

What You Pawn, I Will Redeem

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ENG125

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February 19, 2018

“What You Pawn, I Will Redeem” (Alexie, 2003)

The need to have his grandmother’s dancing regalia back is the driving force as to why Jackson works hard. ¹

Literary work serves an imperative role in contemporary society. Students can understand different ways of approaching literary work which enhances communication and how an individual analyses ² literature. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine the literary work given above.

The work by Alexie shows a clear representation of what a desire can drive an individual to do. In the work, Jackson, the main character finds himself at crossroads. At crossroads, because his grandmother had died a long time ago but while traveling with his friends he notes dancing regalia at a pawn shop which he understands to belong to his granny. As such, Jackson, therefore, vows to buy it back after the pawnbroker tells him he has to offer a whopping \$999 to get it back. But one would ask what drives Jackson to undertake all that he does to recover the regalia, is ³ it the desire to be reconnected with his past or simply because he wanted to have it back to avoid it being sold to another person? Such questions arise when one analyses this work. From the work, it is apparent that Jackson’s concern for the dancing regalia is deeper than one can imagine. Ideally, when he decides to sell newspapers to raise money to recover his grandmother’s dancing regalia is a clear indication that the regalia held a special place in his life. He wanted it to remain a constant reminder of his grandmother. Perhaps this dancing regalia was what would make him clear the somber mood and bad feeling which he experienced when he

1. Thesis needs to be further developed. A good thesis is a type of argument--what do you think the story means or why do the characters do the things they do? [Joseph Hankinson]

2. **analyses** spelling [Joseph Hankinson]

3. **regalia, is**
A comma splice is a type of run-on sentence. Review sentence boundaries. [Joseph Hankinson]

remembered her grandmother. The idea of deciding to sell newspapers in spite of knowing it would need him to sell many to raise the money do not discourage him, but rather he keeps on trying. From this, it is clear that he desired to have something tangible that could reconnect him with his culture and past and the dancing regalia was the perfect something for him. In the work, "What You Will Pawn, I Will Redeem," Alexie (2003) argues that Jackson is a determined person to raise the money to buy back the regalia albeit he faces many challenges while endeavoring to raise the money. For example, the author shows how Jackson desire for alcohol affects his mission because he uses the little money he raises to buy three bottles of alcohol which he drinks with his two friends.

Jackson's addiction to alcohol stands out to be one of his biggest challenge in his mission to raise money to recover his grandmother's dancing regalia. From the story, it is apparent how far an individual can go to reconnect with their past. It is this desire to get to reconnect with the Indian culture that kept pestering him and not merely the desire to have the regalia back with him. In reality, the author attempts to use the regalia as a symbol of Indian culture which the main character pursues with much zeal. In his work, "The Hero of the Modern Mock Epic," Cline (2010) explores how the desire for this reconnection pushes the main character to work hard while at the same time facing a big challenge in alcohol addiction. Ideally, the author uses Jackson's challenge in alcohol to express how alcohol addiction has become a social challenge in the contemporary society. Many people in the society today have become addicted to alcohol and especially the young people in the community. To this end, therefore, alcohol addiction is a social issue that needs to be addressed, and that is what the author is trying to portray through using it as a challenge facing the main character in the work by Alexie.

Jackson's social nature is well captured in the story and acts as one of his good characters which enables him to finally get the dancing regalia back. Jackson's social nature is used by the author to exemplify what a collectivistic society should be like. To the author, society is supposed to be mindful of each member of the society when in need as seen from the way Jackson's friends helped him while undergoing this difficult time. His social nature helps him interact with many people ranging from a police officer, waitress to the pawnbroker. This social nature in a society is what the author is advocating for in an ideal society. In his work, "Dialogue and Discourse Structure: A Speech Move Analysis of Sherman Alexie's Story 'What You Pawn I Will Redeem,'" Troyer (2008) discusses the various conversations which take place between the main character Jackson and other individuals to show the readers the true nature of Jackson. For example, Troyer describes the conversation of Jackson and the pawnbroker at the end of the story where Jackson is finally given the regalia at a lower price by the pawnbroker.

Ultimately, the work by Alexie presents an analysis of the importance of culture to a person. from the above discussion, it is apparent that Jackson wanted to reconnect with his past and the only way was through his grandmother's regalia.

-2

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1. Good start! Be certain to follow all requirements for the final draft and my comments as you revise. A good grade on the rough draft does not guaranty a high grade on the final draft. Final grades are based on how well you revise.
[Joseph Hankinson]

2. Conclusion should be further developed. What has your literary analysis done to unlock the mystery of what the story means or why the characters act the way they do? Why is this important?
[Joseph Hankinson]

References

Cline, I. (2010). The Hero of the Modern Mock Epic: Sherman Alexie's 'What You Pawn I Will Redeem.'. *The Image of the Hero II*, 139-41.

Troyer, R. A. (2008). Dialogue and Discourse Structure: A Speech Move Analysis of Sherman Alexie's Story 'What You Pawn I Will Redeem.' *The State of Stylistics.-Amsterdam: Rodopi*, 303-331.