William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*

A Chronicle of Im/Mobilities

Leonardo Nolé

Abstract

William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* (1942) focuses on what the author calls the "earth's long chronicle," a century-long story about an imaginary and truthful land of the American South. In this article, I show how this chronicle is built on the idea of "im/mobility," considered from different perspectives. First, the seven stories that form *Go Down, Moses* depict various forms of exploitation, the effects induced by time and human movements on fields, woods, and animals, underlying the contrast between an "immobile" wilderness and a "mobile" (tamed, exploited) plantation. Second, these stories follow the destiny of im/mobile people who inhabit the land—like Ike McCaslin, the most prominent character, who is blamed precisely for his "immobility," i.e. his inability to take action and change the status quo, at the end of the story. Finally, the literary form of *Go Down, Moses* contains the idea of "im/mobility" in its hybrid and fragmented structure, halfway between a novel and a short story collection.

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"But Isaac was not one of these:—a widower these twenty years, who in all his life had owned but one object more than he could wear and carry in his pockets and his hands at one time . . . who owned no property and never desired to since the earth was no man's but all men's, as light and air and weather were."[1] From the very beginning of his *Go Down, Moses* (1942), William Faulkner highlights some of the fundamental themes developed in this complex text, which took him almost two years to write. The author starts by introducing Ike McCaslin, the human character who has long attracted readers' and scholars' attention, because of his "mobile," i.e., contradictory and ambiguous, traits—he, in fact, inherits a plantation and then renounces it; he swears to respect all people and finally repudiates his Black descendant; he recognizes the social and environmental violence of his time and never actively resists it. But immediately following this, Faulkner names the true protagonist of *Go Down, Moses* that holds together other intertwined stories of mobility: the earth. In this text, Faulkner not only records the vicissitudes of a family, the McCaslins, but also gives voice, as he himself wrote, to the "earth's long chronicle,"[2] that is to say, to almost a century of U.S. history (1860–1940) through the stories germinating in an imaginary but verisimilar territory in the South of the United States, the famous Yoknapatawpha County.

By following this material and more-than-human chronicle, this article will focus on *Go Down, Moses*'s depiction of various social and technological forms of mobility, taking them as a fundamental component of Faulkner's discussion of the exploitation of both people and land. On the one hand, I will build on recent discussions in mobility studies, useful for examining Faulkner's representation of the inequalities in social mobility and the American "uneven national movement toward industrialization, urbanization, and consumerism."[3] On the other, my discussion will be informed by the readings of scholars such as Lawrence Buell and Judith B. Wittenberg, who were the first to recognize a sort of ecological attention *ante litteram* in Faulkner's book. Far from being just a beautiful landscape in the background, the natural world of *Go Down, Moses* is subject to the intervention of time and human beings, offering the opportunity to explore the cultural meanings behind the main forms of modern mobility and their relationship with modernity at large. It is not by chance, I will argue, that Faulkner chooses a "mobile" literary genre to represent this complex discourse. Halfway between a novel and a collection of short stories, *Go Down, Moses*'s structure becomes a fundamental element in fully understanding Faulkner's idea of the "earth's long chronicle."

Mobility of Form: A Non-Chronological Chronicle

The earth Faulkner puts at the center of the text is inhabited and worked by the McCaslin-Edmonds-Beauchamp family, a mix of white landowners and Black workers, whose threefold lineage can be understood only after reading all of the stories in the text. The first one, "Was," takes place in 1859 and centers on Uncle Buck's and Uncle Buddy's pursuit of one of their Black workers, Tomey's Turl, as well as Sophonisba Beauchamp's machinations to become Uncle Buck's wife. This is followed by "The Fire and the Hearth," set in 1941 and focusing on Lucas, Tomey's Turl's son, his feverish search for a hidden treasure impossible to find, and the subsequent difficult relationship with his wife, Molly. "Pantaloon in Black," still set in 1941, is the only story that is not directly linked to the McCaslin family, since it follows the despair of one of the plantation's Black workers, Rider, after his wife's death. The next three stories, "The Old People," "The Bear," and "Delta Autumn," follow different moments in Ike McCaslin's life, spanning the years between 1877 and 1940, through some important milestones: his so-called "initiation" into the wilderness; his long bear hunting in the woods; his discovery of his grandfather Carothers McCaslin's terrible crimes; his challenging decision to renounce the plantation; and finally, grown old, the betrayal of his progressive ideals. The last story gives the title to the whole text, "Go Down, Moses," taking place around 1940 and recalling the death of Samuel Beauchamp (grandson of Lucas and Molly—here Mollie—already encountered in the second story), who is banished from the plantation and accused of killing a policeman, followed by his grandmother's and a white lawyer's attempt to bring his body home.

Even this essential and inevitably incomplete summary may be enough to understand how interlinked the different stories of *Go Down, Moses* are and how complex the writing process must have been. Despite publishing some of the stories in magazines earlier, Faulkner carefully reworked the previously written material in order to unify the tone of the narrative and make it consistent.[4] Such careful labor corresponds to a precise awareness of the peculiar literary form chosen for this text, which the author on several occasions called a novel.[5] "I remember the shock (mild) I got when I saw the printed title page," Faulkner explained, referring to the first edition published by Random House in 1942 and titled *Go Down, Moses and Other Stories*. "I say, reprint it, call it simply *Go Down, Moses*, which was the way I sent it in to you."[6] The confusion caused by the unusual structure of the book is confirmed by critical responses. While the initial reviewers simply considered this work a collection of short stories, some others went as far as to call it a "literary hybrid," a "loosely constructed novel," or even a "storied novel."[7] More recently, this text has been rightly included among those critical works that, since the 1970s, have helped to recognize and define the short story composite (or short story cycle), a hybrid literary genre where independent stories work together to comprise a more ambitious design, which asks to be read as one.

This is not the place to investigate the short story composite in detail, but it may be useful to mention some of its fundamental characteristics that are particularly important for *Go Down, Moses*'s composition and its exploration of various forms of mobility.[8] The first one is its "dialectic" working mechanism, in which the stories remain individual entities, complete in themselves, while starting at the same time a dialogue with the other parts and the text as a whole. As a result, each part (story) has the possibility of progressively modifying the meaning of the whole (novel) and vice versa. According to Forrest L. Ingram, "Like the *moving* parts of a *mobile*, the interconnected parts of some story cycles seem to shift their positions with relation to the other parts, as the cycle *moves* forward in its typical pattern of recurrent development."[9] By building on what Ian C. Davidson calls "mobility of form," it becomes clear that the idea of movement is already there in the way short story composites work and create meaning, as well as in the way readers are encouraged to interact with the text.[10]

One of the consequences of this peculiar structure and "working mechanism" is that the protagonist of the composite is almost always collective, made of all the single protagonists of each story. It can be shaped as a family, a community, or a collectivity variously defined.[11] In *Go Down, Moses*, the collective protagonist not only consists of some members of the McCaslin family, but it soon comes to embrace the whole county and its inhabitants. This focus on many equally important protagonists belonging to all levels of society reinforces the representation of disparities in social mobility as well as the impact that the various forms of human and technological mobilities have on the environment over the course of a century.

In addition, the structure of the short story composite supports the peculiar form of chronicle that Faulkner achieves in the book. The author's recollection of the events is in fact non-chronological; his stories continuously interrupt, move freely back and forth in time, and introduce new characters and/or events without fully contextualizing them. The question that Jean-Paul Sartre asks when discussing *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) is particularly useful here—"why has Faulkner broken up the time of his story and scrambled the pieces?"—because the most spontaneous reaction to Faulkner's problematic narrative of time would be to underestimate or deny the role of temporality in the text.[12] However, according to Sartre, this is a mistake, which comes from the common but simplistic equation between temporality and chronology. "Normally we associate 'reality' with *chronos*," Frank Kermode confirms, "and a fiction which entirely ignored this association we might think unserious or silly or mad."[13] By contrast, William Faulkner's non-chronological chronicle in *Go Down, Moses* helps to depict the social reality of a specific historical time, thanks to a focus on the correlation and interdependence between present and past. According to Sartre, "Faulkner's vision of the world can be compared to that of a man sitting in an open car and looking backwards. At every moment, formless shadows, flickerings, faint tremblings and patches of light rise up on either side of him, and only afterwards, when he has a little perspective, do they become trees and men and cars."[14] Sartre's "impressionist image" explains that Faulkner's chronicle juxtaposes and combines past and present in order to provide an alternative and more complete explanation of the events and their social and historical contexts. Moreover, the fact that Sartre uses the image of a car to represent Faulkner's philosophy of time is particularly interesting for this discussion of the various forms of mobility in *Go Down, Moses*. In Sartre's words, the car comes to symbolize a modern version of time that favors speed over the possibility of gazing and understanding. Everything is consumed so quickly that it is impossible to immediately think about consequences and implications. In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner discusses the concept and effects of modern mobilities on several levels, and his choice of a non-chronological chronicle can be seen as a preliminary criticism of a time based solely on progress and speed—that is to say, on consumption and exploitation. By contrast, the various human protagonists of *Go Down, Moses* seem to be always tied to their past, to an uninterrupted chain of sins and mistakes. According to Gerhard Hoffmann, this book is, in fact, held together "by the repetition of these misdeeds up to the time at which the novel was written by the continuous obsession with blood, inheritance, and possession, a circle of unexpiated guilt which weighs as a burden on all the old Southerners."[15] This is why Faulkner's personal "chronicle of the earth" becomes a useful instrument to investigate time and its major problems, starting with the representation of social im/mobilities and the resulting inequalities.

Social Im/Mobilities: A Chronicle of Inequalities

Go Down, Moses variously explores the concept of social im/mobility through its several protagonists and their complex genealogy. In particular, Faulkner uses characters belonging to different social groups to investigate the human longing for possessions, power, and liberty. As a result, he problematizes the American "assumption that socio-economic mobility is available to all."[16] For instance, in the second story, titled "The Fire and the Hearth," the protagonist Lucas Beauchamp is a descendant of the mixed-race branch of the McCaslin family and employed as a plantation laborer. Lucas, however, knows that "it was his own field, though he neither owned it nor wanted to nor even needed to," and he can in fact perform an illegal activity demonstrating that he owns it "more" than his white masters.[17] His illusory longing for possession comes to the fore when he finds a gold coin buried in the earth: being convinced that it is the first part of a great treasure, he starts spending his nights digging while risking divorce from his wife Molly and embarking on a dangerous confrontation with the white landowner.

Lucas's father, Tomey's Turl, a Black worker at the plantation, embodies the idea of social mobility in a more symbolic way. He is at the same time son and grandson of Carothers McCaslin, the result of an act of violence and incest that the progenitor of the McCaslin family perpetrated on the illegitimate daughter (Tomasina) through one of his Black slaves (Eunice). In "Was," Tomey's Turl escapes from the plantation to visit Tennie, a slave of the Beauchamps whom he intends to marry. His escape works as a sort of "game," which symbolizes his repeated efforts to gain liberty and emancipation. It is no coincidence that the original meaning of the word "liberty" is precisely freedom of physical movement. As Thadious M. Davis underlines, this character is "represented in motion, in action, and thus as an agent, even though his agency is constrained by . . . the racist ideology informing the conception of 'nigger' and enslaved property."[18] Thanks to his movement and behavior, to his dreams of social mobility, "he accomplishes a deregulation of the ownership claims and property rights," and he "articulates a narrative by means of motion and action."[19]

Among the white masters, Ike McCaslin epitomizes immobility. In the fourth section of "The Bear," Ike is in the wooden cabin where his family has always stored the ledgers that keep track of the movements of products, money, and slaves. While reading these old records, he finds the proof of the rape and incest committed by his grandfather, Carothers McCaslin. What strikes Ike beyond the atrocious actions themselves is precisely the idea of possession, of both the land and the slaves. In his family's view, as the ledgers report, the Black workers are nothing more than bought, sold, and occasionally lost "goods."[20] In this instance, Faulkner's narrative comes to embrace a broader perspective, exceeding the McCaslin story. From being a sort of family journal, the ledgers turn into "the continuation of that record which two hundred years had not been enough to complete and another hundred would not be enough to discharge; that *chronicle* which was a whole land in miniature, which multiplied and compounded was the entire South."[21] In other words, the stories of Eunice, Tomasina, Tomey's Turl, and the other Black workers of the plantation epitomize slavery in the United States. According to Abdul-Razzak Al-Barhow, "the book achieves a 'measure of victory' in the way its narrative techniques acknowledge and respect the otherness of black people, and, more importantly, in the way it maintains the determination to subvert the codes of the Southern racial ideology by both white and black characters."[22]

Ike McCaslin begins to view his white privilege as a fortuitous, yet regrettable, coincidence, "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."[23] Ike's renunciation stems precisely from this awareness and results in two main forms of "social" immobility. On the one hand, the repudiation of the land entails the end of his lineage. In a powerful moment in "The Bear," Ike's wife is so interested in taking his property and so angry at Ike for his decision to give it away that she suddenly denies any intimacy with him. "That's all from me," she says, "if this dont get you that son you talk about, it wont be mine."[24] On the other hand, Ike's act of renunciation does not lead to any real societal change because it is itself a form of immobility.

By incorporating "The Bear" into the composite novel, Faulkner revises its optimism by connecting it to the following chapter, "Delta Autumn." Ike is now an old man without a family when he meets with a young woman visiting his mansion. She is there to convince Roth Edmonds, the son of the cousin to whom Ike has bequeathed the entire plantation, to finally marry her and acknowledge their son. When Ike perceives the woman's African American origins, his answer is imperative: "Maybe in a thousand or two thousand years in America, he thought. But not now! Not now! . . . You're a nigger!"[25] With this statement, the hopeful attitude that had distinguished Ike as a young man vanishes. By expressing the impossibility of social mobility for a Black woman of his time, Ike cowardly suggests a different kind of movement. In the subsequent exchange, he offers her some money and advises her to go away, to the north, to look for a husband "in her own race," forgetting the McCaslin family and her dreams of equality.[26] Even if the narrator does not highlight his presence, the child the woman holds in her arms plays a key role in this scene. The young woman is the last descendant of Tomey's Turl, the Black man born from Carothers McCaslin's incest. The child, then, unites two different branches of the family: the legitimate and illegitimate children, the white and Black descendants, who have been divided up to this point by a terrible story of violence and abuse. Old Ike knows that this child embodies the reconciliation of the family, yet he nonetheless repudiates him.[27] This—Ike's latest mistake—again takes the form of a renunciation—of both the property, left to those who did nothing but repeat the same mistakes of the past, and of the new lineage, banished and never welcomed. In a way, here Ike seems to perceive the idea of mobility as a threat. "In response to this threat," Stephan Greenblatt writes in his "Mobility Studies Manifesto" (2010), "many groups and individuals have attempted to wall themselves off from the world."[28] The future to which the young Ike McCaslin once aspired has drifted further and further away because he has never actively committed himself to achieving it.[29] According to Thadious M. Davis, Ike "can forcefully resist evil in society only if he acts; passivity is no solution, because it cannot generate a social reformation."[30] When asked to comment on Ike's behavior, Faulkner seems to support this reading as he explains that Ike is the kind of person who says, "This is bad, and I will withdraw from it," whereas the world would need people who say, "This is bad, and I'm going to do something about it. I'm going to change it."[31]

The final story of the book, "Go Down, Moses," no longer focuses on Ike McCaslin. Because of his "immobility," his role is clearly over.[32] Ike's "lack of concern for [the] future interests of the community" does not follow the direction the book takes at this point.[33] This story appears to speak to the future, showing the first, hesitant examples of equality. Although the victim is still a young Black man punished for a crime he actually committed, the help provided by certain white characters in bringing the corpse home and ensuring him a decent funeral becomes a sort of "act of expiation" from the white community for the first time.[34] And although the editor of the local newspaper mocks Mollie for asking him to write about her grandson's killing, race relations are now starting to change. "The Fire and the Hearth" stresses that Lucas Beauchamp, as a Black slave, did not have the right to personally submit a complaint to the judge; in the fourth section of "The Bear," Black workers not only had no voice in the records kept by the McCaslin family, but they would have never asked to read them.[35] Here, by contrast, their descendants have moved forward and developed a new courage, which allows them to ask for attention, to demand that their words will appear in writing next to those of the white people. Through her grandson's story, Mollie demands the legacy of slavery be published in the newspaper, as a way to begin publicly addressing racial inequality and injustice.[36]

Mobility and Technological Innovations: A Chronicle of Exploitation

The same uncontrollable longing for possession and power that sustains the practice and institutionalization of slavery can be found in the characters' relationships with the natural world.[37] One of Ike McCaslin's hunting companions in "The Bear," Boon, of partial Chickasaw and European descent, never killed any prey before Old Ben, the "mythical" bear representing the wilderness. Ike and the other hunters had several opportunities to shoot Old Ben, and they had always abstained from doing it. Like a sort of extended ritual, the hunt had, in fact, lasted for years. But Boon's desire to prevail becomes irrepressible, inevitably driving him to madness. When Ike returns to the forest some time after the killing of the bear, he finds his friend seated against the trunk of a tree full of squirrels, with a disassembled gun in his hands, only able to shout at him: "Get out of here! Don't touch them! Don't touch a one of them! They're mine."[38]

Before discussing how Faulkner represents the technological changes required by human mobility and their effect on the natural world in his narrative, I would like to mention other examples of *Go Down, Moses*'s explicit critique of the culture that prompts and directs these changes. For instance, Boon's story draws attention to an activity Faulkner discusses extensively and which becomes an ambiguous symbol of the human yearning for possession: the practice of hunting. As Judith B. Wittenberg and Lawrence Buell point out, this is a sort of *file rouge* that complicates the concept of movement in *Go Down, Moses*, while interlinking almost every story in the text in different ways, from the hunt for Tomey's Turl, the fugitive slave in "Was," and the hunt for the buried money in "The Fire and the Hearth," to the search for the young man's corpse in "Go Down, Moses."[39]

In the three stories focusing on Ike McCaslin, "The Old People," "The Bear," and "Delta Autumn," the author lingers on traditional hunting expeditions. As Faulkner presents it, hunting is simultaneously a game, a form of entertainment but also an activity with serious consequences.[40] Surprisingly to a contemporary reader, Faulkner's hunters are often those who care about the woods and their preservation. In one important scene of "The Bear," for example, Major De Spain, one of the regular members of Ike's hunting party, forces the train that crosses the forest to stop in order to save a passing bear.[41] Moreover, throughout *Go Down, Moses*, the hunt becomes a symbol of life and growth. This is why Sam Fathers says to his disciple Ike in "The Old People": "You wait. You'll be a hunter. You'll be a man," establishing a direct, meaningful relation between these two conditions.[42] Faulkner explained that in "The Bear," "the hunt was simply a symbol of pursuit . . . I was simply telling something which was, in this case, . . . the compulsion of the child to adjust to the adult world . . . to catch, to touch, and then let go because then tomorrow you can pursue again . . . The pursuit is the thing, not the reward, not the gain."[43] The child named here is Ike McCaslin, whose story begins very much like a *Bildungsroman* in which the natural environment plays a key role in the development of the protagonist.[44] As Faulkner writes, "If Sam Fathers had been his mentor and the backyard rabbits and squirrels his kindergarten, then the wilderness the old bear ran was his college and the old male bear itself . . . was his alma mater."[45] In the woods, Ike is assisted by his "human" guide, Sam Fathers—who teaches him a different relationship with nature—and by the mythical and symbolic presence of the bear, Old Ben. Both examples allow Ike to reach a higher degree of awareness that escapes most of his family members and contemporaries.

For example, Ike understands that, unlike human beings, "the earth dont want to just keep things, hoard them; it wants to use them again," that is, he learns lessons he attempts to apply to his own life.[46] In a more general manner, it could be said that an entirely new set of values develops within him, beginning with innocence and respect for otherness, which he had yet to encounter in society.

In the fourth section of "The Bear," Ike's new consciousness is tested via a long dialogue with his cousin. Ike, who is now twenty-one years old and therefore the fully entitled heir to the plantation, seems to understand the consequences of the human presence on the land. From the very beginning of the discussion, Ike contrasts the wilderness with the plantation, the "tamed land which was to have been his heritage."[47] The wilderness has its own rules and rhythms, he explains, and above all it is immobile because it is not meant to produce profit.[48] Ike experiences it during his first meeting with Old Ben: "Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear: it was just there, *immobile, fixed* . . . Then it was gone. It didn't walk into the woods. It faded, sank back into the wilderness *without motion* as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink back into the dark depths of its pool and vanish *without even any movement* of its fins."[49] To Ike, human logic is antithetical to this idea of wilderness because human logic is always directed to action and consumption. Unlike the rest of his family, he takes the opportunity to join the wilderness and realizes how human work turns that free land into the tamed land of the plantation. For this reason, he blames the McCaslins' progenitor, Carothers, for having treated the earth as a mere commodity at his disposal, for having monetized, subjugated, and exploited it.

Go Down, Moses critically explores this idea of possession and exploitation of the natural world also through its depiction of different forms of human and technological mobility. As John Urry notes, "The human 'mastery' of nature has been most effectively achieved through movement over, under, and across it."[50] The hunting expeditions in the woods are an intrusive form of human mobility, since they are a sort of race, an action that—before anything else—disrupts the same idea of the immobility of the wilderness.[51] Ike fails to realize it, but, as a human being, he, too, is an agent of that progress and change he would have never wanted to see in the wilderness. And in fact, even when he goes deeper and deeper into the woods to look for Old Ben and abandons his "human" tools (gun, clock, and compass), he forgets to leave behind the most powerful agent of civilization—himself.[52] Even when he is simply walking through the woods, Ike still performs a human activity, since "there is nothing natural about walking."[53] This last example, together with Ike's idea that the woods can be taught, that nature can be taken as a source of life lessons, that people can use the earth well, look very much like a less audacious version of that longing for possession and exploitation that has always characterized the chronicle of the earth.[54]

Another ambiguous symbol of human presence and movement in the natural world is the train. Returning several years later to the same wilderness that had guided him in his "initiation," Ike finds it irreparably changed. A new factory covers acres of forest and the small railroad, formerly considered to be harmless, has become something different, "as though the train . . . had brought with it into the doomed wilderness even before the actual axe the shadow and portent of the new mill not even finished yet and the rails and ties which were not even laid."[55] Faulkner's rich prose explains the cultural change behind the success of railroads around the world. In John Urry's words, "The railway restructures the existing relation between nature, time, and space" while it turns "places into a system of circulation, transforming what had been distinct places into commodities."[56] In "Delta Autumn," in particular, the old Ike looks at the land he once knew and has seen change, realizing that "now the land lay open from the cradling hills on the East to the rampart of levee on the West, standing horseman-tall with cotton for the world's loom . . . the land across which there came now no scream of panther but instead the long hooting of locomotives."[57] Railways, roads, sawmills, plantations, growing cities, multinational corporations: the natural world depicted by Faulkner is not only mediated by literary lenses, by a sort of mythical, poetic gaze at the beauty of the wilderness, but it is also embedded in the environmental actuality of a capitalist society.[58]

As a final step in this material chronicle of various means of transportation, in "Delta Autumn," the attention is likewise focused on cars. The narrator underlines the fact that Ike belongs to a distant past because "he was the last of those who had once made the journey [to the hunting grounds] in wagons." By contrast, "now they went in cars, driving faster and faster each year because the roads were better and they had further and further to drive."[59] Traveling by car is depicted as a completely different kind of journey: faster and therefore able to cover greater distances. When reflecting on it, Ike notes not only the changes in the natural landscape, but also in the roads, which from the small paths traced by the deer have now become large roads that connect different cities. In order to get to the hunting grounds, however, Ike and his companions must leave the paved road and adapt to a slower kind of movement. The change in speed corresponds to the possibility of Ike reactivating other memories, marking his diversity in a more and more evident way. This is one of the few occasions in which Ike's "immobility," his attachment to a past now too distant, seems to present a positive meaning for Faulkner. In fact, when the horses to be used for the hunting expedition are freed from their truck, Ike is the only human able to calm them down because he is "insulated by his years and time from the corruption of steel and oiled moving parts which tainted the others."[60]

Conclusion

The different means of transportation and their cultural significance are some of the most evident examples of the extent to which *Go Down, Moses* and its chronicle of the earth are related to the cultural discourse around American im/mobilities. The seven stories that form this complex text depict the earth's changes, the effects induced by time and human movement on the fields and the woods, critically underlining the contrast between an "immobile" wilderness and a "mobile" plantation. Everywhere in his narrative, Faulkner suggests that the human longing for possession and power is the reason behind the exploitation of both land and slaves. And the people who inhabit this land, both Black workers and white landowners, complicate the discussion about social im/mobility with their actions. With the exception of Ike McCaslin, who is ultimately blamed precisely for his "immobility," i.e., his inability to take action and alter the status quo, the characters in *Go Down, Moses* are frequently depicted in motion—they will at least try to change their situation, to overturn the logic of exploitation and submission, and hope for a different future. To support his discourse on these different forms of im/mobility, Faulkner relied on the short story composite and its hybrid and fragmented structure. Due to his non-chronological chronicle, his collective protagonist, and his focus on the cultural significance of modern mobilities, Faulkner sought to highlight the contradictions of his time, along with the power literature has to break down the ever-contemporary narratives of consumption, exploitation, and inequality.

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Notes

1 William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 5.

2 Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*, 296.

3 Julia Leyda, *American Mobilities: Geographies of Class, Race, and Gender in US Culture* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2016), 23.

4 See Joanne V. Creighton, "Revision and Craftsmanship in the Hunting Trilogy of *Go Down, Moses*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 15, vol. 3 (1973): 577–92; Susan G. Mann, *The Short Story Cycle: A Genre Companion and Reference Guide* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 121–40.

5 He did so, for example, in a lecture given at the University of Virginia on February 15, 1957. William Faulkner, lecture in Frederick Gwynn's literature class, http://faulkner.lib.virginia.edu/display/wfaudio01_1#wfaudio01_1.24, accessed on April 28, 2019. The audio recordings and transcriptions of these lessons, recorded between 1957 and 1958, are collected

on the *Faulkner at Virginia: An Audio Archive* website: http://faulkner.lib.virginia.edu/.

6 Linda Wagner-Martin, "Introduction," in *New Essays on* Go Down, Moses, ed. Linda Wagner-Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16.

7 Malcolm Cowley, "Go Down to Faulkner's Land," *The New Republic* (June 29, 1942): 900; Olga Vickery, *The Novels of William Faulkner* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 124; Ronald Schleifer, "Faulkner's Storied Novel: *Go Down, Moses* and the Translation of Time," *Modern Fiction Studies* 28, no. 1 (1982): 110.

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9 Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles*, 14; emphasis added.

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