Most critical appraisals tend to isolate The Bear for closer scrutiny from the collection of stories in Go Down, Moses. This study attempts to trace the links between The Old People, The Bear and Delta Autumn, on the assumption that the three stories combine to project one experience. The content of Go Down, Moses encourages such telescoping for the three tales have been presented in sequence and the artistic focus throughout remains on a single consciousness. If the three stories are reduced to symbolic expression or if attempts are made to trace Ike's biography, certain discrepancies appear inevitable.

Some critics have adopted the structural approach to a reading of The Bear, while others have held Ike to be the central image. Ike has been estimated by R.W.B. Lewis as "Faulkner's first full-fledged hero." Kenneth Richardson highlights the ethical elements of Faulkner's novels and downgrades the character of Ike McCaslin in a claim that he:

\[...\] demonstrates the incompleteness of Faulkner's concept of the wilderness. He is not a fully satisfying redeemer, for he only repudiates evil; he never acts against it.\[91\]

R.D. Jacobs reduces Ike's stature to "a pathetic figure, slightly comic, certainly ineffectual," and this view is

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endorsed by Lewis P. Simpson who adds further:

I mean that through his perspective as a kind of moral philosopher he affords us an ironic and dramatic commentary on the Second Fall. Such critical appraisals tend to arrive at a single formula for the man and nature interactions in the three stories. To gloss over the distinctions and to equate the experience in each would be to ignore the complexity of Faulkner's art. The three tales presented in sequence narrates the growth of an individual consciousness in its transmission through three levels of experience. The hierarchy of responses in the stories is so perfectly coordinated that it culminates in a tribute to a grand gesture of repudiation in time. This study assumes that the stories, The Old People, The Bear and Delta Autumn, combine to form a triad. It undertakes an exploration of the three tales from several perspectives. The preliminary effort is to establish an alignment in form and function of the central image of nature in each story; this leads to an assessment of its contribution to the mainstream of consciousness; and lastly an attempt to relate the pattern of the movement to the structure of the language.

The image of the immortal buck appears to hold a central place in The Old People. The timelessness of Ike's first exposure to the buck is evoked in flashback at the very beginning of the tale. The visual perspective reveals that the image of the buck is artistically blended into the backdrop of the November dawn in a fusion of varying shades of light. And yet the nuances of language insinuate that the distinction lies in the evocation of time. The reiterated references to the "grey and constant light" of the winter dawn suggests a surface of continuity on which the image of the buck is sketched "as if all light were condensed in him and he were the source of it, not only moving in it but disseminating it", wrought in the form of timelessness. The buck holds a pivotal place in the story, not because it is central to the action, but it appears to control responses in the viewers. For his cousin Cass the exposure to the immortal buck is a thing of the past; to Ike the vision is alive in the present, and in Sam there is a sameness of experience as continuous with time. The impact of the experience on Ike is underlined in the buck envisioned once again at the close, "not proud and not haughty but just full and wild and unafraid". The
artistic purpose is not to provide the tale with a tragic unity but to clothe an aesthetic idea in a structural form. The moment of epiphany is not the instance of the killing of the buck and the anointment ceremony. It is evoked in the vision of the buck which emerges as an image in pure form and in perpetual motion 'not fleeing, not even running, just moving with that winged and effortless ease with which deer move". This is the motion which had been identified by Charlotte in The Wild Palms and this is the motion which is acknowledged by Sam Fathers in the salute "Oleh, Chief". But mere recognition does not contain the whole experience. The story of Old People does not limit itself to Ike's recognition of the t - t motif in the image of the buck. It goes further to explore a response beyond a mere instinctive identification. Sam is serene for he has chosen not to seek anything beyond the intuitive. But Ike, even at the end of the tale appears to be in quest of a higher realm of experience.

The image of the bear in Old Ben functions as the most powerful motif of nature in the Faulkner canon, because it has been the most artistically synthesized. In the projection of the bear, Faulkner has obviously used several artistic devices, and yet the ultimate image
does not appear to rely on any of these tools for justification. Taken at the symbolic level the bear has been held as the supreme token of the wilderness, carrying the condition of the woods in its every gesture. Yet the significance does not end there, for there is a marked distinction in tone, in the chant of the killing of the bear and the lyrical descriptions of the destruction of the wilderness. It is possible that the ritual chant rings true to the other layer of significance in the mythical mode, for the entry into the primeval forest does represent the ceremonial act of recession. But if this is claimed to be the keynote of the legend, then Ike's reaction to the octoroon in Delta Autumn, becomes a retraction. The content of the image is communicated with utmost clarity in the visual form. The composition in linear rhythm contains the tension in the juxtaposition of the bear against the wilderness. The forest in its containment of an ineffective past is reduced to the horizontal line of the earth, visualised as ''that doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with ploughs and axes''. The bear in its upright stance of affected immortality operates as the repudiating force against this act of immolation. Old Ben, like all bears belongs to
the wilderness while in a state of endurance, but it is isolated as The Bear in its act of assertion. The bear's gesture of repudiation ceases to be a mere act of survival, but becomes a statement in affirmation. This is conveyed in Sam Father's tribute to Old Ben:

He don't care no more for bears than he does for gods or men neither. He comes to see who's here who's new in camp this year, whether he can shoot or not, can stay or not. Whether we got the dog yet that can bay and hold him until a man gets there with a gun. Because he is the head bear. He's the man." 93

The experience in confrontation with Old Ben extends beyond man and nature interactions. The tension between man and nature no longer operates at the level of physical conflict but is revealed as tension in time. It is a conflict that cannot be resolved but must be reckoned with from time to time; Old Ben being "the head bear", "the man" represents a gesture in timelessness. And it is Ike's exposure to the bear and his own counter-gesture in repudiation that isolates him as "the man" among all men. Every encounter with Old Ben provides Ike with a challenge to seek the limits of human experience in time. There are varying nuances of time in the contrasting representations of "the old bear's furious immortality"
against the backdrop of the doomed wilderness. While the death of the wilderness is duly mourned, the death of the bear is invoked, apprehended and experienced. The physical description of Old Ben is exaggerated in dimension in order to contain this conflict. The clash does not terminate in a dramatic or ethical experience but probes further into the metaphysical. The bear is posed as:

... not malevolent, but just big, too big for the dogs which tried to bay it, for the horses which tried to ride it down, for the men and the bullets they fired into it; too big for the very country which was its constricting scope.\(^94\)

The levels of conflict in progression are clearly defined from the dramatic chase "too big for the dogs which tried to bay it" to the dialectical, spatialized in the image of the bear as "too big for the very country which was its constricting scope". The underlying tension in the encounters between the bear and Ike is between the resurrection of truth in the image of Old Ben and the realization of it in Ike's consciousness. Leo Marx in a review of the pastoral theme in American literature infers that the image of the train in The Bear is Faulkner's version of the machine in the garden. He includes Faulkner among the American writers including Thoreau, Melville, Frost and Hemingway in the claim that:

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\(^94\) Ibid., p.146.
Marx states that, "the theme of withdrawal from society and an idealized landscape is central to a remarkably large number of them". He offers new insight into the modern use of the pastoral but his approach tends to be schematic in its applications to a range of novelists. According to Marx:

The imposition of the train on the scene is an artificial blocking of the abundant sources of the mind. It provides the tension and confusion which is related to the consciousness in dichotomy — the shallow stream of recorded thought and the broad tide of emotions, ideas and associations.95

The image of the train in Faulkner's *The Bear* is not merely the imposition of metaphorical tension on a surface of no-tension. The motions of the train described as "a lethargic deliberate clashing of slack couplings" appears to implicate a tension in time. The image of the train has more relevance to the immortal bear than the vanishing wilderness "garden". As pure function the train represents a repudiation of time. And yet the disengagement between the object and its operations is underlined in the slow motions of the train, seen "dragging its length of train behind it so that it resembled a small dingy harmless snake vanishing into weeds".

The train stands in ironic inversion to the time-transcending motif rather than as a contrast to the wilderness condition. The association with Old Ben is suggested in Ike's reveries when he returns to the forest after the death of the bear. Against the motions of the train, he reviews the bear's repudiation of time:

... as if there were a point between immobility and absolute motion where even mass chemically altered, changing without pain or agony not only in bulk and shape but in colour too, approaching the colour of wind, yet this time it was as though the train (and not only the train but himself, not only his vision which he had seen it and his memory which remembered it but his clothes too, as garments carry back into the clean edgeless blowing of air the lingering effluvium of a sick-room or of death) had brought with it into the doomed wilderness. 96

In the classical mode, the staging of the bear-kill functions as an ante-play, which though minimal in content exercises a control over the entire experience. Whereas the destruction of the wilderness leads to an irremediable loss, the annihilation of the bear further enhances its immortality. This polarity is once again reiterated after the death of the bear in the image of the immense rattle-snake which encroaches on Ike's

96. W.F. The Bear, GDM, p.245
vision at the close of the story. His response to this object in motion 'moving erect yet off the perpendicular as if the head and that elevated third were complete and all'' is significant for he acknowledges it as, '"Chief', '"Grandfather"'. Ike's reiteration of Sam's earlier tribute to the image of the buck is not for the purpose of drawing an analogy in response. The comparison lies in tracing the line of motif from the buck to the bear, further heightened by the inferences drawn from the sustained bracketing of the bear and the deer in the initial stages. The words which qualify Ike's response as '"speaking the old tongue which Sam had spoken that day without premeditation either''', are the words which underline the contrast in the levels of response. Sam's life terminates with the physical death of the bear because his response remains at the level of the preconscious.

One illustration of the artistic control over irony in this story lies in the projection of Sam's state as '"an old lion or a bear in a cage"'. The cage here is a metaphor not for the strictures imposed on him by society, but for self-generated inhibitions. Old Ben's achievement lies in the transcendence of this state of imprisonment. The drama of the bear-hunt ends on a dialectical note. The tension in responses to time is underlined by a dual process in an instinctive identification and the dissociation of sensibility.
The image of the doe in *Delta Autumn* is not merely an etiolated version of the earlier ones but it appears to be the most concretized expression of the t - t motif. The image in this story undergoes an organic change for it operates simultaneously at the level of the instinctive in its literal form and at the level of the metaphysical in the shape of the octoroon woman. Though the image of the doe occupies a pivotal position in the story, the actual references to it are nominal. The author here exercises tremendous skill in the projection of the motif in the ironic mode. In *The Bear*, irony in motif remains extraneous, for it is used to heighten the effect, but the use of irony in *Delta Autumn* in the form of inversion, is more radical a turn. And this transformation in media is relevant to the transition in experience. The doe motif is deliberately superannuated in content in order to offset its heightened impact as pure form. The motif in appearance both in the image of the hunted doe and the violated woman is lesser in stature to the image of the buck and the bear. But the reduction in stature is in keeping with the changed face of the land which no longer is "the ancient woods" Ike used to know. The spiral on temporal form of the motif is retained, and its impact once again suggests an accretion of consciousness in Ike. It is
Legate, a member of the hunting party, who makes the first reference to the doe in *Delta Autumn*. The snide remark is directed at Roth Edmonds, a young member of Ike's clan, when he expresses his reluctance to join the party on this occasion. The edged venom in his statement is obvious to all concerned: "If it was just a buck he was coming all this distance for now. But he has got a doe in here". The remark is with reference to the torrid affair between Roth and an octoroon, during the last hunting season and one still fresh in the minds of the party members, though it has become a closed chapter for Roth now. The play with the word "doe" continues in an interlocution and the tone indicates the inherent cynicism in the stance of younger members of the group. Roth tries to clinch the issue by the decision to finally accompany them on the hunting spree and he ceremoniously concludes "Because this will be the last of it". But Legate does not spare him, and is quick with the query: "The last of deer hunting, or of doe hunting?" And while this furious exchange takes place, Ike, who is now seventy and "Uncle" to them all, enters the fray to air his opinion that: "The only fighting anywhere that ever had anything of God's blessing on it has been when men fought to protect does and fawns".
Though the disparity appears to lie in the failure in comprehension, the innate distinction is embedded in the levels of response primarily guided by the extent of apprehension and its application to experience. The threads of this exchange is once again picked up at the end of the tale, in a final reference to the doe. While Ike sits lost in introspection, immediately after his confrontation with the octoroon, Legate intrudes, engaged in the task of collecting horse and knife, and on enquiry from the old man, announces briefly that Roth had just grounded a deer. The levels of response are once again reiterated against the nature backdrop of "the faint light and the constant and grieving rain". One level is exposed in Legate's rejoinders and in his anxiety to return to the scene of action: "Just a deer, Uncle. Ike", he said impatiently. "Nothing extra". The other is expressed through Ike's reply, which comes after Legate has already left the tent and which consists of four words: "It was a doe". This succinct remark, on which the story closes has led some to conclude that the tale ends with Ike's realization of his own helplessness in his failure to prevent the "death" of the doe. Such a conclusion dispenses too easily with the artistry in the use of a dual perspective for the operative word in Ike's statement.
appears to be not "doe" but the article "a". Ike infers that the doe which Roth has actually shot down is only "a doe" that is, one among several others of this breed, while the doe still remains immortal in stance, for the octoroon has left an indelible impress on Ike's consciousness. This distinction is what reaffirms the link between the three images of the buck, the bear and the doe.

In order to trace the evolution of Ike's consciousness, it is necessary to evaluate the extent of response to each motif. The limits of the exposure on each occasion can only be assessed from the depth of its impact. The various reactions when telescoped together appear to culminate in a single process of learning. The crystallization of knowledge takes place from the moment of apprehension of the motif to its realization through an intellectual drill. The dialogue between Ike and Cass in the first two tales and between Ike and Roth in the third, provides a perspective from which to view the development of Ike's consciousness in its continued interaction with the motif. The vision of the immortal buck is Ike's first exposure to the t - t motif, and his response here remains steeped in the instinctive. The motif here is sketched in chiaroscuro, in delicate shades of illusion and reality. It is because
at this stage reality merely haunts Ike's consciousness that he fails to comprehend it. In *The Old People* extensive biographical details are given regarding Boon and Sam Fathers; it is not because *The Old People* comes first in the triad and the author uses it as an introductory note to *The Bear*. This body of information forms an aspect of reality, which is the only reality the adolescent boy had been trained to accept till then. He brings to the new experience, his built-in inhibitions apart from the responses which he had been schooled in, in the past. If *The Old People* had been a straight initiation tale, Ike's successful killing of a buck would have completed his exposure to reality. But to conclude thus would be to ignore the exchange between Ike and Cass in the third section of the story. This interlude is the moment of stasis which follows in the wake of crisis. The querulous defiance with which the young boy attempts to assert the efficacy of his vision is in truth and assay to contain the new experience. The combined impact of Sam's tutoring and the image of the buck has opened up for Ike latent areas of response, and he increasingly finds himself unable to come to terms with his widening consciousness. The dialogue with Cass functions as the drill in time by which his awakening response is put to the test. The story
ends with Ike's reiteration: "But I saw it! I saw him!". At this point his cousin interjects with the words:
"Steady. I know you did so did I. Sam took me in there once after I killed my first deer". There are two kinds of responses inferred from this exchange. The mode of perception for Ike has undergone a tremendous upheaval and he is still caught at the end in an engagement with time and his conscience. The change of pronoun in the boy's assertion from "it" to "him" is not merely for the purpose of emphasis, but indicates his attempt to identify with the motif. Gass operates as that thread of rationalization which is integral to a vital experience. But at this stage the force of Ike's assertion does not spring from a distilled state as his response at the close of Delta Autumn. This accounts for the emotional intensity that is packed into the primary assertion. Another aspect of the developing consciousness is evident in its awakening to the mode of ratiocination in The Old People. The process of argumentation in its earliest stage invariably expresses itself in the urge to prove oneself to others by coequalling the cynosure. Here Ike's reliance on the approval of his cousin is indicative of his need for reason to vindicate his new condition.

The experience in The Bear follows as a sequel to Ike's apprehension of reality in The Old People. Though it is time that The Bear can stand as a coherent statement on its own
the legend as a triad represents the dynamics of experience. The sustained references to the buck in the beginning of *The Bear*, suggest that Ike approaches the bear motif, no longer at a preconscious level, but in a state of unresolved apprehension. The various encounters with Old Ben and the endless skirmishes which follow, besides adding to the thrill of a hunting tale, contribute heavily to the symbolic content as the oft-quoted occasion, when Ike discards compass and watch and rifle, in a direct confrontation with Old Ben. Yet the main function appears to be artistically drawn in terms of a cumulative effect on the process of conceptualisation. It is only the scene of the actual slaying of Old Ben which exposes Ike to reality in a new form. This is the sole occasion when the boy discovers that it is in the role of spectator and not as participant that an ideal distancing may be achieved, an experience integral to the comprehension of reality. In order to realise the implications of the movement the language appears to draw attention to the visual aspect of this man and motif spectacle. The ironic note resonates as the frenetic chase increases in pace, while the backdrop turns to turmoil and the hunted and the hunter become "one uproar", the reportage comes through with an added translucence. The very mode of action reduces all elements
without even any movement of its fins'. But in the moment of death, Old Ben carries the gesture of repudiation in its every move. It's very fall seems to be its grandest motion towards an upward incline for "It did not collapse, crumple. It fell all of a piece, as a tree falls, so that all three of them, man, dog and bear seemed to bounce once". The movement as recorded in this tableau is reflected once again in Ike's act of renunciation of his heritage. To reduce the elements of the movement to its essence in an ethical content, would be to destroy the aesthetic form. It is possible to reduce the strains of evil woven into this dramatic confrontation and to relate it to the discovery of evil in the ledgers. But the complexity of the author's vision extends beyond man's exposure to good and evil. The rationale Ike adopts in section IV of the story indicates that the consciousness sets out to explore a different texture of experience, armed with the newly-discovered approach in the dissociation of sensibility. It is important to note that a new tone is set for the exchange between Ike and Cass, as they meet at the commissary to review Ike's decision. This time the tone of Ike's argumentation is changed, for he now no longer needs to prove himself to others, but he is faced with a new adversary and that is himself. In fact in both the scenes, at the commissary and in the bedroom scene with
his wife, Ike finds himself in confrontation with aspects of the self. And what he learns is, to face it and contain it, and not fight it to eradicate it. It is interesting to note the changed backdrop of both these scenes. The first being: "not against the wilderness but against the land, not in pursuit and lust but in relinquishment, and in the commissary as it should have been"; the words "in the commissary as it should have been" indicates that the renovated landscape is in keeping with Ike's private communion with himself. If section IV is interpreted as a dialogue between two characters then the interlocution operates only at one level, explicit in Ike's statement: "I am trying to explain to the head of my family something which I have got to do which I don't quite understand myself, not in justification of it but to explain it if I can". But the actual tension in conflict operates at the level of Ike's consciousness, "not in justification of it but to explain it if I can". At this level McCaslin functions as the source in reason, conveyed thus: "McCaslin had actually seen it, and the boy even at almost eighty would never be able to distinguish certainly between what he had seen and what had been told him". The dialectical tension here is between conceptual reality which is open to question and experienced reality which can not be proved but can only be comprehended. And it is this polaric
dilemma which Ike seeks to resolve in his exposition of the Bible, articulated in the form of such rhetorical queries as: what distance back to truth must they traverse whom truth could only reach by word of mouth?

His exploration of the ledgers is his maiden venture to comprehend reality through an exposure to different levels of freedom. Section IV traces Ike's pursuit, which is a quest in inversion, for it is empirical in the content and ontological in form. It is a commitment to the timeless in experience and the form of a quest provides it with dimension. The three instances, of Eunice's supposed suicide, Fonsiba's rejection of the role of prodigal, and Lucas' arrogant posture are not occasions that expose Ike's failure in amendment; they contribute to the moments of apprehension in Ike's process of learning. The relinquishment of the land may have been initiated as an act of separation, but he lives to realize that though the assertion of freedom is viewed as one, it assumes variations in the very making of it, that ultimately what he has seen is not necessarily what he had learned.

The moment of epiphany in Delta Autumn is the most subtly evoked for the climactic interaction between motif and man takes place in the confrontation between Ike and the octoroon. Roth, who anticipates the arrival of the
woman and child at the camp, leaves behind a packet of notes with uncle Ike, before slipping away from the scene. This time Ike is not directly responsible for the act of separation but is instrumental to it. The tension in the restrained exchange between Ike and Roth once again suggests the fact that it not merely represents a clash in generations, but that it reflects a polaric strife in Ike. It is projected into the very act when Ike brings himself to hand over the envelope to the woman. He does it, not to execute an order, but as an endorsement of an impersonal code. Here the motif is presented in the most sublime image of the madonna and babe and it is vivified in the supreme act of repudiation. Though the scene is not encompassed in the violence of the deed, it throbs with the very virility of the woman's gesture. What the woman strives to retrieve is her rapidly depleting freedom, for that is what she has lived to lose since that moment of regress. She realizes that her very bondage sprang from the instance of Roth's desertion, and that is what she comes to redeem herself of. For her, Roth is representative of the inveterate dehumanization which comes with progress and she asserts her identity against this force. The facts of her circumstances, of being with a child and of being partly
black, and of being remotely connected to the Edmonds clan, make it harder for the old man to comprehend the implications of her act. The impact of her gesture which transcends the level of money and marriage, falls full on him during the moments when he stretches out his hand as she prepares to leave:

He did not grasp it, he merely touched it—the gnarled, bloodless, bone-light bone-dry old man's fingers touching for a second the smooth young flesh where the strong old blood ran after its long-lost journey back to home.97

This moment once again resurrects for Ike that dialectical tension in the modes of perception of reality. And his acknowledgement of the woman's gesture is endorsed in the gift of the horn. The exchange of the horn like the touch of the hands revives for the old man the polarity in believing and seeing and seeing and believing. On facing the woman he realizes that all the conceptual themes he had brought to the experience have been reduced to nothing by the sheer impact of that instance. From her vivacity for life he imbibes the truth. The horn, a beautiful piece "covered with the unbroken skin from a buck's shank and bound with silver", which he pretends to be Roth's, but which actually belongs to him, is not merely a souvenir of his hunting glory. It embodies a texture of experience which he considers invaluable to life. This is the

climactic moment when man and motif culminate in one movement, to assert existence over endurance. The hunting horn, in the context of Ike's experience in the woods acquires greater significance. The exchange of the horn is not merely the old man's puny effort to compensate on behalf of his nephew. It is his endorsement of her gesture of repudiation. Ike responds to the self-generated zest for life in the doe-woman. Ike sees Roth as the agent of dehumanization and the woman as the victim of it. And yet in her bid to start life afresh he perceives her attempt to repudiate her condition. At first Ike is increasingly frustrated to find that the girl's trip to the camp is not in quest of cash or compassion. The old man is unnerved by "that grave, intent, speculative and detached fixity" of her gaze and he is unable to cope with her responses to her condition. He had anticipated the stereotype dramatics of tears and regrets and the serenity of her stance disturbs him. It is not even in a confessional tone that she tells him:

I knew what I was doing. I knew that to begin with, long before honour I imagine he called it told him the time had come to tell me in so many words what his code. I suppose he would call it would forbid him for ever to do. And we agreed. Then we agreed again before he left.
New Mexico, to make sure. That would be all of it. I believed him. No. I don't mean that; I mean I believed myself. I was not even listening to him any more by then because by that time it had been a long time since he had had anything else to tell me for me to have to hear. By then I was not even listening enough to ask him to please stop talking. I was listening to myself. And I believed it. I must have believed it. 98

The woman sees her condition as not a betrayal by man but a betrayal by time. In believing in herself, she had disregarded the circumstances and placed her faith in her own integrity. Her experience with Roth proves to her that life cannot be lived by continuously warding off time. And through this experience she not only learns to live with time but to prevail over it, symbolised in her statement:

'I'm going back North. Back home'.

Ike recognises the woman's commitment to life and the horn is his tribute to her stance. The exchange that follows between Ike and the woman is vital in its reaffirmation of the stance. If taken at the literal level there appears to be an incongruity between Ike's gift of the horn and his parting words:

98. Ibid., p.271.
"Then you will forget all this, forget it ever happened that he ever existed".

Taken in the context of Ike's own commitment, the words have greater significance for it is a test of the girl's integrity. Though he appears to pontificate when he tells her:

"That's right. Go back North. Marry a man in your own race. That's the only salvation for you - for a while yet, may be a long while yet. We will have to wait".

The emphasis is not on the counselling but on his evocation of time, time: "for a while yet, may be a long while yet".

The words suggest that Ike deliberately underlines the passage in time to provoke a response from the woman. And her reply is a confirmation of her repudiation of time:

"'Old man', she said, '"have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you don't remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?"

The dialogue between Ike and the woman does not signify a breach brought about by the irrevocable in two different races or two different generations. The exchange signifies a transcendence of such apparent distinctions in its alignment of human responses to time. The woman's reference to the experience of love is an endorsement of her commitment to the timeless. And Ike's acknowledgement lies in his
introspections after her departure:

No wonder the ruined woods I used to know don't cry for retribution. The people who have destroyed it will accomplish its revenge.\footnote{Ibid., p.275}

Ike's frustration, expressed in his trembling and panting form, is not directed at the woman and her flaunt at parting, but at himself for requiring a reaffirmation of the stance, a stance that he had identified earlier in the image of the immortal buck and the immortal bear.

A closer study of the language reveals that Faulkner projects the backdrop in each story of the triad to denote a phase in time and consciousness. The triad opens to an identical locale, the area being the delta region of the Tallahatchie and the sameness of season in the faint and steady rain of November; yet the description of the landscape in each tale invariably conveys a distinct texture of experience. In The Old People the background assumes a concave shape for it conveys the continual urge which is inward-bent. What Ike carries back from his first exposure to the wilderness is a "sense" of the big woods - "not a quality dangerous or particularly inimical, but profound, sentient, gigantic and brooding"; and with Sam's schooling, the woods appear to lure him towards a primeval experience. For the boy at that preliminary
stage, the areas of experience are compartmentalised and the exposure, to the woods is divided from life in the settled country, but a line 'as sharp as the demarcation of a doored wall'. The title itself and all of Sam's tales suggest an inhibited withdrawal toward reconciliation in a cyclic image of time. The boy, who had been trained to function in terms of the present only, becomes suddenly aware of the past involving itself in the present and even appearing to control the future. It is this new concept of time which intrudes on his imagination evoked in the fleeting line of 'those dead and vanished men of another race' and he strives to translate into reality, the vision of the immortal buck. This movement precipitates a moment of crisis for the youth, because he longs to identify with the time-motif, and yet his innate reason withholds him from such an endorsement. In a humanistic framework of reference, as determined by McCaslin's exposition, it becomes difficult for Ike to place the vision of the buck. When Ike is in despair his cousin quibbles thus:

... because after all you don't have to continue to bear what you believe is suffering; you can always choose to stop that, put an end to that. And even suffering and grieving is better than nothing: there
is only one thing worse than not being alive, and that's shame.

This remark provides the boy with a norm of life, a hunter's code of ethics, but not a way of living. And the story ends with Ike straining to reassert his wavering faith in his vision, in order to establish the efficacy of his experience.

The landscape of The Bear supercedes the earlier tale in its complex delineation of time. Though at the mythical level, the woods represent a cyclic regeneration, the "Edenic time" as Hoffman terms it, yet the constant involvement of the consciousness appears to implicate the linear form. Here the dialectical tension shifts from the conceptual to the empirical tone. The wilderness assumes a new shape in the image of "a corridor of wreckage and destruction" and the conflict acquires a new dimension thus, "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", in the projection of the bear. For the hunters the yearly rendezvous with Old Ben becomes the framework of reference while the falling wall of dense November woods is discarded with facility, and likewise

100. W.F. The Old People, GDNN, pp.143-144
the death of the bear brings an end to the annual ritual. But in Ike these shifting images create an anguish in adjustment. The preconceived lies in his belief that the woods are timeless, 'older than any recorded document', and what he comes to learn in the killing of the bear is the timelessness of one gesture. The polarity is further heightened by the symbolic implication of the ledgers at one level and the biblical assonance of the rhetoric at another. The unfolding of the ledgers is not the boy's attempt at a reconnaissance of his ancestry but an effort to reconstruct the past for realising truth within the present. What he discovers is that history is a false record, that truth cannot be learned but must be lived. The stylised dialogue of section IV underlines the dichotomy. When Ike justifies the Bible that, 'it had to be expounded in the everyday terms which they were familiar with and could comprehend', he implies that the mythical form of revelation in the 'Bible was adopted to facilitate comprehension in the common man. The argument between Ike and Cass is not regarding truth and untruth but of temporal perspectives. The dialogue exposes responses to the Biblical rhetoric. To Ike, the mode itself appears to generate a false sense of security as evident in Cass' self-righteous tone. Ike differs from his cousin in his tentative approach. This dialectical tension is reiterated
in the last section of *The Bear*. Ike's visit to the woods after the death of Old Ben does not appear to be out of a romantic nostalgia for the past; this is his first move to reconstruct an experience. To reduce the scene to its symbolic content and to label the image of the train as representative of the erosion by industrialisation, and to read the legend as a pastoral idyll is a possible line of approach. But the image of the train visualized as "dragging its length of train behind it so that it resembled a small dingy harmless snake" and the focus on the pace as "a lethargic deliberate clashing of slack couplings", suggests an added dimension in the engagement of time and distance. And to contrast with the slow pace of the train the majestic motions of the rattle snake are exaggerated, as it overwhelms Ike by the sheer grandiosity of its gesture. The image of the Gum Tree as "one green maelstorm of mad leaves" adds yet another dimension to the delineation of time. This image contributes to the bear motif for it assumes the same stance in inversion. As Ike views the scene, the tree seems to come alive with the frenetic motions of the squirrels while Boon sits at its base furiously hammering "with the frantic abandon of a mad man". Boon's verbalisations begin and end on an identical note "Get out of here! Don't touch them! Don't touch a one of them! They are mine!" This moment generates the process of
dissociation in Ike. The futility of Boon's frenzied gesture leads back to the act of slaying the bear. The texture of experience borne by this motif suggests that any attempt to resolve the duplicity in time by such inductions of spatial forms can never yield results. Identification with the spatial invariably lures one to sacrifice as in Sam, while eradication of it through counter pressure ends in self-destruction as in Boon. Ike's emotional distancing enables him to confront the tension, not through compromise or repulsion but in the containment of it. And this aesthetic stance is evoked by Ike in his reference to the Keatsian Ode in his dialogue with Cass in Section IV. Ike deletes the content of the entire poem and uses only one line of the stanza to explicate the timeless form of the urn, "for she cannot fade though thou hast not thy bliss". He chooses this statement rather than the truth beauty formula, for it contains the essence of a dialectical tension which he is not merely aware of but which he has begun to acknowledge. The renunciation of the land is not for Ike, a grand act of absolution, but a gesture of commitment to the timeless in experience.

The revised backdrop of Delta Autumn denotes the assimilation of experience. Linear time which continuously
intrudes on the scene in The Bear story acquires greater significance here by a more serious implication of the future. Just as the demarcation between the wilderness and the settled county has etiolated into a dissolving line, the textures of experience which had once been so distinct seem to fuse into one. The changed face of the land does not merely invoke the past to assuage the present but becomes a prologue of the times to come. A sentence in the opening page as this, "Now they went in cars, driving faster and faster each year because the roads were better and they had farther and farther to drive", is not merely to create a sense of continuity, but to readjust the pace of progression in time. Ike's experience in the forest in Delta Autumn is representative of this readjustment. As the hunting party moves in the direction of the forest, the old man apprehends the moment of crisis. The inward pull in time is felt as he discovers that:

the retrograde of his remembering had gained an inverse velocity from their own slow progress, that the land had retreated not in minutes from the last spread of gravel but in years, decades, back toward what it had been when he first knew it.

102. W.F. Delta Autumn, GDM, p.258
But once established in the camp, reinforcement from the present instance appears to counteract the incline toward recession. There are two incidents which endorse the force of the present, one being the occasion when Ike takes the horses to the water as they unload to set up the camp, and the second is the same evening as they gather around the fire. The members of the hunting party begin to realize that they have nothing in common with each other except the purpose of the hunt, and they would sooner part, yet they find themselves gathered together "apparently held there yet by his quiet and peaceful voice as the heads of the swimming horses had been held above the water by his weightless hand". Ike now visualizes the corridors of time as "two spans running out together, not toward oblivion nothingness, but into a dimension, free of both time and space"; the 'two spans' signify the polarity in time, and the moving toward a dimension, free of both time and space conveys that the polarity is not resolved but contained by an experience in timelessness. The wilderness now appears for Ike, like the surface of the Grecian urn to the viewer, to be the delineation of a dialectical tension etched on the face of the earth and the old hunters 'moving again among the shades of tall unaxed trees and sightless brakes where
the wild strong immortal game ran for ever before the
tireless belling immortal hounds, falling and rising
phoenix-like to the soundless guns". The distancing is
further enhanced in Ike's exposure to the doe image in
Delta Autumn. It is from this confrontation that he
learns that the cult of progress by which 'man has deswamped
and denuded and derivered''the land, has also set the pace
for a new mode of experience in the process of dehumanization.
The t- t motif in its most vivified shape is superimposed
on this conflicting surface of reality, and it is the
sincerity of her stance that Ike acknowledges in endorsement
of his own experience, at fourteen when:

... he learned of it had believed he could do both
when he became competent and when at twenty-one he became
competent he knew that he could do neither but at least he
could repudiate the wrong and shame at least in principle.103

The 'serenity' that Faulkner attributes to Ike does not
spring from a recognition of polarity but from a containment
of it. Against the backdrop of that faint light and the
constant and grieving rain the triad closes with Ike's
veiled reference to the timelessness of the doe-woman's
gesture of repudiation. The subdued tone at the end of
Delta Autumn suggests that a containment of the experience
in timelessness lies in muted assent rather than in

103. Ibid., p.265
104. Faulkner at the University eds. F.L. Gwynn and
J.L. Blotner (New York: Random House 1965) p.54
vehement assertions as at the close of The Old People. The movement of the triad traces the shift in Ike's consciousness from the knowledge of time generated by change to an existence in time precipitated by crisis.

The limitation of The Bear triad appears to lie in the scope of the experience, which tends to resist itself to the individual. Though the changing landscape underlines a transformation from an inward exploration to a widened spectrum, the individual's extent of involvement fails to match the revised setting. The reference to the cultural context in the image of the doe-woman is too perfunctory to be effective. She functions mainly toward the integration of the collective unconscious and the process of individuation in Ike. The experience in the triad appears to limit itself to the individual in isolation, rather than the individual within his community.