

Theme

What exactly is this elusive thing called theme?

The theme of a fable is its moral. The theme of a parable is its teaching. The theme of a piece of fiction is its view about life and how people behave.

In fiction, the theme is not intended to teach or preach. In fact, it is not presented directly at all. You extract it from the characters, action, and setting that make up the story. In other words, you must figure out the theme yourself.

The writer's task is to communicate on a common ground with the reader. Although the particulars of your experience may be different from the details of the story, the general underlying truths behind the story may be just the connection that both you and the writer are seeking.

Common Themes in Literature

The American Dream
The Development and Image of the Hero
The Meaning of Freedom
Individuality
Death and How To Deal With It
Religion and Faith
The Power of One
Human Relationship
Liberty and Authority
Community and Responsibility
Challenge and Success
Innocence and Experience
Guilt
Choices and Possibilities
Friendship
Family
Love