There are several similarities as well as differences in the way the authors of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Blessings* developed a theme. The theme of *The Count of Monte Cristo* is to never give up hope. The theme of *Blessings* is to be willing to open yourself up to others. Both authors developed these themes through the actions of the main characters and in the conclusion of the passage. One of the differences in the development of both themes is that Alexandre Dumas sheds light on the thought process of the main character in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, while Mary Hall Surface provides limited information about what the main characters may be thinking in *Blessings*.

In *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the theme of never give up hope is developed by the actions of Edmond, a prisoner who “had resolved to die”. Upon hearing a scratching sound, Edmond becomes hopeful that another prisoner is attempting to escape and that he too may be able to gain freedom. This new sense of hope transforms Edmond. He talks to the jailer in an effort to block the sound of the scratching. He resumes eating and devises a plan to determine if the scratching sound is just a worker or a prisoner attempting to escape. These actions show the reader that if you don’t give up hope, you can survive the worst of circumstances. In the conclusion of the passage, the reader is led to believe that Edmond’s actions will save him from death.

In *Blessings*, the theme of being willing to open yourself up to others is developed by the actions of both Jesse and Rene. Both characters express their preference to be by themselves. “Jesse: I’m not used to lots of new people”. “Rene: “I understand me when everybody else is lost.” Yet through their actions, both characters demonstrate their ability to open up to others. Both characters begin by expressing their interests/talents to each other. Rene paints picture maps with water colors, and Jesse makes mirrors out of redwood and writes poems. As the play continues, they open up even further. Jesse provides an honest answer to Rene’s probing question about Uncle Randy living with him. In the conclusion of the play, Jesse asks Rene to read the poem that he wrote, and Rene asks Jesse to eat dinner with them. Both of these actions lead the reader to believe that a new friendship is forming because both of these characters are willing to open themselves up to others.

One difference in the development of themes is that in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Dumas gives insight into Edmund’s thinking. The reader knows that Edmund has gone from a state of hopelessness (“For a week since, he had resolved to die…”), to a feeling of hope (“Full of hope…”). This makes the theme easier to identify. In *Blessings*, the reader hears/sees the dialogue between the main characters, but must draw conclusions as to what the characters are thinking. This leaves much more room for interpretation of the theme. Both pieces of writing provide well developed themes where similarities and differences can be effectively analyzed.