name to Lucas Beauchamp, he makes his own name his own, not the white man’s. It is his claim that he does not belong to anybody except to himself.

Most notable resistance of all, of course, is Lucas’ repossession of his wife Molly through a duel. Shortly after Lucas’ white cousin Zack Edmonds became a widower, he brought Lucas’ young colored wife into his home ostensibly to nurse his young son. Edmonds has kept her for six months without thinking to return her, until Lucas goes to demand her back, realizing his uncontrollable outrage with a suspicion about the real reason. At first Edmonds refused to give up the woman by arrogating the traditional privilege allowed for white men to own a black woman, but then he “looked up again at the impassive, the impenetrable face under the broad, old-fashioned hat...’I’m going to be the man in this house,’ Lucas said. It was not stubborn. It was quiet: final. His stare was as steady as Edmond’s was, and immeasurably colder” (117). Lucas says, “I wants my wife. I needs her at home” (46). Lucas looks at the man who “could have been brothers, almost twin too,” and said “I’m a nigger....But I’m a man too. I’m more than just a man. The same thing made my pappy that made your grandmaw. I’m going to take her back” (46-7). Lucas took his wife home. Indeed, this is the most significant protest that Lucas made against authority of white master over slaves.

Lucas, however, is forced to accept the restrictions placed upon him by the racial codes of his society. When he decides to kill Edmonds, he expects severe punishment for disobeying his white master--”I would have paid. I would have waited for the rope, even the coal oil. I would have paid” (57). Furthermore, after the confrontation with Zack, he poses a significant question: “How to God...can a black man ask a white man to please not lay down with his black wife? And if he could ask it, how to God can the white man
promise that he won’t?” (58) Here, Lucas is duly aware of the fact that he is no more important than a slave. He cries out: “I aint got any fine big McCaslin farm to give up. All I got to give up is McCaslin blood that rightfully aint even mine or at least aint worth much since old Carothers never seemed to miss much what he give to Tomey that night that made my father” (56).

In this sense, Lucas still suffers from the traditional domination over blacks by whites. His arduous succumbing to the white superiority can never be complete, as Faulkner does not give the details of the resolution of the struggle between Lucas and Zack after the gun whose trigger is pulled by Lucas misfires.

Even though there can be no such thing as a complete emancipation from enslavement, we see some changes of the racially coded society in the novel. They are described as slight changes that are not made explicit but only suggested obscurely. In the case of Lucas, he changes remarkably after the incident that he risks his life to save the son of his master, Zack Edmonds. At the night of early spring when Zack’s wife was about to give birth to Roth, Lucas almost died of drowning himself in the river to fetch a doctor for Zack Edmonds.

Molly delivered the white child with none to help but Edmonds and then they knew that the doctor had to be fetched. So even before daylight he was in the water and crossed it, how he never knew, and was back by dark with the doctor, emerging from that death (At one time he had believed himself gone, a done for, both himself and the mule soon to be two more white-eyed and slack-jawed pieces of flotsam, to be located by the circling of buzzards, swollen and no longer identifiable, a month hence when the water went down.) which he had entered not for his own sake but for that of old Carothers McCaslin who had sired him and Zack Edmonds both, to find the white man’s wife dead and his own wife already established in the white man’s house. It was as though that on that louring and driving day he had crossed and then recrossed a kind of Lethe, emerging, being permitted to escape, buying as the
price of life a world outwardly the same yet subtly and irrevocably altered. (45-6)

Here, “that death” from which Lucas emerged reminds the readers of the death of Eunice who drowned herself in the river—Raped and insulted by the incest violated by her Master, Old Carothers McCaslin--, and who walked into the creek, “solitary, inflexible, griefless, ceremonial, in formal and succinct repudiation of grief and despair who had already had to repudiate belief and hope” (259). Although Eunice was not able to come back from the dark cold river, Lucas was “permitted to escape” from the dark flooded river, and comes back to life. After this incident, the way he sees a world changes, as a world becomes “outwardly the same yet subtly and irrevocably altered” to Lucas. This becomes a crucial change in Lucas as it triggers Lucas’s resistance to his white master who usurped Molly after his white wife died.

As seen above, there is a significant leap from Eunice to Lucas. As opposed to Eunice who was not allowed to have any power or a voice of her own, Lucas remains alive and starts to act against the injustice imposed upon blacks. He becomes even more furiously resistant to the absolute white authority. When he faces down Zack Edmonds to recapture Molly, he also faces down Old McCaslin. “I got to beat old Carothers,” he tells Edmonds, “Get your pistol” (53). He challenges the founder who put Eunice to the desperate suicide.

One of the very important functions of “Fire and the Hearth” is not only to provide a contrast to the character of Isaac McCaslin, as many critics remark, but also to provide a contrast to the characters like Eunice and Tomasina. The amelioration from the first generation of blacks in the McCaslin family tree to Lucas is no way unnoticeable,
even though the complete demolition of the racial hierarchy remains impossible in the novel. “Fire and the Hearth” shows that the world whose power structure is maintained by the color code no longer functions in the same way as it once did, as the boundaries between the blacks and whites undeniably gets blurred and unstabilized with the progression of the miscegenation. Lucas, as a hybrid of white and black, stands strong.
3. The characters that slip away

The divisions and borders are rarely achieved in normal function in *Go Down, Moses*, and this is because there is always something slipping away from the binary organizations. In the novel, there is an intriguing array of characters that are slipping away, or more accurately, escaping and fleeing from the violent cliché binary systems. It is their “impenetrability” that allows them to slip out and flee from the presumed categories and boundaries, by preventing to be categorized and narrated, and by remaining as something that “no white man could have read” (132). Here, black faces remain “impenetrable,” especially Lucas’ face, in being “impenetrable” to whites, “absolutely expressionless, impenetrable...absolutely blank, impenetrable...again the young white man saw a face absolutely impenetrable, a face absolutely impenetrable, even a little cold” (67, 69, 80). With this impenetrability, some characters threaten and intervene in white suppressive narratives, and confuse the power structures of race and gender.

Miscegenation becomes another key with which for these characters to threaten white male characters. As the entangled blood lines of white McCaslin and black Beauchapm shows, *Go Down, Moses* is nothing but mixing. Divisions and binaries are always unstable, as symbolized by the McCaslin slaves who are not-quite-black, but not-quite-white either. Moreover, white male characters tend to dysfunction as a patriarchal southern male, as Theophius and Amordeus live like a married couple (Amordeus prepares food with his apron on, which is clearly a “woman’s job” in this time and place), and Isaac relinquishes the inheritance from his ancestors, and fails to be a father. The whiteness itself becomes unstable and less powerful in *Go Down, Moses*. 
This chapter will examine how the characters jeopardize the world structured by the divisions and boundaries. In so doing, it focuses on some characters such as Tomey’s Turl, and Roth’s nameless mistress. By focusing on these seemingly ‘minor’ characters, it examines the potential failures for dominant white male characters over slaves and women. Second, it is shown how the “impenetrability” allocated to black characters demonstrates the “insuperable boundary” between whites and blacks, triggering the faulty interpretations of black minds by whites.

“Was”

As metaphors of the bear-hunt, the slave-hunt, and the treasure-hunt prevail in Go Down, Moses, the first story, “Was,” revolves around the metaphor of the slave-hunt, while it introduces some of the old McCaslins, including whites and blacks, set in the time right before the Civil War (Since Edmonds, who was born in 1850, is “nearly 9” at this time, it is 1859 in this story) as a seemingly warmly humorous story. Beginning with the chase of fox by dogs, it presents the ritualized chase of Tomey’s Turl who twice a year runs away to see a slave girl of Mr. Hubert Beauchamp, Tennie. This chasing, treeing, and hunting of Tomey’s Turl by his white masters, however, turns out to reveal failures for the dominant hunter because he no longer sets the rule of the hunting game. But rather, it is Tomey’s Turl who clandestinely takes control and sets rules of the hunting game.

Tomey’s Turl, “that damn white half-McCaslin,” almost reverses the relation between the hunter and the hunted (9). Indeed, it is Tomey’s Turl who controls the game of hunting. Without being captured, he continues to run away from his masters with his
physical strength that his masters do not have: When Uncle Buck finally gets the perfect chance to catch Tomey’s Turl, he is knocked down and carefully caught by Tomey’s Turl without getting hurt, and Tomey’s turl goes on to run away like “a white man” (9). As Davis claims, “he is represented as a rational decision maker who pursues a defined objective, and who strategizes on the basis of his knowledge of how the other players will behave” (Davis, 133). Knowing how the other players will behave, Tomey’s turl “went there every time he could slip off, which was about twice a year. He was heading for Mr Hubert Beauchamp’s place....Tomey’s Turl would go there to hang around Mr Hubert’s girl, Tennie, until somebody came and got him” (5).

He represents the fluidity of boundaries in the hunting game, not only by his tactical skill and knowledge, but also by disguising as “white.” Even though the narrative gives a special attention to Buck’s wearing a tie before chasing Tomey’s Turl as a sign of his intention to court Sophonsiba, Tomey’s Turl also dresses himself in his ‘white’ Sunday shirt. This detail is very important especially because he changes into a “white” shirt which reveals not only his intention to transform into a gentleman, but also his intention to transform into a “white.” Concomitantly, it is Tomey’s Turl who instigates Buck to wear a tie: “The only time he wore the necktie was on Tomey’s Turl’s account” (7). Being visually “white” when he is legally black, Tomey’s Turl slips away from discrete category of black.

Just like the game of running of Tomey’s Turl that reflects the master-slave relation, the poker game reveals the hierarchical power structure rooted in the society. In fact, it is a means of maintaining the power structure of owner and property. Thus the owner has to be not only a white, but also a male, and the property must be the rest, that is, blacks,
women, animals and lands. Indeed, the winning prizes of the poker game are blacks and women—Sophonsiba, Tennie, and Tomey’s Turl, with the assumption that slaves and women are interchangeable. It turns out, however that Tomey’s Turl, the property, becomes the one to control the game with an ironical ‘permission’ by Hubert Beauchamp: “Go to the back door and holler. Bring the first creature that answers, animal mule or human, that can deal ten card” (25). Mr. Hubert Beauchamp does not notice that Tomey’s Turl responds to the call and deals the cards until he asks “Who dealt these cards, Amordeus?” (28) Finally, Tomey’s Turl becomes visible with the reflection of the light:

He reached out and tilted the lamp-shade, the light moving up Tomey’s Turl’s arms that were supposed to be black but were not quite white, up his Sunday shirt that was supposed to be white but wasn’t quite either, that he put on every time he ran away just as Uncle Buck put on the necktie each time he went to bring him back, and on to his face; and Mr Hubert sat there, holding the lamp-shade and looking at Tomey’s Turl. Then he tilted the shade back down and took up his cards and turned them face-down and pushed them toward the middle of the table. “I pass, Amodeus,” he said. (28)

Although Tomey’s Turl rules the game of white men, the winning hand belongs to white men, since Tomey’s Turl returns to enslavement as a property. However, there is a difference as Davis claims (Davis New Essays 141). Even though he is still not completely free from enslavement, he now has Tennie whom he has been courting for a long time. Not only does he succeed to gain his desired object, but also he accomplishes the task as the ruler of games. In this case, it is not incongruous to say that Tomey’s Turl ‘wins,’ because he gets his objective of his runaway, Tennie, not emancipation.
In addition, we need to make it explicit that female characters play a significant role as well as Tomey’s Turl in the game of white men. In fact, these characters are the mastermind behind Tomey’s Turl’s runaway game. Bluntly, Tomey’s Turl notifies Cass:

‘I goner tell you something to remember: anytime you wants to git something done, from hoeing out a crop to getting married, just get the women folks to working at it. Then all you needs to do is set down and wait. You member that.’ (13)

Even though Tomey’s Turl’s utterance is minimal and coded, the readers sense that “the women folks” here indicate Ms Sophonsiba and Tennie. He also tells Cass earlier: ‘And nem you mind that neither. I got protection now. All I needs to do is to keep Old Buck from ketching me unto I gets the word’ (12). Even though the details of the conversation that ‘the women folks’ must have had with Tomey’s Turl are not written in the white male-oriented narratives, Tomey’s coded utterance reveals that the ‘winning’ of the game by Tomey’s Turl is a setup by ‘the women folks.’ Surprisingly (especially to white male characters who remain unknown of the truth), they were the “protection” of Tomey’s Turl (12). Indeed, their secret conspiracy ‘wins’ because Ms Sophonsiba and Tennie get their desired object, a husband.

This fact, however, never gets much attention from the narratives in the text, since the text never intentionally strives to investigate the mysterious utterances of Tomey’s Turl, but rather, it tries to keep them hidden and coded. Similarly, as for the conclusion of “Was,” the narrator hesitates to reveal the fact of the marriage of Uncle Buck and Ms Sophonsiba, and closes the ending with the completed escape of Uncle Buck from her. But why? How come they do not reveal the successful marriage of Isaac’s parents? It is
because, in *Go Down, Moses*, the narrative must be by males and about males as the stories only concern “the old days, the old time, and better men than these” (44), and continue to circulate among “not women, not boys and children, but only hunters” (184). Thus, it tries its best to ignore anything except “hunters.” Therefore, the narrator of “Was” strives to silence characters like Tomey’s Turl, Sophonsiba, and Tennie (she is not even allowed to speak for once) who are not “hunters” but women and slaves.

The text, however, fails to conceal the successful ‘winning’ of Tomey’s Turl with the help of “the women folks.” In fact, although the text tries hard to maintain the powerful white male narrative about white male hunters, it repeatedly fails to erase the persistent interventions by blacks and women. Although the black characters like Tomey’s Turl, Tennie are not allowed to give much utterance, they confuse Uncle Buck’s ritualized hunt into a “bear-country,” and they manage to attain their desired objects by taking control over the games (22). Moreover, the text fails to hide the dysfunctional domination over slaves and women by white male characters. The twin abolitionist brothers, Theophius (Uncle Buck) and Amordeus (Uncle Buddy), whom the text concerns as white “hunters,” fail to take control over their properties in the chase with slaves, women and animals (they are twirled by fox and dogs and tricked by Tomey’s Turl). Buck is even threatened by a woman: Ms Sophonsiba frightens Uncle Buck when she sends him the red ribbon for a good luck on his hunt, which only looks like “a little water moccasin” to Buck (15). Furthermore, he is frightened and gets worked up about her ‘queer’ appearance, especially her “roan tooth”:

…the earrings and beads clashing and jingling like little trace chains on a toy mule trotting and the perfume stronger too, like the earrings and beads
sprayed it out each time they moved and he watched the roan-colored tooth flick and glint between her lips (10-11).

Buck fails to act like a man, being threatened by a woman who only equals to “niggers and acres of land,” as Mr. Hubert does nothing less than equate his sister with “niggers and lands,” “telling how many more head of niggers and acres of land he would add” as Miss Sophonsiba’s marriage dowry (6).

Although Tomey’s Turl, Tennie, and Sophonsiba are equated to the properties to be chased and exchanged, they show the resistance to the complete subjugation and indicate the rarely articulated countermove for empowerment. In the case of Tomey’s Turl, he literally “slips off,” and challenges his masters to a game with his “saddle-colored hands” (26). With the help of ‘women folks,’ his visible transgression of being not-quite-black and not-quite-white, the game culminates in his win.

**Delta Autumn**

Roth’s mistress, another hybrid character seen in “Delta Autumn,” appears to hunt Roth with his baby in her arms. This encounter with Roth’s mistress is indeed, as Michael Millgate claims, “the point at which all the threads of the novel seem to cross, at which the whole pattern of the book emerges with final and absolute clarity.” At this point, Ike realizes that his “freedom” is not accomplished, yet, that he can never run away from the doomed past of old Carothers’ sin and shame which is now duplicated by Roth who is the legitimate heir of the McCaslin clan when she tells Ike that she is the granddaughter of James Beauchamp. He undeniably becomes aware of that the past is not yet “was,” or not even “almost” was, but it is still “is.”
This nameless woman’s body is “passing/overpassing” in several ways as Roberts claims (Roberts 85): She is a woman but wears man’s clothes (appearing “in a man’s hat and a man’s slicker and rubber boots”), and she is ‘legally’ black but she looks white (Ike describes her as “queerly colorless”) (340). Ike can tell she is ‘legally’ black only when she mentions about her aunt taking care of another family’s laundry, which is obviously a ‘Negro’s job.’ Isaac is simply threatened by her appearance: “Maybe in a thousand or two thousand years in America...But not now! Not now!” and he screams to her “You’re a nigger!” (344). It is clear that Ike struggles against his fear of mixing represented by this nameless mistress: she seems not-quite-black, not-quite-woman with ‘white’ tongue—Ike says that “You sound like you have been to college even. You sound almost like a Northerner even, not like the draggle-tailed women of these Delta pecker-woods” (343). As James Snead claims, she endangers “all expected figures of social division” (206). Ike only responds to her to stay out of his territory—“Then go,” he said. Then he cried again in that thin not loud and grieving voice: Get out of here! I can do nothing for you! Cant nobody do nothing for you!” (344). He simply suggests her to go back North, and to live as a black.

Go back North. Marry: a man in your own race. That’s the only salvation for you—for a while yet, maybe a long while yet. We will have to wait. Marry a black man. You are young, handsome, almost white; you could find a black man who would see in you what it was you saw in him, who would ask nothing of you and expect less and get even still less than that, if it’s revenge you want. Then you will forget all this, forget it ever happened, that he ever existed— (346)
Out of his insuperable fear of the dilution of the presumed boundary, he advises her to go back to North, which reveals his attempt to maintain the boundary that could separate blacks from whites.

The very symbolic act of Ike’s giving the hunting horn to her baby, which he has inherited from General Compson, signifies another gesture of his disposition. However, at the same time, this action is paralleled to Old McCaslin’s action of giving Tomey’s Turl one thousand dollars to compensate his “sin and shame.” Ironically, Ike helps Roth to treat his mistress just like old McCaslin treated Eunice and Tomey, denying her and her son, buying his way out of trouble by leaving money to Tomey’s Turl. As she leaves, Isaac expresses his fear of miscegenation:

This land which man has deswamped and denuded and derivered in two generations so that white men can own plantations and commute every night to Memphis and black men own plantations and ride in jim crow cars to Chicago to live in millionaires’ mansions on Lakeshore Drive, where white men rent farms and live like niggers and niggers crop on shares and live like animals, where cotton is planted and grows man-tall in the very cracks of the sidewalks, and usury and mortgage and bankruptcy and measureless wealth, Chinese and African and Aryan and Jew, all breed and spawn together until no man has time to say which one is which nor cares. . . . No wonder the ruined woods I used to know dont cry for retribution! he thought: The people who have destroyed it will accomplish its revenge. (347)

Isaac expresses his fear of the possible future that all the racial divisions and boundaries are perplexed. The protest, however, might be too late. As Snead claims, the mixed typography of italics and roman type seem to admit miscegenation Ike repudiates (207). Although Ike thought he was “[seeking] figures of merging and unity rather than figures of segregation and division,” he denies miscegenation and clings onto “figures of
segregation and division,” since he rejects Roth’s mistress who symbolizes the merging and mixture of race (Snead 180).

Ike, however, fails to silence Roth’s black mistress. Unlike silenced characters like Eunice and Tomey, this Negro mistress verbally intervenes in Ike’s speech, blaming Ike for relinquishing his right to succession and handing over his right to Roth, which, she believes, spoiled Roth:

I would have made a man of him. He’s not a man yet. You spoiled him. You, and Uncle Lucas and Aunt Mollie. But mostly you….When you gave to his grandfather that land which didn’t belong to him, not even half of it by will or even by law (343).

Furthermore, when Ike tells her to go back North to marry a black man, she refutes him by saying: “Old man,” she said, “have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you dont remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?” (346) Her utterance on love reminds him of the time when he read the ledgers and knew that old McCaslin committed incest and miscegenation—“But there must have been love he thought. Some sort of love. Even what he would have called love: not just an afternoon’s or a night’s spittoon” (258). Here, he realizes that he is rejecting the “love” like Old McCaslin did.

Compared to Eunice and Tomasina, the black characters in “Was” and “Delta Autumn” clearly have a difference in terms of their amount of utterances and appearances. The text apparently allows more power to Roth’s Negro mistress, since she verbally intervenes in Ike’s speech and shakes his world. Although she is not yet fully emancipated as she “cooked for [Roth] and looked after his clothes” just like a negro
(341), and she accepts Roth’s rejection and the money as “Honor and code” (345), she clearly stands strong while Isaac is left alone in his cabin like a corpse: “the blanket once more drawn to his chin, his crossed hands once more weightless on his breast” (348).

**Pantaloon in Black**

James Early claims that “Pantaloon in Black” gives to the readers “a sense of difficulty of being black in a society dominated by white” (Early 11). Indeed, it tells a moving story of Rider, another black tenant of Carothers Edmonds (134), who has kept a fire on the hearth since the wedding night “as the tale told how Uncle Lucas Beauchamp...had done” until he lost his wife, Mannie (134). Seeing her apparition, he roves through violence and of “quiet beauty” (Early 11), by working and drinking until he finds a way to overcome the “insuperable barrier” between him and Mannie and a way to join her: “Den lemme go wid you, honey” (136). Unfortunately, his enormous grief over the loss of his love cannot be understood, just like his heavy Negro dialect prevents readers from entering his mind. In fact, the “insuperable barrier” is not only between Rider and Mannie, but also between blacks and whites, as the delicate feelings of Rider which are not made explicit but only suggested through violence and desperate actions remain “impenetrable” to whites.

Although Rider’s face is not explicitly described as impenetrable like the other black characters, he is “impenetrable.” This impenetrability troubles the white deputy to understand Rider’s unreadable mind.

His wife dies on him. All right. But does he grieve? He’s the biggest and busiest man at the funeral. Grabs a shovel before they even got the box into
the grave they tell me, and starts throwing dirt onto her faster than a slip scraper could have done it. But that’s all right...maybe that’s how he felt about her. There ain’t any law against a man rushing his wife into the ground, provided he never had nothing to do with rushing her to the cemetery too. But here the next day he’s the first man back at work....the first man on the job, when McAndrews and everybody else expected him to take the day off since even a nigger couldn’t want no better excuse for a holiday than he had just buried his wife, when a white man would have took the day off out of pure respect no matter how he felt about his wife, when even a little child would have had sense enough to take a day off when he would still get paid for it too. But not him. (150-151)

According to the deputy, it is ‘normal’ for white men to take the day off to mourn and it is insane not to, without a slight idea that, for Rider, it is intolerable to stay in the house where there is no longer any room to breathe in “which the walls of his house had had” (143). Not understanding the deep sorrow hidden in Rider’s actions, the deputy attributes his ‘insane’ actions to him being black:

Them damn niggers...I swear to godfrey, it’s a wonder we have as little trouble as we do. Because why? Because they ain’t human. They look like a man and they walk on their hind legs like a man, and they are understanding you, at least now and then. But when it comes to the normal human feelings and sentiments of human beings, they might just as well be a damn herd of wild buffaloes.” (149-150)

The word “human beings” here indicates “white men,” while blacks equate with “a damn herd of wild buffaloes.” Being biased by the savage racial stereotype, the deputy is unable to read Rider’s mind.

The “impenetrability” attributed to blacks is encouraged only through the divisions and boundaries drawn between blacks and whites. With the biased assumptions that blacks are different from whites and blacks are inferior to whites, blacks and whites are categorized into two polarized classes; good and evil. Therefore, the real picture of blacks
is always hidden by the barrier as “impenetrable,” as something “which no white man could have read” (132). Something that slips out of the binary remains impenetrable here.

Although his rebellion comes out of his desire to death, Rider transgresses the unwritten rule between whites and blacks. Rider resists accepting the ‘rule’ of the crooked dice game that allows white man’s cheating as customary. According to the uncompromising sheriff’s deputy,

> the same crap game where Birdsong has been running crooked dice on them mill niggers for fifteen years, goes straight to the same game where he had been peacefully losing a probably steady average ninety-nine percent of his pay ever since he got big enough to read the spots on them miss-out dice. (151)

This time, however, Rider gives voice to the cheating, thinking: “Ah’m snakebit. Ah kin pass wid anything” (148). Rider does not condone Birdsong’s cheating, which is to say, Rider violates the untold ‘custom’ to condone the crimes committed against blacks by whites. It is his rebellion against the white-black power relations in the social world, as Rider gives voice to the cheating of a white man and kills him by cutting off his throat. Unquestionably, there is retribution. Rider is killed and lynched by white, as we find “the prisoner on the following day, hanging from the bell-rope in a negro schoolhouse about two miles from the sawmill” (149). As an unwritten education for blacks, the lynching serves to remind blacks that blacks must obey any customs and rules that white men set.

What is ironic is that Rider desires to be lynched to death because it is intolerable for him to live without Mannie. Mannie’s death torments him, as if he was “engaged without arms in prolonged single combat” (138). Thus, after the jailor does not shoot him, Rider makes his death inevitable. He is well aware that the Birdsongs would never let
him get away as the deputy says that even if Rider had fled, “the simplest way to find him would be just to stay close behind them Birdsong boys” (152). Rider’s lynching is his suicidal, in order to “quit thinking” about Mannie’s death.

laughing, with tears big as glass marbles running across his face and down past his ears and making a kind of popping sound on the floor like somebody dropping bird eggs, laughing and laughing and saying, ‘Hit look lack Ah just cant quit thinking. Look lack Ah just cant quit.’ (154)

“Go Down, Moses”

The “insuperable barrier” that we see in “Pantaloon in Black” recurs in “Go Down, Moses.” Preventing whites to understand and respect the deep grief of blacks, the barrier stands erect between whites and blacks. Here, the barrier stands between Gavin Stevens, and Miss Worsham and Molly who “grew up together as sisters would” (357). Gavin Stevens, the lawyer graduated from Harvard with Ph.D, continues to fail in his judgments of Miss Worsham and Molly’s grief over the death of Samuel Beaucham whose face “was black, smooth, impenetrable” (351).

As in the case of Rider, it is blacks’ grief that is not understood in “Go Down, Moses.” Even though Gavin Stevens’ act has been helpful, his judgments have proved wrong over and over again. Stevens is just astonished when Miss Worsham says “[Mollie] will want to take him back home with her,” without a slight sensitivity to realize Mollie’s respect for the ritual of a proper funeral (358). Thus Stevens goes on to say “They will furnish a box,” thinking that Samuel Beauchamp is just “a murderer... [who] shot that policeman in the back. A bad son of a bad father” (357) To Molly, however, he is not just another bad nigger: “He is her grandson, Mr Stevens. When she
took him to raise, she gave him my father’s name—Samuel Worsham. Not just a box, Mr Stevens” (358).

His inability to understand and sympathize the grief of Molly and her family becomes most explicit when he goes to their house. Although he is brought to the bedroom upstairs where everybody gets together to mourn Samuel’s death, he is unable to take part in the family ritual morning, but he finds the chanting impenetrable to his comprehension and leaves as if he was “almost running” (362):

“Sold my Benjamin,” she said. “Sold him in Egypt.”
“Sold him in Egypt,” Worsham said.
“Roth Edmonds sold my Benjamin.”
“Sold him to Pharaoh.”
“Sold him to Pharaoh and now he dead.”
“I’d better go,” Stevens said. (362)

He feels the urgent need to go outside: “Soon I will be outside, he thought. Then there will be air, space, breath” (362). As he leaves, he still hears the chanting by Molly and Hamp, and her family. At the front door, Stevens apologizes to Miss Worsham: “I’m sorry...I ask you to forgive me. I should have known. I shouldn’t have come.” For Gavin Stevens, it is unimaginable that the chanting was the ritual mourning of their grief. “It’s all right,” Miss Worsham said: “It’s our grief” (363).

While the impenetrability explicates the inability of whites to read and interpret black people, the dead body of “impenetrable” Samuel Beauchamp breaks down boundaries. While the readers are not allowed to infiltrate the mind of Samuel Beauchamp whose eyes have “seen too much” (351), as he appears alive only in the first few pages and then remains quiet as he is dead, his dead body becomes the center of
attentions, uniting blacks and whites, men and women, and men and children. As Dirk Kuyk claims, it does not only unite the black (Beauchamp) and white family (Worsham), but it creates “the communal anonymity of brotherhood” (246) in the ritual of mourning (Kuyk 178). When Samuel’s coffin is unloaded from the train, there are “Negroes and whites both” (363), and it turns out to be an assemblage of “the idle white men and youths and small boys and probably half a hundred Negroes, men and women too” (363).

While the dead body dissipates the boundaries, Mollie challenges the casual racism and the world that disdains and neglects blacks. She insists that the newspaper must contain all the story of Samuel Beauchamp--“Is you gonter put hit in de paper? I wants hit all in de paper. All of hit” (365). It certainly not for herself, since she cannot read, and not to whitewash an offense of her grandson, but for the record to exist: the record of Samuel Beauchamp who is assumed only to be the Negro murderer: “the slain wolf” (364). Here, we need to consider the reason why the shortest and least related of the seven stories of the novel gives the novel its title, as if “insisting on the centrality of its marginal situation” (Matthews 22). From Eunice’s suicide to Rider’s death by lynching and Samuel’s death, the grief of blacks have been neglected and not even been comprehended. As the text of the ledgers, “that chronicle which was a whole land in miniature…the entire South” (280), omits Eunice’s death that is "solitary, inflexible, griefless” without “belief and hope” (259), the grief of blacks have been untold and unrecorded. Mollie, however, challenges the injustice imposed upon blacks by keeping a record of Samuel Beauchamp’s death to be memorized, unforgotten and mourned. She issues a call to mourning and she asks us to remember.
Notes


8 Jeseph R. Urgo claims that the world Faulkner created in his writings is nothing less than “a sustained squaring off with his time and place.” (Urgo xvi)
Edouard Glissant claims that Faulkner’s work is about “digging up roots in the South,” where the roots begin to act like a rhizome (Poetics 21). Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, Glissant theorizes the notion of root as “unique, a stock taking all upon itself and killing all around it,” while the rhizome as “an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently” (Poetics 11). In sum, the root is “absolute” and totalizing, whose growth is structured from a single central point, while the rhizome challenges the totalitarian root by growing indistinguishably both as root and stem: it is relative.

His attempt to set the slaves free is paralleled to the story of Moses, the religious leader who releases Israelites with God’s bidding. In fact, Ike’s relation to God is one of the most significant themes in “The Bear.” Ike asserts to Cass in the commissary that he was chosen by God— Ike claims that “He saw the land already accursed even as Ikkemotubbe and Ikkemotubbe’s father old Issetibbeh and old Issetibbeh’s fathers too held it, already tainted even before any white man owned it by what Grandfather and his kind, his fathers,” and He “saw that only by voiding the land for a time of Ikkemotubbe’s blood and substituting for it another blood, could He accomplish His purpose” (248). Thus He brought the white man to the land, bringing in one evil to destroy another evil, just as “doctors use fever to burn up fever, poison to slay poison,” and He chose Carothers McCaslin, “the seed progenitive of the three generations He saw it would take to set at least some of His lowly people free” (248).
He also claims that: “I cant repudiate it. It was never mine to repudiate. It was never Father’s and Uncle Buddy’s to bequeath me to repudiate because it was never Grandfather’s to bequeath them to bequeath me to repudiate because it was never old Ikkemotubbe’s to sell to Grandfather for bequeathment and repudiation” (246).

The image of freedom “in embryo” can be seen in Go Down, Moses several times as Eric Sundquist claims (See The House Divided, p. 131-159). For example, the big house that was given to slaves by Buck and Buddy exposes an ambiguous state of slaves, that is, the status of half-slave and half-free, as the big house had a locked door at front, but also had “broken windows” and “no hinged back door,” from which slaves could have had run away (251).


Evans claims that “The Bear” is about the “the invention of nature” (180). In other words, it is a process which Ike invests his hunting experience with a special meaning. Evan argues that Isaac projects “a distinctively American set of ideas” that originates Puritans (184). Referring to Perry MIlle’s “Errand into Wilderness,” Evans says that, for Puritans, American wilderness was the privileged place of divinity, as opposed to a civilized (spoiled) city, specifically for His chosen people in order to build a covenanted community, the New World, while “Nature somehow...had effectually taken the place of the Bible: by her unremitting influence, she...would guide aright the faltering steps of a young republic” (Miller 211). For Evans, these American preconceptions which entitles
Nature as a divine land of redemption specifically designed for a “chosen people,” are rooted in Ike’s view that is based on “the essential providential assumptions of epistemological privilege and special election that have subtended that [American] history from the beginning” (194).

Boon “had never hit anything bigger than a squirrel that anybody ever knew, except the negro woman that day when he was shooting at the negro man” (225), but he becomes the one who foolishly destroys the smoothness of the wilderness.

In striated space, we see things in terms of objects and their representations, while “forms organize a matter” (A Thousand Plateaus 479). In smooth space however, perception changes, and becomes “based on symptoms and evaluations rather than measures and properties” (A Thousand Plateaus 479). Deleuze and Guattari say that it becomes “haptic rather than optical perception” (A Thousand Plateaus 479). In smooth space, perception becomes free from the distorted vision and recollection, and the connection of things is expressed; whereas striated space imposes distinctions and limits with perception based on “measures and properties.”

Jeremy Bentham states that “that which in the natural state was an almost invisible thread, in the social state becomes a cable. Property and law are born together. Before laws were made there was no property; take away laws and property ceases. The organs of the law are symbiotic with property” (138)

See Chapter 1 about Isaac’s failure to lift the curse on the land.


21 “Lucas was descended not only by a male line but in only two generations” (101)

22 It should be pointed out that Lucas’s dilemma regarding to his wife shows his patriarchal attitude toward woman. It is only one of particular instances of the conflict of attitudes between women and men in the novel.

23 It is interesting that Zack’s wife, a white woman has no meaning here: “It was as though the white woman had not only never quitted the house, she had never existed--“the object which they buried in the orchard two days later...a thing of no moment, unsanctified, nothing; his own wife, the black woman, now living alone in the house which old Cass had built for them when they married, keeping alive on the hearth the fire he had lit there on their wedding day” (46).
24 See William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country, p.253-254. He claims that they are the most important figures in Go Down, Moses, asserting their contrasts in terms of race and idiosyncrasies toward the harsh society.

25 Deleuze once remarked that “society is something that never stops slipping away” (Foucault and the Prison 271). In society, “[there] is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine: things that are attributed to a ‘change in values,’ the youth, women, the mad, etc.” (Thousand Plateaus 216). Something is always being lost and created.

Works Cited


