

A Comprehensive Study Guide for William Faulkner's "Go Down, Moses"

William Faulkner's "Go Down, Moses" is a collection of seven interconnected stories that explore the complex history and racial tensions of the American South. Published in 1942, the novel is considered one of Faulkner's masterpieces and has been widely praised for its intricate prose and profound insights into human nature. This comprehensive study guide will provide an in-depth analysis of the novel, examining its themes, characters, historical context, and literary devices.



Study Guide for William Faulkner's Go Down, Moses (Course Hero Study Guides) by Kira Saito

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 954 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 36 pages

Lending : Enabled



Major Themes

Race and Racism

"Go Down, Moses" is a powerful indictment of the systemic racism that permeated Southern society in the early 20th century. Faulkner unflinchingly depicts the violence, discrimination, and oppression faced by African Americans in the Jim Crow era. The novel explores the deep-

seated prejudices and fears that perpetuate racial inequality, as well as the corrosive effects of racism on both individuals and society as a whole.

History and Memory

The stories in "Go Down, Moses" are deeply rooted in the history of the American South. Faulkner weaves together past and present, personal and collective memories to create a rich tapestry that illuminates the complex relationship between the region's past and present. The novel traces the legacy of slavery and the Civil War, exploring how their repercussions continue to shape the lives of Southerners generations later.

Family and Community

Family and community play a vital role in "Go Down, Moses." Faulkner's characters are deeply connected to their families and communities, but these bonds are often strained by the pressures of race, class, and history. The novel examines the complexities of human relationships and the ways in which individuals both support and betray one another.

Major Characters

Isaac McCaslin

Isaac McCaslin is the central character in the novel. A wealthy landowner and former slaveholder, Isaac grapples with his family's history of slavery and his own complicity in the oppression of African Americans. Over the course of the novel, he undergoes a moral reckoning, coming to a profound understanding of the evils of racism and the importance of social justice.

Lucas Beauchamp

Lucas Beauchamp is a proud and independent African American man who refuses to accept the limitations imposed upon him by white society. He is a skilled craftsman and a respected member of his community, but he is also subject to the indignities and violence of racism. Lucas's story serves as a powerful indictment of the hypocrisy and brutality of the Jim Crow South.

Roth Edmonds

Roth Edmonds is a young white man who becomes increasingly disillusioned with the racist attitudes of his peers. He befriends Lucas Beauchamp and becomes increasingly involved in the struggle for racial equality. Roth's journey represents the possibility of change and reconciliation in a society deeply divided by race.

Historical Context

"Go Down, Moses" is set in the American South in the early 20th century, a time of profound social and political upheaval. The novel reflects the rise of Jim Crow laws and the resurgence of white supremacy that followed the Reconstruction era. Faulkner's characters grapple with the legacy of slavery and the ongoing struggle for racial equality, providing a vivid portrait of a society struggling to come to terms with its past and present.

Literary Devices

Faulkner employs a variety of literary devices in "Go Down, Moses" to create a rich and complex narrative. These include:

* **Stream of consciousness:** Faulkner uses this technique to capture the inner thoughts and emotions of his characters, providing a deeply immersive and psychological experience for the reader. * **Multiple perspectives:** The novel is told from multiple perspectives, allowing the

reader to see events through the eyes of different characters. This technique creates a multifaceted understanding of the story and its various themes. * **Symbolism:** Faulkner uses a wealth of symbols throughout the novel, such as the river, the forest, and the hunt, to explore his characters' relationships to nature, history, and society.

"Go Down, Moses" is a challenging but rewarding literary masterpiece that offers a profound and unflinching examination of race, history, and the human condition. William Faulkner's masterful prose and intricate storytelling transport the reader to the American South of the early 20th century, providing a vivid and unforgettable portrait of a society grappling with its past and present. Through its exploration of complex characters, haunting themes, and historical context, "Go Down, Moses" continues to resonate with readers today, offering timeless insights into the complexities of race, identity, and the ongoing struggle for social justice.



Study Guide for William Faulkner's Go Down, Moses (Course Hero Study Guides) by Kira Saito

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 954 KB

Screen Reader: Supported

Print length : 36 pages

Lending : Enabled

FREE

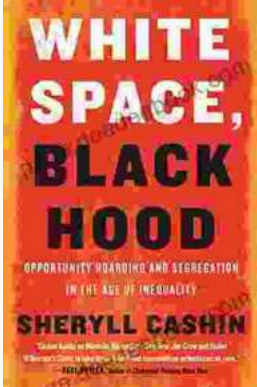
DOWNLOAD E-BOOK





Every Cowgirl Loves Rodeo: A Western Adventure

Every Cowgirl Loves Rodeo is a 2021 American Western film directed by Catherine Hardwicke and starring Lily James, Camila Mendes, and Glen...



Opportunity Hoarding and Segregation in the Age of Inequality

In an age marked by profound inequality, the concepts of opportunity hoarding and segregation have emerged as pressing concerns. These phenomena...