

1. Why is it that Coming of Age, Redemption, and Brother's keeper are such prevalent themes in literature?

Coming of age is like gaining more knowledge about things we could hardly understand and thereby making it more vivid in mind. The gaining of knowledge come with the realization that the rest of the society knew what we did not know and; therefore, one comes of age of their peers like Brown in his dream. Brother's keeper theme encourages people to be concerned with other peoples' well being. It promotes justice, and peaceful coexistence in the society and thereby everyone should be caring to their neighbors. Redemption is starting a new beginning different from the past with the realization of what is righteous life.

2. In "Young Goodman Brown" what is one example of sin in his community that is that the "Dark Figure" reveals?

The effect of the dream on Mr. Brown was that he began treating everyone with contempt. Hypocrisy of members his community likes his minister, the deacon, and the woman who taught the young Goodman brown catechism. The worst all is his realization that Faith his wife is also a member of the spiritual cult. Brown realizes that through the dark figure's assistance his grandfather was able to lash at a Quaker woman, and his father kindling pitch-pine knot at the devil's hearth to set the Indian village a blaze during the king Philips war.

3. Hawthorne seems to be criticizing Goodman Brown's community. What is the foundation for his criticism?

In Brown's community everyone seems to live a double life according to the dream; righteous during the day but evil at night. Goodman Brown believed that their family members were prayerful and of strong moral only to realize that his father and grandfather were wicked. The deacons and church ministers who were holy in the eyes of Goodman brown are the same people who wined and dined to the communion of the devil. Brown's teacher in catechism class was a righteous woman who looked destined for heaven, but she was also in the devil's ceremony. Faith, Brown's wife was also at the devil's meeting.

4. How is "Young Goodman Brown" an example of a coming of age theme?

Goodman brown, like many young men, idolized people like his minister, the deacon, and Goody cloyed thinking they were above reproach. The visit to the woods makes him dispel all those childhood idolatries with the realization that sinful people fill the world. Brown was of the opinion that his going to the woods is what made him see the failing of those he idolized. Brown came of age with the realization that being righteous is never about conserving one's absolute holiness but appreciating holiness beyond oneself.

5. How is the brother's keeper theme illustrated in "The Red Convertible"?

In the story, the red convertible bought by Henry and Lyman symbolizes Henry's life. Lyman tried fixing the car or Henry's life to his level best. It promotes caring for members of the society who are undergoing a rough time in life. Before Henry passed on, Lyman was always offering him assistance to recover from the war trauma.

6. The red convertible in Erdrich's story can be understood as a literary symbol – discuss the significance of the car, both literally and figuratively in this story.

The red car symbolizes the traditions and norms that hold the society together. Henry's going to war destroyed this traditional beliefs, which when he came back he found life so unbearable that he opted to commit suicide. One can only remain healthy and happy when they respect their tradition. However, losing traditional values in combination with post-traumatic experience can result in the destruction of man.

7. What are some examples from Alexei's story that show that the narrator need of redemption?

The narrator could not recognize anything as he drove around town and felt that he has lived much of his life that way (15). The narrator also drive into the residential area where he encounters racism and stereotypes and later tells the police that he know that he does not fit the profile of that residential area but just came to get into trouble (15). The whites and Native Americans conflict interfere with the relationship between the narrator and his white girlfriend (17). The narrator creates anxiety and tension by playing on the fears and stereotypes of a worker in the 7-11(16).

8. Why did the narrator do what he did in the 7-11? What conflict does this interaction reveal?

The woman that the narrator met and seduced wanted him to be what he was not. The worker could not agree to go with the narrator because his hand were small and, therefore, was still waiting for a crazy horse. The narrator did whatever he did, to show the treatment of contemporary Indian with stereotypical believes that they do not measure up to ideal crazy horses and are just a batch of alcoholics.

9. In Sonny's Blues, the context of the story is Harlem, during segregation. What evidence of racism is there in this subtext of the story?

Sonny's drug addiction and subsequent arrest are evidence societal segregation. Though sonny and his brother are both black, the narrator underwent assimilation, and, therefore, was behaving like a white man. The narrator does not want to associate with music and the brother just the same away as the whites. The mother of sonny's girlfriend described sonny as "mossy teeth in an earnest face" just because he was black. The killing of narrator's uncle through a car accident by drunken whites elicits hatred for the whites in the sonny's family.

1. What role does music play in this story?

The music is a unifying factor because, in the jazz club, everyone danced to sonny's music, and he was so popular with the patrons. When the narrator went to the club to see Sonny perform he was happy with his performance that he bought him drinks; therefore, the music cemented their shaky relationship. Sonny's blues served as a source of reconciliation and redemption between the two brothers.

11. What role does music play in your life? What is it?

When I listen to music, it sets the mood and vibes that give a highly individualistic and fulfilling experience. Music helps stimulate the mind through listening to melodies, themes, and rhythms that make one feel as if he is in foreign sound world, which is extremely vital for relaxation. Music helps open up an entirely new dimension of experience that enhances the physical coordination, and expression. It also offers an avenue for escaping everyday life or an alternative way to express one's opinion.

Essay

Young Goodman Brown characterizes one who is distrustful of his own faith. However, the dream changed his life making him believe that he committed a sin by meeting the devil and participating in the rituals. During these periods, the guilt of wrongdoing and superstitions overcame the sinners. Brown's dream left him devastated in that now he suspected everyone to be devils accomplices. His being superstitious overwhelmed his ability to trust or believe anyone. This made him die a bitter and miserable man.

Considering the time for the setting of the story, there was paranoia and suspicion that everyone could be in contact with the devil. Therefore, Brown was right to believe his dreams as a reality. Brown was a marvelous, happy, and decent man who was content with the little he had. However, all these changed when he met the devil in the woods against the advice of his wife Faith resulting in him losing his faith. The devil made him feel that anyone with power was his ally; thus, his main goal in meeting the devil was to acquire the power to enable him achieve his goals. Therefore, what made him change his mind was the realization that most people had sold their soul for power and prestige, and he had nothing to gain from associating with the devil.

In "The Red Convertible" Lyman is hardworking as he was able to make money to buy the red convertible car. He had the determination and passion for work, and, therefore, was making money. Lyman was optimistic in that despite his brother's change when he was in Vietnam, he had hopes that the red car would cheer him up and, therefore, spent so much in repairing the car to its original form. The story portrays Lyman as a truly caring man. He cares for his brother and tries his level best to transform him to his old self.

In the "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" the narrator shows an image of a humiliated man whose interaction with the whites always got him on the wrong side of the law. The narrator gives a picture of impoverished Native Americans emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. He is an alcoholic as other Indians who struggle to withdraw from alcohol abuse and change their lives. However, there was the need to redeem the narrator and his Native Americans from their destructive habits. There is confusion in the narrator in that he drives through Seattle and could not recognize anything familiar. The narrator is also adventurous as he goes to 7-11 where he meets a worker. The Native Americans endure multiple hardships combined with depression, despair, and poverty.

In the "Sonny's Blues," Sonny's brother is serious and hardworking in that he has worked hard academically to be an algebra teacher in a high school. He seems successful because he has a stable job and manages to keep off the drug life of Harlem. Sonny's brother is a racist; he seems not to associate with black Americans living in Harlem, even his own brother Sonny. He also seems undecided in that he does not know whether to associate with his brother or not while Sonny was in prison. However, after the death of his daughter, he sent Sonny a letter and thereafter they decided to improve their relationship.