**Lecture II Plot (情节)& story（故事）：The Rocking-horse Winner**

**Questions for group discussion**

**1. Identify the various stages of the plot development in the story:**

**The exposition ends in Para. 7**, In this part the scene is set, necessary background information, such as characters and their situations, is provided.

**The complication** para.8-168: Paul learns from his mother that because they are unlucky they are lack of money, he decides to find luck to make the family have more money. He finds his luck by riding his rocking horse to predict the winning horse in the next horse race. And he succeeds in predicting the winner horse in a race and wins as much as ten thousand Pounds. Paul decides to use half of the money he has won as birthday gift to his mother to stop the whispering in the house.

**Climax/turning point**: para.169-182 : However, unlike what Paul has expected, his birthday gift fails to satisfy his mother, who wants to have the five thousand Pounds all at once and who very quickly uses up all the money. So, instead of stilling the whispering in the house, the whisper for more money goes mad, Paul is greatly frightened, he is in great agony and forced to overwork himself.

**The falling action**: Para.183- 235: Determined to find out the winning horse in the Derby Race, Paul makes himself overwrought and loses his consciousness after predicting the winning horse.

**The resolution**: para. 236-244: Paul makes great money for his parents at the cost of his own life.

**2. How do you understand the last sentence of the story?**

It’s better for the poor boy to leave this cruel world in which he could find no love for him than to ride his rocking horse to find a winner to buy love from his mother.

**3. How do you think of Paul’s parents, his uncle and Bassett? What role does each character play in leading Paul to his tragic death?**

His parents are extremely unloving, uncaring, and vain, especially his father is an irresponsible father and husband, who shifts his responsibility for the family to his young boy while enjoying the benefits of the money earned at the price of his son’s life. Hester is no better than her husband, if they were not so greedy, maybe Paul would not have died. Uncle Oscar and Bassett don not give Paul real help they only take advantage of him to make money. If they take some measures to help Paul relieve the burden that he should not assume, may be the tragedy could be avoided.

**4. Do you think Paul’s death will finally still the haunting whispers in the house and render his parents changed people? Why or why not?**

Maybe it will temporarily still the haunting whispers when Paul’s parents still have enough money, but when the money is used up, they would feel the want of money as before. Paul’s death won’t make much change in his parents, as they don’t have great feeling for anybody but themselves. Maybe they would just regard it as bad luck that Paul should die so young that he is no longer able to give them more money.

**5.** **What kind of society is reflected in the story?**

The story reflects a money-worshiping materialistic society, in which there is a profound lack of love between family members.

**6. The rocking horse is an important literary symbol in the story. What possible meaning might it suggest?**

It might symbolize Paul’s desire to remain as a child. It might also symbolize that his dream is doomed to failure since the rocking horse is not a real horse.

**Lecture III Narrative sequence:** **The Ant and the Grasshopper**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

**1. What is the narrative sequence of “The Ant and the Grasshopper”?**

Flashback: the narrator first runs into George sitting unhappily in a restaurant, then he starts to present the Ramsay brothers to the reader, and after that he shifts back to the conversation with George in the restaurant.

**2. What is the narrative sequence of “The Rocking-horse Winner”?**

It is presented in chronological sequence, for everything is told in the time order.

**3. Is there any foreshadowing in the story?**

Yes, there is. In Para.5 I could never reconcile myself to the lesson of “the Grasshopper and the Ant”. My sympathies were with the grasshopper and for some time I could never see an ant without putting my foot on it. All these descriptions foreshadow the final results of the two brothers.

**4. Why does the author** **purposefully put Tom in the grasshopper’s position and George in the ant’s position, and has Tom rewarded rather than George?**

Because Tom behaves just like the grasshopper, who hates working but likes to enjoy himself and be idol, while George believes in hard work and has more self-discipline. He has Tom rewarded to achieve an unexpected effect and to reflect real life truly, because, in reality, we do find similar things occur, the industrious thrift people are not properly rewarded, but people like Tom often fare well maybe because these people are mostly unscrupulous who won’t care for anything, so they just do whatever they want so long as this can meet their ends.

**5. There seems to be a contest between George and Tom, what is it about? Whom do you agree with? why?**

This is a contest of two views of life, George believes in the value of hard work and self-discipline, while Tom just wants to enjoy himself and be idle.

I agree with George’s view of life, because it’s the only way for common people to live a decent life.

**Lecture IV Conflict& Stream of Consciousness:** **Eveline**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

**1. What’s the conflict in “Eveline”? Is it an internal conflict or external one?**

The conflict in “Eveline” is an internal conflict, it is the opposition between the protagonist’s desire to change her life, to pursue her own happiness and her fear of future unknown life and sense of guilt for not keeping her promise to her dead mother.

**2. Think about all the stories we have learned, can you identify a story with a character-against-character conflict, with a character-against-society?**

In “The Rocking horse Winner”, the conflict is an external one, it is the type of character-against-character, namely, Paul against his parents. He is forced to work himself to death do satisfy his parents greed.

In “The Ant and the Grasshopper”, the conflict is the type of character-against-society, in this mode the protagonist is confronted with a social group or belief that he or she disagrees.

**3.** Epiphany(顿悟) as a literary device to focus on the internal thoughts of a protagonist and reveal what motivates him or her to act and carries the plot forward. The protagonist will come to a sudden revelation of truth about life inspired by a seemingly trivial incident in their everyday lives that change their views of themselves or their social condition and often sparks a reversal or change of heart. **Can you identify an epiphanic moment in this story?**

Para. 20-22 a bell clanged in her heart, while all the seas of the world were tumbling about her heart, she felt Frank seize her hand and draw her into the seas of the world to drown her. She suddenly realized what to do, so she gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

This is an epiphanic moment in the story. Originally, she is not sure what to do whether she should remain at home or go with Frank. So she fervently prays to God for guidance, at the last moment, she suddenly realized the danger of going away to a strange country with no family about her, so she holds the iron railing firmly.

**4. Some people think Eveline has done the right thing in keeping her promise, others say she does not have enough courage to go with Frank? What’s your opinion? What would you do if you were** **Eveline?**

She has done the right thing in keeping her promise, firstly it’s her mother’s last wish that the family should keep together; what’s more, it’s not safe for a girl of 19 to go to a foreign country without her father’s knowledge. She does not really learn about Frank, nor does she really love him. What she really wants is just to escape from the present life. Comparatively, it’s much riskier to go away with someone she does not really know. If she goes away, given the social conditions, she would have no way to go back, that is to say, she could never meet her family again. If something had happened to her, she could have no one to turn to. So, on the whole, she is right to stay and keep her promise.

**5. Why does Eveline suddenly change her mind and decide to stay?**

Because when she comes to the station, the distressful scene of the quay and the boat makes her afraid of the unknown future, she suddenly realizes if she gets aboard, there would be no coming back. So, she changes her mind at the last minute.

**Lecture V Character(人物) &Characterization（人物塑造）: The Garden Party**

**Questions for Group discussion**

**1.** **Who is the protagonist in “The Garden Party”? What are the protagonist’s distinctive traits? What about other minor characters?**

Laura is the protagonist.

She is kind, sincere sensitive, and sympathetic, who is always ready to think for others; while her mother and sister are not like her, they are more cold-hearted, selfish and indifferent to others, especially to the poor.

**2. Is the protagonist a round character or a flat one? How is the characterization done?**

She is a round character, she is a kind, sensitive girl by nature, but her upbringing expects her to keep distance with the poor, however when she is contacting the workmen, she feels torn between two forces one is represented by her mother, the other is her own kind nature. In the course of the Party, she feels upset and confused about the way people around her behave when someone nearby is dead. She does not feel it is right to be so indifferent to other people’s sufferings simply because they are poor, however she could do nothing about it even though she has tried to do something to show her concern for the poor. As she is very young, influenced by others round her, she is also quick to forget the unhappy event. At the end of the story, when she comes to the poor family to present the food to them and experiences a completely different world from hers even though they are just divided by a road, she feels greatly disturbed and leans more about feeling for others. She is no longer the naïve girl she used to.

Her characterization is done mostly through showing, the narrator tells us nothing about her personality or thought, also gives no comment on the character; instead, the narrator just lets the character display herself through her action and words.

**3. Do you think Jose’s song is merely ridiculous and irrelevant in the story? Why or why not?**

Certainly, the song is not ridiculous and irrelevant. On the surface, Jose chooses to sing this song for fun, as she is young and born into a rich family, she should not have such experience as revealed in the song. Actually, the song functions as a foreshadowing of what is to happen to the poor neighbor who dies in the road accident. The song indicates that life is a hard toil and unpredictable, especially for the poor as they are more vulnerable to disasters and sickness.

**4. Why does Laura apologize for her hat? What does the hat symbolize?**

Because she is to pay a visit to the dead man’s family to show her condolence, she should have worn something more solemn rather than a fancy hat.

The hat symbolizes a happy occasion, this is disrespectful of the dead. Or it may symbolize the selfishness and indifference of the rich; It may also symbolize the distinction between the rich and the poor.

**5. What does Laura’s act of apologizing symbolize?**

The act symbolizes Laura’s psychological growth, she is no longer the weak girl in the beginning of the story who is easy to be influenced by others and could not make her own decision, at the moment of apologizing, she becomes stronger who is able to make her own judgement and decision and brave enough to assume responsibility for her own mistakes and her class’s. On the surface, she is apologizing for her improper dress, in essence, she is apologizing for her class’s selfishness and indifference.

**Lecture VI Point of View（视角）: Story 1:** **My Oedipus Complex**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

**1.Is the narrator of “My Oedipus Complex” a participant or just a witness?**

The narrator of the story is the main character of the story, who involves in the story heavily, so, he is a participant of the story.

**2. How does the author main a balance between the innocent perception of the child and the mature reflections of the adult?**

The story adopts the first-person point of view, through which the narrator tells us the story happening in his childhood. In the setting of the story, the narrator is already grown up, who recalls his early period of life before his father comes back from the war, in this part we get to know the background of the story; from Para.8 on, the perspective is shifted to the narrator as a five-year-old child, everything is told from the perspective of a little boy, the narrator becomes a naïve narrator, this makes the story interesting and convincing, the reader can better understand how a little boy views the world around him.

**3.** **In the story, the mother is not always kept in the foreground, but she is indispensable in a sense. What are the functions of this character?**

Mother is an important character in the story: firstly, her attitudes towards the father and the son cause their intense relationship, she has to serve an mediator between them; next, her preoccupation with the new born baby resolves the conflict between the father and the son, who originally fight for her love and attention. As a result of her neglect of them, they become united and resolve their conflict. So, Mother functions both as the cause of and solution to the conflict between the father and son, who plays a central role in pushing the plot forward. This makes the story funny and interesting.

**4. What’s the turning point for the tense relationship between the father and Larry?**

With the birth of another child, Sonny, Mother becomes preoccupied with the baby, ignoring both father and Larry, so they come to be in the same boat and understand each other better. In this way they get along better and better.

**VI Point of View（视角）Story 2 The Lost Phoebe**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

**1. What’s the point of view of “The Lost Phoebe”? How does it serve the writer’s purpose?**

The third-person omniscient point of view. This point of view is the telling of story by an all-knowing narrator, who seems to know everything about all characters, who is not limited by time and place who can move freely from place to place and one character to another, who not only reports but also speaks directly to the reader to tell his or her own views. This type of point of view can present a more inclusive overview of the events and characters.

**2. What are the points of view of “Eveline” and** **“Hills Like White Elephant” respectively?**

“Eveline” adopts the third-person limited-omniscient point of view, the story is told from the protagonist Eveline’s perspective, so everything is presented from her point of view, nothing is revealed that she does not see, hear, feel or think. This can make the reader easily identify with the protagonist.

“Hills Like White Elephant” on the other hand, adopts third-person objective point of view, which functions as a camera just recording the events without entering the minds and feelings of the characters, leaving the readers to interpret the actions of the characters.

**3. Where does the exposition of “The Lost Phoebe” end? What do we learn about the story’s setting and characters? Is there any foreshadowing for what is to happen in the later?**

The exposition ends in Para 13. From this part we learn about the old couple’s living conditions and family. They live in a remote part of the countryside where it’s not so prosperous. The old couple live in an old house where they have brought up five out of seven children. All of the children live away from the old couple and give little thought as to how it might be with their parents.

In Para.4 the children give little thought as to how it might be with their father and mother, this foreshadows Henry’s later tragedy; In Para 8 Phoebe threatens to Henry if he does not behave well, she will leave him and he will not be able to find her. This foreshadows Henry’s searching of Phoebe several months after her death.

**4. What do you think of Henry, his neighbors and children? Is there any possibility of preventing such a tragedy?**

Henry is a plain hard-working man who lives a simple life with his wife in the countryside all his life. He loves his wife very much so that after her death he could not bear the life without her he becomes out of his mind and finally comes to his death when he is searching for his dead wife.

His neighbors are very kind and sympathetic, they have tried what they can to look after the old man.

His children are cold-hearted, who are indifferent to their lonely father’s life. If they had shown any concern for him, and come to visit him regularly, maybe he would not feel so lonely and go mad.

**5. What do you think is most ironical in the story?**

It is ironical that Henry died alone and miserable when he jumps from a cliff, yet he is peaceful and there is smile on his face, which shows that for him, it’s better to die than living in a world with no one to love and no one loving him.

**Lecture VII Symbols : The Story of an Hour**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

**1. What do the house, the open window, the comfortable chair and the scene outside her house symbolize?**

The house symbolizes a prison that cages her; The open window stands for the way to freedom; the roomy chair stands for her refuge against the hush world, the scene outside her house symbolizes the beautiful new life she is expecting.

**2. What’s the point of view of this story?**

It is the third-person limited omniscient point of view. The story is told from the protagonist’s point of view through the heroine’s mental activity we learn a lot about her married life and why she behaves in that way.

**3. Do you agree with the view in Para.13 that “any intention, kind or evil makes the act of imposing one’s will upon others no less a crime?”**

Yes, I agree. Because when you do that you do not treat others as equals, they have the right to decide about their own life and to live their life in the way they prefer not in the way you would like them to. If you always to that to others, you will turn them into a puppet, who will either breakup with you or lose their enthusiasm for life,

4. What’s the irony of the ending?

The irony lies in that while most people believe that protagonist dies from too much grief, actually the readers know that she dies from great joy for her freedom in future life.

**5. What’s the nature of the conflict in the story? Who or what do you think is the antagonist?**

The conflict mainly belongs to the type of character against society, as the protagonist is mainly fighting against the social conventions of the time, when women generally do not enjoy equal status as men who always regard women as the inferior sex with lots of rights deprived. So. Society is the main antagonist.

**6. What lesson can you learn from the story?**

If you love someone, love him or her in the way he or she prefers, rather than in the way you prefer. / If you love someone, then you should give him or her freedom to live in the way he or she likes.

**Lecture VIII Setting(背景) : A Rose for Emily**

**Questions for Group discussion**

**1. What are the possible conflicts in the story? Which is the central one?**

The possible conflicts may include the conflicts between characters, the conflicts of character against society, character against him or herself. The reason why she could not find love may has something to do with her father who forbids his daughter to associate normally with young men and make his daughter an old spinster; the conflict of character against society refers to the fact that women at that time has low social status, who cannot decide their own fate, that’s why Emily ends up single and with no job to support herself; the conflict of character against him or herself refers to that even though the world has changed a lot since Emily’s father died, she stills refuse to get into the outside world, to change herself and adapt to the new world, instead she just isolates herself from the world, sticking to the old conventions, resulting in her tragedy in the end.

**2. What’s the point of view of this story? Who are “we”? Is the narrator a participant of the event or an observer? What is revealed by the use of first person plural narrator?**

The first-person point of view is adopted to narrate the story. The narrator “we” refers to all the town people except for Emily. The narrator obviously is the observer of the event. The use of “we” as the narrator indicates Emily’s isolation with the outside world. The world is divided into two parts, she and all the others outside her house.

**3. What is the function of the setting in this story?**

The setting tells us the social conditions of the time of the story which takes place in the turn of the 20th century when women still cannot enjoy equal social status as men, especially in Southern part of the U.S. The descriptions of the surroundings of Emily’s house help to create certain fearful atmosphere to indicate Emily’s abnormal change from a respectful fair lady into a fearful old spinster with abnormal mind. She is a victim of the old patriarchal society.

**4. Do you think Emily is a murderous person? Why or why not?**

Though Emily kills Homer, we cannot simply label her as a murderer, she is a very pitiable woman. When she is young, her father denies her the right to happiness, who drives out all the young men who come to court her maybe simply because he believes they are not good enough for their family. When she falls in love with Homer in order to be together with him forever, she kills him and sleep together with the body for several decades. This shows she has become an abnormal woman who hungers for love yet no longer knows how to love.

**5. What’s the symbolic meaning of the title?**

The rose stands for love that Emily yearns for but fails to get. She has tried to get her happiness but fails time and time again, in the end, she has to do it in her own way though what she gets is not love but a dead body. But the author still believes that she deserves to get love because she is a victim of the society.

**6. Is there any foreshadowing suggesting the events to come in the plot?**

Yes, first of all, Emily’s buying of the poison is a foreshadow of Homer’s cause of death which explains his mysterious disappearance; then, the bad smell in Part 2 indicates the death of Homer. The insane great aunt indicates Emily’s similar result.

**Lecture IX Theme : The Open Window**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

1. What is the irony of the story?

Originally Framton is supposed to get a respite in the countryside from his nervous illness, however he ends up being tricked and frightened away by a girl. This is an obvious irony.

A more subtle irony is that though the story is entitled “the Open Window”, however, the characters involved are actually closing their windows to each other for they are conducting ineffective communication as they are all interested in speaking and talking about themselves rather than listening to others about other people.

2. Why is Framton taken in? How does Vera make it?

Vera makes up her story step by step, her logic is unassailable, everything sounds reasonable, and plus her duly performance Framton is completely taken in without any suspicion. She first makes sure that Framton knows nothing about her aunt, then invents a tragic story of three years ago to make him presuppose that Mrs. Sappleton’s husband and brothers were already dead in the hunting. She is sure When Mrs. Sappleton arrives, she is bound to talk about her husband’s hunting today, which makes Framton misunderstand that she’s so grievous about her husband’s death that she becomes out of her mind. With Vera’s facial expression, Framton firmly believes his judgement, so he tries to change the topic of hunting to his own illness to divert Mrs. Sappleton’s attention. When Her husband and brothers come back from hunting, which is sure to happen, Framton is convinced that they are ghosts and is greatly frightened so that he runs away hurriedly even without saying Goodbye to the hostess.

3. Why is a cyclist mentioned here?

To show that Framton is so frightened that he runs away without seeing anything clearly on the way, and he bumps into the cyclist.

4. What do you think is the central theme of the story?

The story reveals that though people at that time seem very refined and courteous, yet they do not really care about each other. In their communication, they are only interested in their own things without paying much attention to what others are saying. That’s why all those adults are tricked by the young girl. This kind of ineffective relations is like a great joke.

5. How do you think of Vera?

She is very intelligent because she can make up very convincing story within a very short time. And she has much knowledge about people’s psychology and know how to make this knowledge to enhance the effect of her story. Also, she makes fun of the hypocrisy of the adult world.

**6. What’s the symbolic meaning of the window in Vera’s story?**

It symbolizes the hope for life.

**Lecture X Irony(反讽) :** **The Cask of Amontillado**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

**1. Find the example of dramatic irony in the story.**

**Dramatic irony** builds on the difference of awareness between a character and the reader or some of the other characters, such examples include the course of their going to the wine cellar in which Fortunato has no idea that he is coming near his death.

**2. Can you find the examples of verbal irony in the story and tell their literal and actual meanings?**

**Verbal irony** builds on the contradiction between the literal meaning and the implied meaning of a statement, which occurs when one means the opposite of what one says.

The examples of verbal irony abound in the story, for example, Montresor calls Fortunato his friend actually he means “his enemy”; “your health is precious” which actually means “your health is nothing”; “(I drink) to your long life” means “to your early death” ; ”let me implore you to return” means “you’d better stay where you are”.

**3. What is a successful revenge according to Montresor? Do you think Montresor’s revenge a successful one according to his own criterion? Why or why not?**

According to Montresor, successful revenge means that on the one hand, the avenger should not get punished for his revenge; on the other hand, the wrong doer should realize that he is being revenged by the one he has wronged. Maybe his revenge is not a successful revenge entirely, because Fortunato may not realize that he is being revenged upon when he dies.

**4.How do you think Fortunato might have offended Montresor? Do you think Montresor has to kill Fortunato?**

Fortunato is the kind of person who is very self-conceited, especially in wines, he is also rash and not so good-mannered with friends or acquaintance, so most probably, it’s the way he talks with friends that has offended Montresor. Of course not, in fact he has many other ways to solve the problem, for example, he can have an open talk with Fortunato to let him realize what has troubled him in their association, or he might find some others to make Fortunato realize his ill manners; At worst, he could break up with him rather than kill him in such mean way after all Fortunato is not really a wicked guy.

**5. What wrong does Montresor want to redress? How does not knowing what wrong Fortunato does to him intensify the horror of the story?**

The insult that Fortunato has done to him makes him determined to revenge, but actually we don’t know exactly what it is. This intensifies the horror of the story, because you will feel Montresor is a horrible person who is moody and sinister, you won’t know how you make him hate you and how he will revenge on you.

**Lecture XI The Narrator (叙述者): The Last Leaf**

**1. What is the type of narrator in this story? Why?**

The narrator of this story belongs to the omniscient third-person narrator. Because the omniscient narrator is free to move from place to place and character to character, who seems to know everything about all the characters, that’s why he is omniscient.

**2. What’s the point of view of The Cask of Amontillado? In the story we see everything from Montresor’s eyes, do you think he is a reliable narrator? Why or why not?**

The story adopts the first-person point of view. The narrator is also the main character in the story so, everything is told from his point of view. However, he is

Not a reliable narrator, because he is a mentally distorted person who might be easily offended by others unconsciously, for normal people this won’t be a big deal, but for him, it might cause unnecessary and deadly disaster to the others, as what has happened to Fortunato.

**3. In Para.42 there is a statement saying that “The lonesomest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey.” Who do you think makes such comment? What does the mysterious far journey symbolize?**

The comment is made by the omniscient narrator, who is commenting on Johnsy’s state of mind while waiting for her death, she is in great agony and feels most lonely because no one will accompany her on the way to death, everything is so mysterious about death, so it’s scary and seems far. The journey symbolizes the process of dying.

**4. Which character impresses you most? Why?**

The old man Behrman is a very impressive character, though he is not very successful in his career, he is kind, generous and ready to help others even at the price of his own life. In order to encourage Johnsy to defeat the disease he paints the last leaf at the night when it’s raining and cold. As a result, he develops pneumonia and dies. However, he does not fell regretful, but regards it as his masterpiece in his life.

**5. What is the significance of the story?**

The story praises the selfless love between these poor people who help each other in whatever way they can. It is exactly because of love from these people that Johnsy can go on to live, without their support it would not have been possible.

**6. What effect does the last leaf have on Johnsy?**

It encourages her greatly and fills her with the desire to live on, and she realizes her mistake of not wanting to live.

**Lecture 12 Allegory:** **Young Goodman Brown**

**Questions for Group Discussion**

**1.What’s the purpose of the author’s mentioning the similarity between Brown and his fellow traveler?**

According to the author, they are like father and son, not in features but in expression. Maybe the author wants to reveal that in some way everyone is sinful because the sin is hereditary, it indicates that Brown’s father also has done something bad in his life unlike what Brown has assumed. So, Brown is not necessarily better than anyone else.

**2. Try to explore and interpret the symbolic meanings of the following: Faith, the pink ribbon, Goodman, the forest, the staff, and the congregation in the forest.**

Faith literally means one’s belief, especially religious belief, it actually means people’s loss of religious belief;

The pink ribbon symbolizes some beautiful quality like naivete, the loss of the ribbon means the loss of the quality.

Goodman originally is used before a man’s surname to address a male, like the way “Mr.” is used, in the story, it also means man with good virtues, which carries some ironic meaning.

The forest symbolizes one’s inner world. It indicates that there is always a dark side in one’s mind.

The staff is a magic stick, symbolizing a contributing factor to someone’s bad deed.

The congregation in the forest symbolizes the world which is roughly composed of good people and bad ones, with the latter far less than the former. However, the so-called good people are not entirely so innocent who are also sinful one way or the other way. That is the way the world runs; however, Brown simply cannot accept this fact and becomes a very cynical and makes himself painful.

**3. What do you think is the central idea behind the story? Why?**

The central idea behind the story is that in some way everyone is sinful, no one is entirely pure and clean, even the well claimed role models have some secrets that cannot bear the light of day. When Brown finds all the so-called good people come to the congregation, including his own kins and those he has always respected, he entirely loses his faith in anything and becomes cynical and painful, and he treats his wife badly, so he is also sinful as a result.

**4. Would the meaning of the story be different if it is a mere dream?**

If it is a mere dream, maybe the impact on Brown would not be so great, he would simply dismiss it as a dream and then forgets it. So, it’s better the way it is.