

A photograph of a jazz musician, likely a trumpeter, in a dimly lit setting. The musician is wearing a light-colored jacket and is holding a trumpet. The background is dark with some warm, glowing lights, creating a moody atmosphere.

Jazz Poem Two

- Carl Wendall Hines, Jr

Notes and Solved Textbook Questions

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Chapter Summary

The Beginning

The musician's appearance is of someone who has faced a tough time in life:

- He has an unshaven and wrinkled face
- His old blue shirt is faded and frayed at the collar
- His jacket is worn
- His necktie is undone
- His stomach is sagging
- His shoes are old and have paper in them
- His saxophone is supported by a wire coat hanger around his neck.

The End

When the player begins to play on the saxophone, his whole personality changes:

- His music is compelling and can make people listen.
- The player is like a preacher and Jazz music is his Gospel.
- He resembles a bird that can fly towards freedom.
- When playing music he is not restricted by any societal constraints.
- The player has a commanding presence when playing which contrasts his earlier demeanour.

Others:

Black citizens in America have had to suffer several injustices over the years.

- The Jazz player could be a representation of all Black people,
- Jazz music could be a symbol of Black culture.
- The poet could be conveying that true freedom will be found only when Black people are able to fully embrace their culture.

Phrase	Figure of Speech
1. "...like a black Ancient Mariner"	Simile - The Jazz player is compared to a sailor from Samuel Coleridge's poem - 'The Rime of the ancient Mariner'.
2. "...Black Gospel of Jazz..."	Metaphor - Gospel refers to the Bible which is a reference to truth. Jazz is compared to the truth or true voice of Black people.
3. "...Screaming notes & chords ..."	Personification - Notes & chords are non-living entities that are said to perform the living action of 'screaming'.
4. 'A Bird'	Metaphor - The Jazz player is compared to a bird taking flight.

Understand the Poem Questions - Solved

1. Read the first stanza and see how closely the description of the Jazz player is made and fill in the columns in the table.

Answer:

1. Face	Wrinkled, unshaven
2. Eyes	Closed and downward facing
3. Ears	Closed, but perk up when listening to the baseline
4. Belly	Sagging with the worn jacket barely closing over it.
5. Shirt	Faded blue with a frayed collar
6. Shoes	Run-down and stuffed with paper

2. Why do you think the Jazz player keeps his head down? [lines 1-6]

Answer: The Jazz player is probably lived a troubled and tough life given his physical appearance of worn out clothes, wrinkled, unshaven face and weary expression. Thus, he keeps his head down as if to shield himself from the pain.

3. The word 'old' has been repeated several times in the first two stanzas. What does this suggest?

Answer: The word 'old' has first been used to describe the Jazz player's face suggested that he is an elderly person. The word 'old' is also used to describe his faded shirt and neck-tie suggesting that his clothes are worn and hence he may not be financially well off. His instrument is also described as an 'old alto-saxophone'.

4. What description do the lines from 13 to 18 suggest about the Jazz player?

Answer: The lines 13-18 describe the Jazz player's sagging stomach over which his worn jacket barely closes. It also describes the musician's run-down shoes with stuffed paper and his rough, unshaven face that highlights every wrinkle. All this suggests that the player is not financially well off and is not taking care of his appearance and physical self.

5. a) Read the lines from 19 to 25 carefully. Is there any change in the stature of the Jazz player?

b) Now read the lines from 31 to 35. Can you guess what he is meditating on?

Answer:

a) In lines 19-25, the Jazz player initially seems to stand with his head faced downward, closed eyes and ears as if to shield himself from the world around him. However, once he begins tuning his instrument, his ears perk up and there's seems to be a change in stature and an insertion of life and interest compared to his disinterested state before.

b) In lines 31-35, the musician seems to have gained confidence from his playing. He no longer wants to hide away from the world, instead he wants to announce that he is a proud Black Man. With the embracing of his identity, he also wants to announce that his purpose is to get the audience to listen to and appreciate Jazz music.

6. How has he held his instrument?

Answer: The musician's instrument, the alto saxophone is strapped across his chest as if the musician wishes to hold it close to his heart. It is supported by a wire coat hanger draped around his neck.

7. Read the lines from 29 to 41. It gives a picture. Can you imagine that? Try to get that picture in your mind. If you can, draw the picture.

Answer:



Hassan, M. (2018, November 30). *Saxophone Jazz Musician Silhouette*.
Stockvault.net - Free Stock Photos.
<https://www.stockvault.net/photo/256989/zlib/messages>

8. 'Preaching it with words' (line 35). What does 'it' stand for here?

Answer: 'It' refers to the Black Gospel of Jazz.

9. 'He is no longer a man', says the poet (line 37). Who else is he supposed to be if he is no longer a man?

Answer: When the musician plays his instrument, he is no longer just a man. Instead, he is transformed into a bird which can fly higher and higher, leaving behind all troubles and focused only on exploring new heights of his music.

10. Read the last ten words of the poem. You may observe a change in the tone. What is that about?

Answer: In the last ten words of the poem, the tone changes back to how it was in the beginning of the poem. The musician has finished his playing and is brought to the harsh reality that is his life. The freedom, joy and confidence that he experienced moments ago has gone, leaving behind the pathetic weariness that existed before he began playing.

Read and Appreciate Questions - Solved

1. Usually a poem is written in a stanza form with a rhyme scheme. Check and find out whether this poem follows any rhyme scheme. You may compare this poem with the poem, "Seal" given below.

Answer: The poem 'Jazz Poem Two' by Carl Wendall Hines, Jr. doesn't follow any consistent rhyme scheme.

The poem 'Seal' follows the rhyme scheme a b c b, d e f e and so on.

2. Refer to the last stanza of 'Jazz Poem Two'. Do you find anything extraordinary in the shape of the poem? Check the length of each line carefully. Why do you think lines 41, 42 and 43 are different from others? What does it suggest?

Answer: The last stanza, lines 41, 42 and 43 consist of only one word each. The emphasis is on that one word and it signifies the heights to which the Jazz musician can soar like a bird due to his joy in playing music. It offers complete undivided attention. It can also signify the crescendo of the music that would also require a ton of details.

3. The poem is full of images [word pictures]. Some examples are given. Now find as many images as you can in the poem.

a) wrinkled old face.

b) sagging stomach

c) frayed-collar

d) faded-blue old shirt turns dark with sweat

e) old necktie undone

f) worn old jacket

g) run-down shoes have paper in them

h) rough unshaven face

i) still down eyes

j) old 25 alto saxophone- supported from his neck by a wire coat hanger

k) gently he lifts it now to parted lips

l) gathers his wings & flies

4. Is there a simile in the poem? If so, identify it.

Answer: Yes, there is a simile in the poem. In the beginning, the Jazz musician is compared to a black Ancient Mariner.

Line 1 - 2: "There he stands, see? like a black Ancient Mariner".
