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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Freedom is the apparent ability to make choices that are free from any kind of constraints and which are based on one's own logic and morality. The protagonists of the following three literary works have managed to overcome shackles put on them by society, but the readers are left to wonder whether or not they really achieved the freedom they were yearning for. The tale of Goodman Brown epitomizes the conflict between personal freedom and conventionality in the guise of the oldest story in the world, the battle between good and evil. He leaves his wife, aptly named Faith, on a dark errand into the woods, where he will use witchcraft to explore uncertainties that trouble a man's heart and mind. What Goodman Brown fails to realize is that his religious convictions are rooted in his belief that all those around him are also religious, he mirrors the beliefs of people around him, making his faith become weak and rootless, while "the devil on his elbow" has more than an easy job to corrupt the seemingly pure. Universal questions must be asked, but it is the way one perceives these truths that affects the person, and it is exactly this perception of truth that turns Brown into a broken man. Kate Chopin liberates her female characters, not limiting her exploration of freedom to physical emancipation, but also intellectual autonomy. But, for them, it comes at a high price. Despite the positive implications of self expression, her heroines experience solitude as a consequence of independence, and it seems that for some characters, such as Edna, there is only one way out of her conventionally imposed role. The sea symbolizes freedom and escape, and when in the water, Edna is reminded of the depth of the universe and of her own position as a human being within that depth. In *Sister Carrie* Dreiser portrays a young small-town girl drawn by undefined

dreams to the great city and the men she meets during her search for fulfillment. She gets by on her looks and lives by the motto “ you are what you want.” In the end, having got what she so desperately desired, she was supposed to undergo a radical transformation for the better, but the conclusion of the novel does not constitute a fresh beginning. Dreiser's heroine has not triumphed over mediated desire, she has not achieved the clarity of vision necessary to contradict the ideas and transcend the obsessions that have driven and shaped her actions throughout the story. In the end, the question of whether these characters achieved their respected freedom is still left open, leading one to conclude that the price of freedom is not always accurately predicted. References: Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. New York: Prestwick House Inc, 2005. Print. Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981. Print. Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Young Goodman Brown and Other Tales*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Print.