
Dialogism in *Go Down, Moses*

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Abstract:

William Faulkner presented his reader a multicolored South by echoing vividly the variously inflected voices of the old South in his Yoknapatawpha novels. This multiplicity of voices contributes to what Bakhtin called the ‘symphonic theme’. In *Go Down, Moses*, the complex mosaic of themes and histories remains a vivid and moving statement on the wall of racial misunderstanding, the nature of family, the idea of property and the role of man in nature. Besides displaying the vivid literary dialogues of different characters, Faulkner throws into focus the infinite ‘heteroglossia’ of his time in provoking his mythical Yoknapatawpha kingdom, and underlying this multiplicity of voices, each is constantly in confrontation with another, creating tension, bringing the reader into the internal force of his work. This internal force, termed by Bakhtin as ‘dialogism’ – the constant, endless state of intentional and value-laden dialogue into which every word enters (inter and intra language dialogue), enables the reader to ‘hear’ the different opinions and strives of characters and to let the reader make their own judgments. Within this internal force of dialogism, the voices of Faulkner’s South are interwoven, ringing through this sprawling tale of the McCaslin clan and the complexity of Faulkner’s ‘world view’ finds its fullest expression. For Bakhtin, the power of novelistic language is precisely its ability to stage the conflicts that occur when such a variety of voices enter into dialogue with one another. Faulkner is indeed a master in governing various voices and conflicts. Rather than resolving these conflicts through a single artistic vision, he retains the tensions that exist between different socioeconomic groups of the old South. The novel is thus more than the creation of his; it becomes a record of his era. The study in this essay shows that in *Go Down, Moses*, dialogism plays the key part as a style which overrides various voices and a myth which contain their story. It is the tensions held by dialogism that bestow an eternal vitality and charm to this novel.

Key Words: Dialogism, Heteroglossia, Multiplicity, Symphonic Theme

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William Faulkner (1897-1962), a renowned Mississippi writer and the Nobel Prize-winning novelist, is acclaimed throughout the world as one of the twentieth century's greatest writers. During the period of his greatest artistic achievement, from *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929 to *Go Down, Moses* (hereafter abbreviated as GDM) in 1942, Faulkner accomplished in a little over a decade more artistically than most writers do in a lifetime. In his Yoknapatawpha novels, Faulkner not only presented his reader a multicolored South but also echoed it vividly with multiplicity of variously inflected voices of the old South that contributes to what Bakhtin called the 'symphonic theme'¹. In his 'little postage stamp of native soil'², Faulkner 'invented voices for characters ranging from sages to children, criminals, the insane, even the dead—sometimes all within one book. He developed, beyond his ventriloquism, his own unmistakable narrative voice, urgent, intense, highly rhetorical.'³ In a letter to Cowley, he wrote: 'I listen to the voices, and when I put down what the voices say, it's right. Sometimes I don't like what they say, but I don't change it.'⁴

As Faulkner used the metaphor of voice to describe his representation of Yoknapatawpha and its people, the ways how he represented these voices are worthy of noting: besides displaying the vivid literary dialogues of different characters, he portrayed the life of the Old South as a multivoiced world full of tensions, conflicts, confrontations, resistances and compromises, in which people from different groups and classes, man and nature, the author and the reader find their own expressions and have their say. There lies in his novels a kind of internal force that is constantly at work, a force termed by Bakhtin as 'dialogism'⁵—the constant, endless state of intentional and value-laden dialogue into which every word enters (inter and intra language dialogue) – that enables the reader to 'hear' the different opinions and strives of characters and to let the reader make their own judgments. According to Bakhtin, language is never to be defined in linguistic terms. It is, by nature, verbal ideological, characterized by social heteroglossia. Or in his own words, 'we are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as concrete opinion, insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life.'⁶ For Bakhtin, language is a social practice, a world-view. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin found that 'Dostoevsky's characters assert their own world-views not only in relation to other characters, not only in relation to the reader, but even in relation to the author.'⁷ The same is true with GDM, in which the voices of Faulkner's South – black and white, men and women, human and nature, the author and the reader, comic

¹ In 'Discourse in the Novel', Bakhtin, uses this term as a metaphor to refer to the peculiarity of Dostoevsky's art, characterized by the diversity and stratification of languages or voices to be found within his works.

² Rubinstein (1998), 533.

³ Baym (1979), 1693.

⁴ Cowley (1966), 21-22.

⁵ Bakhtin (2001), 1195.

⁶ Bakhtin (2001), 1198.

⁷ Harland (2005), 159-160.

and tragic – are interwoven, ringing through this sprawling tale of the McCaslin clan and the complexity of Faulkner’s ‘world view’ finds its fullest expression.

GDM is a collection of seven short stories (of them, ‘The Fire and the Hearth’ and ‘The Bear’, are long), though seemingly fragmented, but actually a unified group of stories, which interrelate on a number of levels, and which deal with many of the same characters and places, most specifically the McCaslin plantation and the descendants of Carothers McCaslin. The complex mosaic of themes and histories that emerges from this novel remains a vivid and moving statement on the wall of racial misunderstanding, the nature of family, the idea of property and the role of man in nature. In this novel, Faulkner, the southern chronotope, throws into focus the infinite ‘heteroglossia’ – the multiplicity of variously inflected voices comprising any given culture, as Bakhtin suggested – of his time in provoking his mythical Yoknapatawpha kingdom, and underlying this multiplicity of voices, each is constantly in confrontation with another, creating tension, bringing the reader into the internal dialogism of his work and endowing a long-lasting charm to his stories.

1. DIALOGISM REFLECTING THE WALL OF RACIAL MISUNDERSTANDING

Language, as Bakhtin explains, is to be seen as inherently ‘dialogic’: it can be grasped only in terms of its inevitable orientation towards another. It is to be seen less as an abstract, fixed system of langue suggested by Saussure(1959)⁸, than as an active speech, modified and transformed in meaning by the variable social tones, valuations and connotation it condense within itself in specific social conditions. Since such valuations and connotations are constantly shifting, since the ‘linguistic community’ is in fact a heterogeneous society composed of many conflicting interests, language for Bakhtin is full of struggle and contradiction⁹. In GDM, the struggle and conflicts between the white and the black, men and women, human and nature are portrayed by juxtaposing their contrasting ideas and actions, thus to reveal a kind of ‘great dialogue’¹⁰ between these conflicting social groups, classes, individuals and discourses.

Like most of Faulkner’s novels, the exploration of the complex relationships between the white and black races remains a major theme in GDM, in which the white race’s misunderstanding and ill treatment of the black is held responsible for the conflicts between these two races. ‘Was’, the first story in the novel starts with a humorous tone, but it ranges from the farcical to the profound: a young child, McCaslin Edmonds rode with his Uncle Buck to the neighboring plantation of Hubert Beauchamp, in pursuit of an escaped slave – Tomey’s Turl, who was actually Uncle Buck’s and Buddy’s half brother and ran away frequently to visit Tennie (a

⁸ Saussure (1959), 9-15. According to Saussure, the Swiss linguist, language is ‘a system of signs that express ideas’, and it may be divided into two components: *langue*, referring to the abstract system of language that is internalized by a given speech community, and *parole*, the individual acts of speech and the ‘putting into practice of language’.

⁹ Eagleton(2004), 101-102.

¹⁰ Bakhtin, qtd in Xiao(1997), 158.

slave of the Beauchamp's with whom he was in love). When Uncle Buck saw Tomey's Turl on his horse Black John, he 'wooped once from the woods, running on sight, then Black John came out of the trees, driving, soupled out flat and level as a hawk, with Uncle Buck right up behind his ears now and yelling so that they looked exactly like a big black hawk with a sparrow riding it...' ¹¹ In the vivid description of Uncle Buck's hunting Tomey's Turl, the voices from both the white and the black are heard explicitly: the whites do not take the black people as human beings at all; rather, they take them as their property, their prey and tools for production. The black people, however, are struggling hopelessly under such a pressurized life.

More evidences of the white's misunderstanding and ill treatment of the black can be found in this novel. In 'The Bear', Isaac happened to look through the old ledger books of Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy and found an appalling fact: Tomey, the slave who Carothers McCaslin took as a lover and the mother of Turl, may also have been Carothers McCaslin's daughter by another slave, Eunice. Eunice committed suicide shortly before Turl's birth. In the ledger book, his uncle wrote: '23 Jun 1833 Who in hell ever heard of a nigger drowning him self' (204). Obviously, for the white people, the 'niggers' are but lower animals, having neither feeling nor thinking ability; the 'niggers' are tools for them to use whenever they need and discard whenever they are no longer useful because they are of an inferior race. The protesting voice of the black people, although physically silent, is vehement in Eunice: she is ashamed of the graceless behavior of Carothers McCaslin and hopeless in front of the humiliation crashed on her head. If the above evidences of the white people's misunderstanding and ill treatment of the black people are implied by the narrator's description, rather than expressed directly by the whites, then in 'Pantaloons in Black', what the white sheriff's deputy tells his wife about the lunatic Negro, Rider who, after his wife died, killed Birdsong, a security guard at the mill where Rider worked, is an open declaration of the white's discrimination against the black race:

'Them damn niggers,' he said. 'I swear to godfrey, it's a wonder we have as little trouble with them as we do. Because why? Because they aint human. They look like a man and they walk on their hind legs like a man, and they can talk and you can understand them and you think they are understanding you, at least now and then. But when it comes to the normal human feelings and sentiments of human being, they might just as well be a damn herd of wild buffaloes. Now you take this one today -' (121-122).

However, the relationships between the white and black are far more complicated, as it involves multivoices within either of the two sides. On the side of the whites, a different voice is exposing the other side of their feelings: that of guiltiness and the tendency to escape from the guilt by some compensating means. In 'The Bear', the protagonist, Isaac McCaslin, relinquished his inheritance to escape the guilt of wealth derived from slavery. However, he was never free of racism and recognized it in himself and felt it will take many generations to overcome. His wife was angry with him and refused to sleep with him. That's why he is

¹¹ Faulkner(1987), 13. All of the quotations of the novel in this essay are from this edition.

‘husband but no father, unwidowed but without a wife’ (215). Looking through the old ledger books, Isaac McCaslin realized the incest committed by Old Carothers McCaslin, his grandfather, who ‘bequeath a thousand dollars to the infant’(250), the son he had with his slave-daughter, as a way to bear ‘the consequence of the act ... flinging almost contemptuously, as he might a cast-off hat or pair of shoes, the thousand dollars which could have had no more reality to him under those conditions than it would have to the Negro, the slave who would not even see it until he came of age...’(205). For Isaac, his grandfather’s compensation ‘was cheaper than saying My Son to a nigger’ ‘[e]ven if My Son wasn’t but just two words’(205). Ike’s uncles Buck and Buddy, who kept the old ledger books, also made some compensation after their father, Old Carothers McCaslin, was buried – they ‘moved out of the tremendously-conceived, the almost barnlike edifice which he had not even completed, into a one-room log cabin... and domiciled all the slaves in the big house...’(200).

The misunderstanding and ill treatment of the black and the compensations the McCaslins made reveal the deep contradictions in the minds of the white: on the one hand, they believe in the superiority of the white race; on the other, they feel guilty for the crime they committed to the black people. This perhaps can be derived from the deep-rooted influence of Puritanism in the Christian whites, many of which took America as the second ‘Garden of Eden,’ the second chance of having a paradise because it was a new and pure land reserved for them by God.¹² However, as soon as they settled down in their new ‘Paradise’, they turned it into the hell of the black. When the crime they committed to the black became more and more appalling, some of them were conscious-stricken and wanted to do something as a redeemer to save indulgence from God. In GDM, Ike is a typical redeemer and sacrificial figure who sacrifices himself to compensate the evil deeds his forefathers have conducted to the black by relinquishing all his property and living an extremely simply life. He takes himself as the Isaac, son of Abraham in the Bible, who was chosen by God as a ‘burnt offering’ and almost slain by his father.¹³ However, what he says and does was too impotent – for his discontent with the system of private property, his escapism from the reality and living back in the remote past is but a passive response to racism; no effective measures have been taken to change the situation and eradicate the racism of his time. The one that really incarnates Faulkner’s humanity is certainly Gavin Stevens – the white lawyer in ‘Go Down, Moses’, the last story of the seven in GDM – who helps Molly and Miss Worsham bring Samuel Beauchamp’s body back from Illinois. Gavin Stevens, regarded as Faulkner’s alter ego¹⁴ speaks out Faulkner’s condemnation of the cruelty of slavery and humanistic ideas of human equality.

Despite of the dominant voices of the white seeking to achieve ideological supremacy, the voices of dissent, resistance, and contradiction are also resounding – the black people have never ceased asking for equal rights and better treatment by the whites. Rider in ‘Pantaloons in

¹² Xiao (1997), 191.

¹³ Genesis 22:3.

¹⁴ Rubinstein (1998), 557.

Black', for instance, displays his rebellious spirit by cutting the throat of a white-night watchman who runs a crooked dice game for Negroes, for which he pays too high a price, as he is then killed by someone unknown (120). In 'The Fire and the Hearth', Old Lucas Beauchamp, a mixed-race tenant farmer on the old McCaslin plantation now owned by Carothers Edmonds, has a sense of self-esteem as well as courage. Zack Edmonds's wife died in childbirth, and Lucas's wife moved to the big house to raise the baby. It was after more than half a year when Lucas angrily demanded his wife's return. 'I'm a nigger,' he declared bravely, 'But I'm a man too' (42). He nearly killed Zack Edmonds, who had been his playmate and friend as a boy, but the gun failed to fire. Besides the resistant voices from the black, there are, however, voices of reconciliation and compromise. Molly is a typical example of this kind. Modeled after the author's 'Mammy', Caroline Barr (1840-1940), who was born in slavery and who gave to his family fidelity and to his childhood an immeasurable devotion and love, Faulkner expresses his sympathy for her sufferings and appreciation of her virtues. Ironically, his nostalgic feeling for the life of the Old South and his illusion that the black slaves and their masters may coexist harmoniously becomes detectable.

In GDM, the conflicts and contradictions between different races and classes, in individuals and discourses of the narrator and even the author, are juxtaposed, setting sharp contrasts between them, calling for the reader to make their own judgments. This juxtaposition, macroscopic or microcosmic, of space or of time, is often set between different characters, things, situations, and views; it is even set between traditions and changes, between the past and the present. The purpose of this juxtaposition is not to compare whether one is superior to the other, or which is right and which is wrong; rather, it enables a kind of 'dialogue' between the juxtaposed things. This dialogue is termed as 'great dialogue' by Bakhtin. The 'great dialogue' does not intend to clear up misunderstandings and solve problems; nor does it try to remove conflicts and resistance. Instead, it contains all of these contrasting elements, letting them fight against each other, by which, an eternal vitality is bestowed to the work.¹⁵ The technique of juxtaposition, used most extensively in Faulkner's novels, characterizes his works with tension, multiple points of view and mosaic of themes, opening possibilities for various interpretations.

2. DIALOGISM EXPOSING CONFLICTS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

The conflicts between men and women are also juxtaposed with their respective contrasting qualities, views and behaviors, thus the 'great dialogue' between men and women is always on stage. Unlike in Faulkner's many other novels, in which women are depicted as 'an alien species'¹⁶, most women in GDM, white and black, are portrayed positively, some of them possessing strong personality, courage and high self-esteem; others holding fidelity and love to the family. In GDM, although none of the women can be claimed as a major character, their voices are, nevertheless, recorded sonorously, setting a sharp contrast with those of the men.

¹⁵ Xiao (1997), 158.

¹⁶ Rubinstein (1998), 558.

Sophonsiba, younger sister of Hubert Beauchamp in 'Was' is just this type. She wants to marry her neighbor Buck (father of Isaac McCaslin). The latter, however, has no intention to marry her at all. As a woman, Sophonsiba has nothing that has to do with timidity in attaining her goal. She takes a series of actions and finally achieved her success by trapping the man in her bed. 'Well, Filus', his brother, Mr. Hubert jeered at Buck, 'She's got you at last.' (23) Although the way Sophonsiba captures her love is unwisely conducted by force, her courage, nevertheless, is worthy of praise in a male-dominated world, where women were considered inferior as a race and properties of men as individuals. In this aspect, she dwarfs the man, Theophilus McCaslin who is 'woman-weak' (27). The relationship between Isaac McCaslin and his wife (as discussed in section 1) is also one composed of 'a weak masculinity versus a strong femininity,' which characterizes the relationships between men and women among white families in GDM. In this 'great dialogue', there are on the one hand, women's voices, expressing loudly their consciousness or disappointment; on the other, men's voices, revealing feebly their timidity and impotence. In the Deep Old South, where the society is severely hierarchical with the white-male dominance, the women challenge the authoritative men, although their actions were only limited within their families. Their challenging discourses and behaviors show a kind of carnival spirit, or in Bakhtin's widely cited concept – the 'carnavalesque'. In Bakhtin's view, '[t]his literary mode parallels the flouting of authority and inversion of social hierarchies that, in many cultures, are permitted in a season of carnival.'¹⁷

The 'great dialogue' is also directed back and forth between the author and the reader. For example, on the peculiar family pattern of 'a weak masculinity versus a strong femininity' in the white families, Faulkner provides no explanation for his reader. The reader is thus taken into the participation of a discussion with the author and the right of making judgments is left to them. Reading through the novel, the reader can unmistakably feel Faulkner's condemnation of slavery in the Deep South, the crimes and incest committed to the black people by the white as well as his sympathy with the poor and oppressed. Therefore, the reader is convinced to make their own judgment that the pattern of 'a weak masculinity versus a strong femininity' family is the price the whites have to pay for the crimes committed to the black, by them or by their forefathers. Their impotence and loneliness in family life is the Judgment made by God. The exploration of the conflicts between men and women, therefore, leads to Faulkner's great theme – the relationship between the white and black races, though from a different aspect.

In GDM, to explore thoroughly the miserable destiny of the black women, Faulkner juxtaposes their sufferings and the indifference of the white men, from which conflicts arise. In this 'great dialogue', the black women protest desperately the humiliation and degradation they suffer, the injustice they receive in the Old South, showing the fire of their inextinguishable rebellious spirit. In 'The Bear', Eunice, Tomey's mother, a slave of Carothers McCaslin's, found out

¹⁷ Abrams (2004), 63.

Tomey's son Turl might also have been the son of old Carothers McCaslin, she committed suicide shortly before Turl's birth. Here, Isaac's father's indifference to the feelings and lives of black people is completely exposed, for he wrote his comments in the old ledger book, wondering why she had to kill herself for such a trifle. Eunice's unyielding action, while silent, is a strong protest against the misdeed of her owner, for which, she sacrifices her life. Her extreme action blames the white loudly for their wrongdoings and expresses fully her anger and hopelessness. Under this sound and fury, there lies an internal dialogue between the author and the reader. What Faulkner conveys to his reader is his ruthless blame to the inhuman slavery and his fierce criticism of the whites that do not treat the black people as human beings, not mentioning to understand their feelings and emotions. What he arouses in the reader is, on the one hand, the sympathy for Eunice, and on the other, the indignation at the white's evil deeds.

Perhaps the character that displays most typically the 'carnival spirit' is the 'negro' girl in 'Delta Autumn', who had a child by Roth, McCaslin Edmonds's grandson, but was deserted soon by him for her inferior race. As a woman in a male-dominated world and a black girl in a society of white superiority, she requests equal treatment and equal rights from the whites. When Isaac passed the envelope prepared by Roth to the girl, she found there was only money enclosed in it and understood Roth was attempting to pay her off as a lover. She refused to accept the money and refuted Isaac, in response to his question 'What else did you expect?' (270) by saying: 'Old man... have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you dont remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?' (275) She blamed Isaac, Lucas and Molly for the fault of spoiling Roth, as they 'gave to his grandfather that land which didn't belong to him, not even half of it by will or even law'(272). She left the tent where Isaac stayed without any entreating or desperate action. Her scoff to Isaac and contempt at the money given by Roth, her defiant attitude towards the authoritative white men, her courage and self-esteem, shock the souls of the white man. In this 'great dialogue', the white men are displaced from honor, dignity, nobility, courage and responsibility.

3. DIALOGISM REVEALING FAULKNER'S AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO NATURE

Man and nature is another great topic with which Faulkner is deeply concerned. 'The Old People' and 'The Bear' feature Ike McCaslin's confrontations with nature. In these two stories, especially in 'The Bear', the centerpiece of GDM, Faulkner's ambivalence – his ambiguities and complexities towards man's relationship to nature, towards social development and changes, towards the present and the past – is gradually revealed through an internal tension created by contrasting voices from both the characters and the author. The dialogue in these two stories is characterized by being what Bakhtin terms as 'double voiced', in that it is embedded in the narrator and the author himself, 'revealing the speaker's conflicts with himself and with his environment and defining his position in relation to other people and to the

world'.¹⁸ According to Bakhtin, this type of dialogue within the speech is the 'microdialog'. In GDM, the 'microdialog' is particularly apparent in the narration of 'The Old People' and 'The Bear'.

The former story gives a detailed account of how Isaac McCaslin was overwhelmingly influenced in his growth by Sam Fathers, the son of a Choctaw chief and a Negro slave-girl. In the forest, Sam fathers, whom Ike regarded as his 'spirit's father' (249), taught him how to hunt and shoot animals. Sam even assured him: 'You'll be a hunter. You'll be a man'(136), signifying Sam's influence on Ike, with his concept of value in the pride and honor of hunting, and his persistence in retaining a primitive life style. When Isaac was deemed old enough to go on the yearly hunting expeditions with Major de Spain, General Compson, and Isaac's older cousin McCaslin Edmonds, he killed his first buck, and Sam Fathers ritualistically anointed him with its blood. But when a giant buck came down the slope toward them and looked at them with gravity and dignity, Sam called it 'Chief' and 'grandfather' (142) and nobody tried to shoot at it. Here lies a thematic ambiguity in the 'microdialog' voicing Sam Fathers's psychological conflicts: on the one hand, he trains Ike to be a good hunter and encourages Ike to kill the first buck; on the other, he praises highly the mysterious power of the Big Wood and respects a giant buck with ancestor worship.

'The Bear', widely considered Faulkner's finest work, conducts his most intense, focused, and symbolic exploration of the relationship of man and nature. Old Ben, the legendary bear, was a symbol of the power and inscrutability of nature – he was nearly immortal, nearly invulnerable, capable of overpowering virtually anything, and capable of wreaking havoc on human settlements and establishments. The men, who put their minds to work on the single purpose of hunting him, were in some way representative of man's drive to control nature. Again, the thematic ambiguity occurs, in that hunting has been previously portrayed as a noble and respectful act, but in 'The Bear', it becomes, in part, a symbol of man's attempt to conquer nature. Even the narrator's, or rather, Faulkner's own point of view on the hunters' determination of killing Old Ben with the help of the hound Lion is ambiguous:

'So he (Ike) should have hated and feared Lion. Yet he did not. It seemed to him that there was a fatality in it. It seemed to him that something, he didn't know what, was beginning; had already begun. It was like the last act on a set stage. It was the beginning of the end of something, he didn't know what except that he would not grieve. He would be humble and proud that he had been found worthy to be a part of it too or even just to see it too.' (172)

What is 'something' that is at the end and what is that 'beginning'? It seems that there is a 'microdialog' going on in Faulkner's mind, with different voices arguing about 'something' within him. Perhaps he is confused himself: does it suggest the end of Old Ben's life and the beginning of a new era when there is no danger threatening human beings any more, or does it imply the end of man's close relationship to nature, the disappearance of the big forest, the

¹⁸ Xiao (1998), 284-285.

primitive life style and the beginning of man's cursed life? The moving and devastating scene of Old Ben's death is also ambiguous. Is the death of Old Ben at the hands of Boon Hogganbeck a right or a wrong or something more complex than either? Ike's attitude towards nature is totally contradictory: on the one hand, he respects nature embodied by the wild, solemn, primal forest, which is further represented by animals living in it – Old Ben, the giant buck, even the rattlesnake whom Ike saw crawling on the ground and, as Sam Fathers had done to the giant buck, called 'Chief' and 'Grandfather'; on the other hand, he spends most of his time hunting and killing animals 'simply because he love[s] the woods'(1). Faulkner's ambivalence is especially salient on Ike's world-view and way of life. One voice of him blames Ike for escaping from reality and remaining in the past rather than facing challenges and launching actions to help the black people out, like Moses, as the title suggests, the Hebrew prophet and lawgiver, who led the enslaved Jews out of Egypt. At the same time, an opposing voice reveals the worry and fear for the progress and development of human civilization. Ike's last trip to the forest, made by a locomotive, expresses his disapproval of the intrusion of the outside world that destroys the Big Woods. The shrieking of the little locomotive frightened a half-grown bear that 'took the first tree it came to' and ducked its head 'between its arms as a man (a woman perhaps) might have done' (243-244).

Much work has been done on Faulkner's double vision in depicting the Old South. Cowley discusses the cause of his double vision in the 'Introduction' of *The Portable Faulkner* and points out: 'Here are the two sides of Faulkner's feeling for the South; on the one side, an admiring and possessive love; on the other, a compulsive fear lest what he loves should be destroyed by the ignorance of its native serfs and the greed of traders and absentee landlords.'¹⁹ However, under Faulkner's conflicting feelings, there is a deeper cause that determines the power of such tensions in almost all Faulkner's novels – the historical background of the South in the postwar years. Louis D. Rubin, a leading southern critic and editor of *Modern Southern Literature in its Cultural Setting* (1961) comments on the historical background of the South in his introduction to that book:

'Southerners saw the American Union growing stronger and greater all around them. The great railroad trunk lines drew the West and the Pacific Coast toward the industrial East, and the nation became richer while they remained where they were, sweating to gain a living from the soil, without capital good, with little power in the national government, a colonial people....'²⁰

In explaining the causes of Faulkner's double vision towards the South, Rubin says:

'The two-way vision was possible to the southern writers of [this]... generation not only because of their ability to believe in the value and meaningfulness of their people's past but also because they could disbelieve. Being of that first twentieth-century generation of Southerners, they had been strongly reared in the ways of an older South, vividly taught the beliefs and loyalties of the

¹⁹ Cowley (1985), xxvi.

²⁰ Rubinstein (1998), 529.

nineteenth century as the South knew them. But they were of the twentieth century, not the nineteenth.... And being artists, gifted with the perception of artists, they sensed only too clearly the meaning of what was happening. They could believe in the old Army of Northern Virginia kind of belief, and yet share the self-consciousness and skepticism of postwar America and the world.²¹

This is an adequate explanation of Faulkner's double vision on the Old South, his ambivalence towards the present and the past, man and nature, the old life style and the modern one. As an important representative of 'Southern Renaissance', Faulkner is constantly in conversation with the authoritative world through his works. In GDM, the multivoices, expressing the characters' different or contrasting views, the conflicts between classes and social groups, the author's uncertainties and ambivalence through an internal dialogue underlying the literary dialogues, is characteristic of what Bakhtin called a 'polyphonic novel,' in which more than one consciousness is involved and no authoritative concept is provided, either in the 'great dialogue' or in the 'microdialog'. The central concern of Faulkner in GDM is not just the presentation of the multiplicity of voices; rather, it is the desire of holding of the tensions between these many voices by a style which overrides these voices and a myth which contains their story.

For Bakhtin, the power of novelistic language is precisely its ability to stage the conflicts that occur when such a variety of voices enter into dialogue with one another. Rather than resolving these conflicts through a single artistic vision, the novel retains the tensions that exist between a culture's different socioeconomic groups. The novel is thus more than the creation of the novelist; it becomes a record of the novelist's era—in particular, the tensions, conflicts, and struggles that divided (and sometimes united) that era's various social groups. Because Faulkner did not change the voices he heard (despite the fact that he sometimes did not like what they said), his novels embody the heteroglossia of his time: the voices of dominant groups seeking to achieve ideological supremacy, as well as the voices of dissent, resistance, and contradiction.

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²¹ Robinstein (1998), 531.

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