Faulkner and Love: The Women Who Shaped His Art

Judith L Sensibar


The book "Faulkner and Love: The Women Who Shaped His Art" by Judith L. Sensibar is a groundbreaking work that explores the lives and relationships of three women who played significant roles in the development of William Faulkner's work. Sensibar, a scholar of Faulkner's life and literature, delves deeply into the lives of Estelle Oldham, Nellie Frock, and Rilla Templeton, who were integral to Faulkner's creative process.

Estelle Oldham was Faulkner's first love and a constant presence in his life. Nellie Frock was a slave who inspired Faulkner's portrayal of African American women in his writing. Rilla Templeton, Faulkner's wife, was a source of support and inspiration. Sensibar's research reveals the profound influence these women had on Faulkner's art and his understanding of race and gender.

By examining the lives of these women, Sensibar provides new insights into Faulkner's personal and professional life. She argues that Faulkner's early education and experiences were shaped by Estelle Oldham's lessons and the stories he heard from Rilla Templeton. Sensibar's work also challenges the traditional view of Faulkner as a solitary and isolated writer, highlighting the importance of relationships in his creative process.

Faulkner and Love is essential reading for any student of Faulkner's fiction. It offers a fresh perspective on the complex and multifaceted world of southern literature and provides a richly detailed account of how Faulkner's personal relationships shaped his artistic vision.