

All the King's Men

Robert Penn Warren

Themes

As you read through the novel, pay attention to the following themes and discuss where you see signs of them through characters and events:

1. Power and Corruption
2. Individual responsibilities, especially regarding others and society in general
3. Fatherhood—the importance of fathers; the search for the missing father
4. Alienation
5. The “Spider Web” Theory
6. The Great Sleep
7. The “Great Twitch”
8. The Old South (especially in light of the New South)
9. Time—how much does Penn Warren refer to time throughout the novel? What impact does time have on the structure of the novel?
10. Change—what are its costs?

Title

What is the origin of the title? Who are “all the king’s men”? What is the significance/impact of this title on the work as a whole?