

SYMBOLS AND HUMAN NATURE IN  
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S "YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN"

A MASTER'S PROJECT  
BY  
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สัญลักษณ์และธรรมชาติของมนุษย์ในเรื่องสั้นของนาตานิเอล ฮอว์ธอร์น  
เรื่อง “Young Goodman Brown”

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

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เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ  
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อาจารย์ ดร.สุภาภรณ์ ยี่มิวัลย์

งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์การใช้สัญลักษณ์ของนาตาเนียล ฮอว์ธอร์นเพื่อนำเสนอธรรมชาติของมนุษย์ในเรื่องสั้นเรื่อง “Young Goodman Brown” โดยนำแนวคิดเรื่องสัญลักษณ์มาวิเคราะห์ในงานวิจัยครั้งนี้

จากการศึกษาพบว่า ฮอว์ธอร์นนำสัญลักษณ์หลายอย่างมาสนับสนุนเพื่อแสดงให้เห็นธรรมชาติของมนุษย์เพื่อให้ผู้อ่านเข้าใจในเรื่องนี้มากขึ้น สัญลักษณ์ที่ใช้อันดับแรกคือ ตัวละคร ได้แก่ กู๊ดแมน บราวน์, เฟธ, กู๊ดดี คอยส์, และผู้ร่วมเดินทาง จากการวิเคราะห์โดยผ่านตัวละครเหล่านี้ พบว่ามนุษย์มีทั้งด้านดีและไม่ดี สัญลักษณ์ต่อมาคือ ฉาก ได้แก่ ป่าและเมือง เมืองเป็นสัญลักษณ์ของสถานที่ที่มีแต่คุณงามความดี ขณะที่ป่าแสดงถึงความชั่วร้าย สัญลักษณ์สุดท้ายที่ฮอว์ธอร์นนำเสนอคือ ไม้เท้า แสดงถึงเครื่องมือของการกระทำชั่ว จากสัญลักษณ์ที่กล่าวมาข้างต้นนั้น ฮอว์ธอร์นแสดงให้เห็นถึงความดีและความชั่วที่เกิดขึ้นเป็นธรรมชาติของมนุษย์ ไม่มีใครคนใดดีเลิศเลอเพราะว่าความชั่วนั้นเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของธรรมชาติของมนุษย์

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The purpose of this research was to explore how Nathaniel Hawthorne employed symbols to present human nature in his short story "Young Goodman Brown." The concept of symbols was applied to analyze this short story.

The study found that Hawthorne employed many symbols to support this theme about human nature in order that readers would better understand his perception of human nature. Firstly, the characters -- Goodman Brown, Faith, Goody Cloyse, and the fellow-traveller - - were symbolic. Through these characters, Hawthorne proposed that they had both sides: goodness and evil. Secondly, the settings, the forest and village, were symbols. While the village symbolized meritorious and moral place, the forest represented evil. Finally, Hawthorne used the staff as a symbol of the instrument of evil. Through these symbols, Hawthorne showed that goodness and evil constitute human nature, so no one was perfect because evil was part of human nature.

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Thidarat Susirirat

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the great American writers. His first novel, Fanshawe, was based on his college life and published anonymously in 1829. Hawthorne felt ashamed of his work, so he withdrew most of the copies and burned them. After that he published a collection of short stories including Twice-Told Tales in 1837 and Mosses from an Old Manse in 1846. Then he married Sophia Peabody and moved to Old Manse in rural Concord. He returned to Salem as governor of the port. There he completed his masterpiece The Scarlet Letter in 1850, The House of the Seven Gables in 1851, and The Blithedale Romance in 1852. His last published novel was The Marble Faun in 1860.

Ira Konigsberg remarks that Hawthorne's short fiction contains fantastic, adventurous, and moralistic tales which were popular in his time. Hawthorne also concentrated on human nature; his characters often seem to become symbolic of

certain aspects of mankind in general. Hawthorne's work is in an old form with something new and important; his work is also psychological realism. It is colored by his Puritan background with its overwhelming concern about sin and guilt (3).

Ketsuda Vanit states that Hawthorne's works are fascinating because they contain the themes of sin and evil of mankind. Puritan society allowed him to analyze the inner feelings and minds of the characters. He felt ashamed of his ancestors' misdeeds.

Hawthorne believed that sin is in the nature of mankind; as John A. Hutchison says: "In Adam's Fall, we sinned all" (205). This belief affects Hawthorne's works.

"Young Goodman Brown" is one of Nathaniel Hawthorne's works which presents the sin and evil of man. It is considered one of the best stories in Hawthorne's collection Mosses from an Old Manse. The story was published in New England magazine in 1846. In the story, Goodman Brown meets the Devil. He leaves his wife, Faith, and walks through the forest with the Devil for one night. As Goodman Brown and the Devil are walking, he meets many people performing Devil worship ceremony. The Devil attempts to convert Goodman Brown from Christianity. However, Goodman Brown

refuses to worship the devil as the others do. At the end of the story, the readers have to decide for themselves whether Goodman Brown actually went to the meeting or only had a dream. After he returns to his Salem village, Goodman Brown loses everything about his faith. He believes that the entire world is evil. He becomes a miserable man who chooses isolation. Goodman Brown lives and dies in misery.

“Young Goodman Brown” is a short story that has a great number of symbols. Hawthorne uses the symbols to present human nature. Therefore, this study aims at examining the symbols which present human nature in this short story.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to study how Nathaniel Hawthorne employed symbols to present human nature.

### **Procedure of the Study**

1. Accumulation of Information.

- 1.1 Study of the concepts of symbols.
- 1.2 Study of research related to Nathaniel Hawthorne.
- 1.3 Study of Nathaniel Hawthorne's biography.
2. Information Analysis
  - 2.1 Study of "Young Goodman Brown."
  - 2.2 Analysis of symbols used in the text.
  - 2.3 Discussion of the use of the symbols to present human nature in "Young Goodman Brown."
3. Report of Findings

Presentation and discussion of the findings of the study.
4. Conclusion and suggestions for further studies.

### Scope of the Study

"Young Goodman Brown," a short story written by Nathaniel Hawthorne, was analyzed.

## Significance of the Study

1. The study will help readers better understand symbols presented in “Young Goodman Brown”

2. The study will help readers better understand human nature.

3. The study will help readers better understand Hawthorne’s work.

4. The study can be used as a guideline for further studies.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter comprises three major parts. The first part discusses the biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The second part presents the concept of symbols. The last part discusses previous related research concerning Nathaniel Hawthorne.

#### **Biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)**

Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the greatest American fiction writers of the nineteenth century. He was born on July 4, 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. He was descended from wealthy and influential citizens. The members of his family once participated in the Salem witch trials and Quaker persecutions in the streets of Salem for holding to a religion the Puritans strongly opposed. He could not forget that in 1692 these ancestors “made himself so conspicuous in the martyrdom of witches that their blood may be said to have left a stain upon him” (Carlsen et al. 100). These sins—

intolerance, cruelty, pride—obsessed the young Hawthorne while he listened to the history of early Salem and his ancestors. Bold Daniel Hawthorne, his grandfather, belonged to that early Salem. He was a naval captain in the Revolutionary War. He became the hero of a popular ballad. Other ancestors fought Indians to sail merchant ships and built up considerable fortunes in trade. But Hawthorne grew up in the nineteenth century “joyless” Salem, as he called it, in the “chilliest of social atmospheres,” and he loathed it. His father died of a fever in Dutch Guiana when Hawthorne was only four, and his mother moved her three children into her parents’ crowded Salem home in her brother’s house in Raymond, Maine. The father’s death caused the grief-stricken mother to seclude herself for the rest of her life.

Hawthorne went to Bowdoin College in 1821, where he befriended Franklin Pierce, who became the president of the United States, and the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. After graduating in 1825, he returned to Salem, but he did not intend to read law or enter business as his relatives had expected. He secluded himself in his mother’s house. He started his writing sketches and stories for magazines and

newspapers. His first novel was Fanshawe, which was related to his college life and published anonymously in 1829.

After that, Hawthorne traveled to New Haven, to Swampscott, to the mountain of Vermont. He regularly made observations of places and people as possible ideas for his stories. Finally, at the age of thirty-two, he published in 1837 an important work, Twice-Told Tales, which was his first collection of short stories. During the same year, he worked at the Boston Custom House and invested his savings in the Transcendentalist Community Brook Farm. In 1841, he left Brook Farm, married Sophia Peabody and moved to the Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts, the one-time home of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He produced more than twenty tales within three years in Concord. His second volume of short stories Mosses from an Old Manse was published in 1846. It was reviewed by Herman Melville and established a friendship between the two writers.

In 1849, Hawthorne returned to Salem, resumed work at the Custom House and began his work on his masterpiece, The Scarlet Letter which was published in 1850, followed by The House of the Seven Gables (1851) and The Blithedale Romance (1852).

He also wrote a campaign biography for his college friend, Franklin Pierce, when Pierce became the president in 1853, and Hawthorne was appointed consul to Liverpool. The position made him travel extensively around Europe where he completed his last published novel, The Marble Faun (1860).

Hawthorne died on May 18, 1864 in Plymouth, New Hampshire. He left four unfinished novels. He elevated and transformed short stories from magazine filler to legal art form. "Young Goodman Brown" was first published in Hawthorne's collection Mosses from an Old Manse, in which Hawthorne used Puritan New England as the setting for his works (Carlsen, Schuster, and Tovatt 100-101).

### The Concept of Symbols

According to J.A. Cuddon, in The Penguin Dictionary of Literature Terms and Literary Theory, the word "symbol" derives from the Greek verb *symballien* "to throw together" and its noun *symbolon* "mark," "emblem," "token," or "sign." Cuddon also claims that "a symbol is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or

“stands for” something else. Writers indicate that a literal symbol combines an image with a concept (words themselves are a kind of symbol.) It may be public or private, universal or local. It *exists*, so to speak” (939).

The purpose of symbols in literature is to expand the possible meanings of a story. They highlight the story to be interesting. Readers also participate in the text so they have to recognize a symbol when they meet it in fiction. For instance, in Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery” the mysterious wooden black box has symbolic significance. It is referred to prominently and repeatedly and plays an important role in the story. The box is very old, a relic of many past lotteries. The narrator would like to represent tradition. It is shabby, “splintered badly along one side...and in places faded or stained.” This statement suggests that ritual or tradition has deteriorated. The box is constructed and designed simply. It suggests the primitive nature of ritual. This symbol encourages readers to probe the values of symbols (Kirszner 260).

Symbols are classified into two types: conventional symbols and private symbols. Conventional symbols embody ideas and emotions shared by writers and

readers having the same historical and cultural traditions. When writers use conventional symbols, they assume that readers already know what the symbols represent. For instance, the stars and stripes of the American flag can evoke powerful feelings of pride and patriotism in a group of people who share the same orientation toward it. Private symbols are unlike conventional symbols because they derive their meaning from a work's context and circumstances (Robert and Jacobs 328). A particularly famous example of a private symbol is Herman Melville's white whale, Moby Dick. Whales are often associated in the popular imagination with brute strength and cunning. The meaning of the whale is limited only in Melville's novel. Outside that novel, a whale is just a whale ( Pickering and Durham 25).

### **Use of Symbols**

#### **1. Symbolic characters**

Kennedy and Gioia claim that "in some novels and stories, symbolic characters make brief cameo appearances. Characters often are not well-rounded and fully known but are seen fleetingly and remain slightly mysterious." They cite William Faulkner's "A

Rose for Emily”, in which Miss Emily twice appears at a window of her house “like the carven torso of an idol in a niche.” They add that Faulkner also clothes her in symbolic hints: she seems almost to personify the vanishing aristocracy of the antebellum South. She still maintains a black servant, being ruthlessly betrayed by a moneymaking Yankee” (237).

## 2. Symbolic acts

A symbolic act is a gesture with larger significance than usual. For the boy’s father in Faulkner’s “Barn Burning,” the act of destroying a barn is no act of spite, but an expression of his profound hatred for anything not belonging to him. Faulkner adds that burning a barn reflects the father’s memories of “the waste and extravagance of war” (Kennedy and Gioia 237), and further adds that “the element of fire spoke to some deep mainspring” in his being (Kennedy and Gioia 237).

## 3. Symbolic settings

The setting of a story is not only the physical location but also the time of day or year or century. Sometimes the setting is lightly sketched and presented only because

the story has to take place somewhere. However, the setting is more important, giving us the feeling of people who move through it. In "Hills Like White Elephants", a short story by Ernest Hemingway, a man and a girl sit waiting for the train to Madrid, where the girl is to have an abortion. The man wants her to do it but she does not. They are at a railroad station which is situated in a river valley between two mountain ranges. On one side of the valley there is no shade and no trees and the country is "brown and dry" (Perrine and Arp 196). It is "the dry side." On the other side of the valley, which the girl can see when she walks to the end of the station lies the river, with "fields of grain and trees" along the banks, the "shadow of a cloud" moving across a field of grain. The two landscapes, on opposite sides of the valley, have symbolic meaning. The hot side of the valley represents sterility. The other side with water in the river and the cloud, a hint of coolness in the clouds moving shadow, and growing things along the river banks, represents fertility (Perrine and Arp 196).

Therefore, symbolism in fiction helps readers organize and enlarge their experience of the work. This is not to say that a work which contains symbols is

inherently or necessarily better than one that does not. Symbols can make a given work successful. It can be said also that symbols are employed as an integral and organic part of the language and structure of a work of fiction. They can stimulate and release the imagination, which is one of the major goals of any form of art.

### **Related Research**

In "Time Past and Time Present: Hawthorne and Warren in the American Literary Continuum", Frances Janet Harris studies "differences and contradictions among the greatest literary figures to exhibit a continuity of ideas, a recurrence and emphasis of common themes. Although Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) and Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989) are in different periods of American literary history, their thematic fiction indicates the American tradition between writers of the New England Renaissance and the Southern Renaissance. Hawthorne and Warren share a common view of human condition. Both view man's life as dark and tragic and search for meaning in human nature by linking past to present; therefore, their works illustrate universal, philosophical,

moral, and psychological truths. Their specific themes reveal initiation into adult reality, original sin as part of human nature, the divided self or the evil of the isolated intellect, the unpardonable sin or the selfish manipulation of another person and the fortunate fall or knowledge through suffering" (1-8).

In "A Man and his Faith; Teaching "Young Goodman Brown" in a Bible College Context, Images of a Prairie Town: 32 Miles from the Middle of Nowhere (Nathaniel Hawthorne, with Original Writing, Poetry, North Dakota)," Douglass P. Schaak teaches fiction to Christian students in the context of a Bible College. He lays out a two-part instructional plan for teaching Hawthorne's short story "Young Goodman Brown". The first part is Bible college students expressing their ideas about Christian principles. These are the beliefs that sin is any form of rebellion against God. He applies this to the text. He finds ten moments in the story where Brown violates the first of these principles with negative consequences. The second part is a discussion of the points of divergence, in order that the students can read and interpret the text. He finds that the students can seek moral guidance from literature.

In Thailand, there is a study concerning Hawthorne's framework. Ladda Chabthanom in "Hawthorne's Idea of the Middle Ways as It Appears in His Short Fiction," studies the middle way in Epicureanism, Buddhism, and Psychology. Then she discusses how Hawthorne's idea of the Middle Way is in line with the general idea of the Middle Way in Epicureanism, Buddhism, and Psychology. Moreover, she explores Hawthorne's literary techniques, such as characterization, setting, and atmosphere, and figurative language to support her study on the Middle Way. She finds that Hawthorne's Middle Way lies between the extremes in an acceptance of the moral. To reject the abnormality of monomania and to accept the earthy and the modest is the Middle way. The Middle way is happiness in the human mind. She concludes that most of Hawthorne's short fiction is presented in negative ideas rather than positive. Hawthorne shows the damage to the main characters who do not conduct their lives in the Middle Way and he also presents life which he admires and praises. Hawthorne understands human nature and artistically and effectively expresses his psychology in his framework.

His concept of the Middle Way is similar to the idea of the Middle Way in Epicureanism, Buddhism, and Psychology.

In short, there are several studies on Nathaniel Hawthorne's works, some of which deal with topics like the human condition in man's life, teaching a man and faith through "Young Goodman Brown," and ideas of the Middle way. Nobody in Thailand has studied how Nathaniel Hawthorne employs symbols to present human nature in "Young Goodman Brown."

## CHAPTER 3

### AN ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLS AND HUMAN NATURE IN

#### “YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN”

This chapter is an analysis of symbols and human nature in “Young Goodman Brown.”

Chapter 2 briefly presented the concept of symbols. A character can be a kind of symbol which is powerful. Generally, the main characters illustrate the theme of a story. In “Young Goodman Brown”, the characters are used to present the theme of human nature. In The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary, the word “young” means a) not far advanced in life, development, or existence: not yet old; b) immature or inexperienced; c) felt in or characteristic of youth; d) representing young people (678).

In “Young Goodman Brown,” the word “young” means that he is a young man who is not mature. Goodman Brown considers humans only from one side; the good. In fact, humans have both good and evil sides, like his ancestors, Faith, Goody Cloyse and

Deacon Gookin. They display both sides of human nature, but Goodman Brown doesn't understand this, because of his youth.

The word "Goodman" suggests that he is a good man. That is he comes from a proper lineage. Also, he is a religious person. Goodman Brown is a good man because he forbids his wife to worship the Devil in the forest. Goodman Brown shouts to Faith:

" 'Faith ! Faith !' cried the husband, 'look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one' " (89).

When the words "young" and "Goodman" are used as adjectives of the noun "Brown", they refer to a young man who is not mature. Brown is presented as a young person who does not understand human nature. His name has two levels of meaning; literal and symbolical. Literally, Young Goodman Brown is a young good man of Puritan religion. Symbolically, Goodman Brown is too young. He is not mature because he thinks Puritans are perfect people. His innocence derives from his youth. Therefore, his youth makes him uncorrupt and innocent. He does not understand that

people have both sides; good and bad. He believes that they have only one side. For example, he thinks that his family are religious Puritans, people in the town are good Christians, and Faith is a faithful wife.

Goodman Brown ventures on a journey into the forest to meet the Devil.

Although his wife forbids him, he intends to go to the forest for his errand with the Devil.

He does not state what his specific purpose is, but the readers perceive apparently that

it is involved with a witches' Sabbath in the forest. When he sees the Devil, he feels

guilty and dishonors himself because he thinks he is the first one to meet the Devil, but

the Devil says that Goodman Brown's family is not good. The Devil explains that the

Puritans are bad. They are the persecutors of Salem who are cruel to the Quakers.

Goodman Brown is tempted by the Devil to reject his religion. When he enters the

forest, he is suspicious of everything around him: trees, rocks and the evil which hides in

the forest.

In the deep forest, he meets the minister and Deacon Gookin and Goody Cloyse.

Goody Cloyse, who taught him his catechism in childhood. Goodman Brown wishes to

venture as fast as possible, so he accepts the Devil's staff on his journey in order to go to the evil meeting. Finally, he reaches his destination and sees people in his community, including his wife Faith, participating in the Devil worship. This destroys his faith in his wife and people in his community and he loses faith in goodness. He cries, "My faith is gone!"(89). His use of the word "faith" represents not only his wife but also his faith in the goodness of the world. He wakes up in the morning uncertain of whether it was a real event or a dream. He wonders what happened in the previous night. He instantly concludes the people in his community are devils. His life becomes brown. It is not pure because he cannot accept and understand that good and evil are a brotherhood in human nature.

In Hawthorne's story, Goodman Brown's wife Faith is an important character who presents human nature. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic Dictionary, Faith means a) trust, strong belief; unquestioning confidence; b) strong belief without proof in God or in an established religion; c) religion (32-330). In "Young Goodman Brown," there are two meanings of the name Faith. Firstly, Faith is Goodman

Brown's trust or reliance in his wife. Goodman Brown admires and loves his wife. She uses a pink ribbon to adorn her cap. The ribbon connects two conceptions of Faith; a sweet little wife in the village and the woman who stands at the Devil's baptismal font.

At the beginning of the story, Faith is introduced as a young and pretty girl. She is joyful and innocent like a child when she greets her husband before he goes to the forest.

She has both youth and innocence. Pink is neither scarlet nor white. Scarlet looks like the blood of the baptism in Devil worship, but white symbolizes innocence. The pink ribbon is tied like a label to Faith's head. It implies that Faith has taint in her head. Faith is one of the people in the community who participates in the mystery of sin and lays the mark of baptism upon her forehead. Goodman Brown sees the pink ribbon fall from the sky in the forest. The name Faith is symbolic of Brown's lost hope, since she displays both sides of human nature, good and bad.

Another meaning is faith in Goodman Brown's religion. Faith implies a faithful Christian. Goodman Brown believes in his religion. Hawthorne writes: "Faith, as the wife was aptly named" (82). Brown has faith in his wife, indicating he has faith in his religion.

Faith illustrates the goodness that is found in a young wife. Brown marries Faith because Faith is a symbol of goodness. He says: "...Well, she's a blessed-angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven..."(83).

At the beginning of the story, Goodman Brown leaves his wife to go to the forest at sunset. He states that "Faith kept me a while" (82). Hawthorne presents the name of Brown's wife as a symbol of Brown's faith in goodness. That makes him hesitate to go on his wicked mission. When Brown enters the forest and sees Faith worshipping the Devil, he feels disappointed. Hawthorne intends to present Faith as an ordinary human being. Clearly, her mind is not perfect. She behaves in both good and bad ways.

In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne sets the forest as a significant symbol. According to Ad de Vried, the word "forest" in Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery means a) earth-symbol: the opposite of the sun; b) the unconscious: terrors and monsters in it represent the perilous aspect of the unconscious (199). In The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic and Folk Belief, Richard Cavendish states that in the Bible, darkness means death, and the land of the dead, evil and sin (88). He also

claims that “the dualism of light and darkness is based on fundamental rhythms of life.

Darkness implies death, danger, the unknown, inertia and sterility, ignorance, doubt,

and spiritual blindness. The darkness of night is mysterious and menacing. On the

other hand, light implies life, warmth, security, the known and familiar, intellectual and,

spiritual vision” (87).

Hawthorne employs the word “forest” to contrast the village with the forest. The village is associated with daylight, faith, and goodness; on the other hand, the forest is darkness, loss of faith and evil (Barnet et al. 61). The village is the symbol of merit and morality because in Goodman Brown’s Salem village, in the daylight, Young Goodman Brown sees that all the people around him are good Christians, such as the old minister, old Deacon Gookind, Goody Cloyse and Faith. Goodman Brown sees them devote themselves to their religion. The good old minister meditates about his sermon. Old Deacon Gookind usually prays in his domestic worship. Goody Cloyse is also an excellent old Christian. She teaches the catechism to children in the village. She taught it to Goodman Brown when he was young.

However, the forest contrasts with the village. Hawthorne begins his story by having Goodman Brown leave his house and his wife at sunset in order to meet the devil. Although his wife attempts to persuade Goodman Brown to depart at sunrise, he refuses. He moves from the town to the dark forest because he follows his impulse. The darkness at night time in the forest where Brown starts his journey is a symbol of evil. It is a mysterious place and it is the residence of witches and demons. The night time when Brown starts his journey is dark and full of harmfulness. It implies that Goodman Brown will go to a wicked place. The atmosphere in the forest is mysterious.

Goodman Brown tells the fellow-traveller: "There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree" (75). Goodman Brown walks a narrow path into the forest:

"He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind" (74).

The narrowness of the path symbolizes that Brown is surrounded by evil. In the forest, there are many monstrous events. Hawthorne conveys the mysterious

atmosphere by using words such as “frightful sounds,” “the creaking of the trees,” “the howling of wild beasts” and “the wind tolled like a distant church bell” (80). All of them are horrifying. According to Laurie G. Kirschner and Stephen R. Mandell, a dark forest is expected to evoke fear (259). Goodman Brown becomes fearful in this scene. There will be an evil ceremony. Hawthorne compares the forest to the verge of wickedness in the dark world. There is a basin, but it is full of blood. The Devil prepares the mark of baptism for the partakers. Therefore, the forest represents evil.

In the forest, Goodman Brown meets the fellow-traveller who is symbolic of the Devil. In fact, he is Goodman Brown’s dark side. Hawthorne describes him thus: “As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveler was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him...” (83). Goodman Brown finds the fellow-traveller to be familiar to him. The fellow-traveller looks like his relatives or father. He tries to convince Goodman Brown to worship evil. He hastens Goodman Brown’s journey by offering him his walking stick.

However, Goodman Brown informs the fellow-traveller that he cannot begin the journey because his ancestors are good and honest.

“My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the day of the martyrs...” (83).

Actually, Goodman Brown's ancestors were not perfect Puritans. The fellow-traveller says that Goodman Brown's family is not good. He claims that he knows Goodman Brown's family well:

Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem. And it was I that brought your father a pitch-pin knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war (83).

In fact, the fellow-traveller and Goodman Brown's ancestors helped each other to do evil deeds, such as lashing the Quaker woman or setting fire to an Indian village in King Philip's war. In short, his ancestors were both good and bad people. His ancestors judged and condemned a Quaker woman. She was whipped in the streets of Salem for holding to a religion the Puritans strongly opposed. Goodman Brown feels he is obsessed with sin when he learns about his family's history. Hawthorne presents Goodman Brown's father and his ancestors as humans who are surrounded by evil. Hawthorne would like to show the human nature which is in everybody. In short, Hawthorne's father and his ancestors are not perfect Christians. They are ordinary humans who have good and bad sides.

As Ira Konigsberg has pointed out the influence of Puritan religion on Hawthorne's writing (3). Hawthorne sets the story in his hometown of Salem, Massachusetts in New England. He harmoniously combines his Puritan background with the experience of his childhood. He refers to the bad actions of the Puritans and his ancestors who treated the Quakers badly.

Mike C.H. Yarrow states that the name "Quaker" was first used in 1650 by preacher George Fox, the son of a Leicestershire weaver. It was applied to people who were dissatisfied with the existing denominations and other groups of Christianity. The Quakers were called The Religious Society of Friends. Quakerism began in England and spread to other countries, mainly the United States, Kenya, and Bolivia. Although the number of Quakers in the world was relatively small, there were some places, such as Pennsylvania, particularly Philadelphia, where the Quaker influence was strong. (23-26).

The Quakers came from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs to embark together on a spiritual journey. They were divided into two main groups -- those who had unprogrammed and programmed meetings for worship. The concept of unprogrammed worship focused on communing with God. The Quaker perspective was based on trying to hear what God was saying and to allow the Spirit free action in the heart. They were quiet for about one hour. People spoke only when they could move towards God. Although there were no church services, God was met in the gathered

meeting. Programmed worship, on the other hand, arose among a large number of converts to Quakerism during the national spiritual revivalism of the time. Typically, there were readings from scripture, hymns, and a sermon from the pastor. Their individual beliefs vary, but Quakers share an understanding of a Divine presence in all people (Comfort 39-41).

The Quakers appeared in New England in the early 1650s. It was a Nonconformist movement breaking away from Anglicanism. As the movement expanded, it faced opposition and persecution. Quakers were banished on pain of death. Some Quakers were put to death for returning to preach their beliefs. In addition, Quakers did not like either the forms or ceremonies of the Church of England or the strict beliefs of the Puritans. For their extremist ideas, Quakers were severely punished. English judges jailed hundreds of them for rejecting the established church. Between 1659 and 1661, Massachusetts Puritans hanged three Quaker men and one woman who had insisted on coming into the colony. From June to September 1692,

nineteen men and women were hanged near Salem Village, Massachusetts for the crime of witchcraft (Vanit 50).

In "Young Goodman Brown," the fellow-traveller refers to a Quaker woman who was persecuted by Goodman Brown's grandfather: "I helped your grandfather the constable when he lashed the Quaker woman smartly through the streets of Salem" (83).

When Young Goodman Brown enters the forest, he finds that many people whom he believes to be good participating in evil activities. He also learns from the fellow-traveller about others who have committed evil deeds. The fellow-traveller says to him:

I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me: the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority to the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The Governor and I, too...(83-84).

Another character is Goody Cloyse, a pious and exemplary woman, who taught Goodman Brown in his youth. She is still his moral and spiritual advisor along with the minister and Deacon Gookin. The meaning of her name, "Goody" comes from "Good," but her behavior is in contrast. She worships the Devil. Hawthorne describes the fellow-traveller pointing at Goody Cloyse with his staff and her reaction implies her acquaintance with him: she screams, "The devil!" (84), she has a conversation with him. She would like to go to the evil ceremony as fast as possible. The Devil offers his staff to her and she accepts his tool of Satan, thus coming under his control.

The minister and Deacon Gookin also go to the meeting with the Devil. Goodman Brown finds out that they cannot miss this meeting. If the minister is late, the meeting will not start. Goody Cloyse, the minister, and Deacon Gookin are also people who are surrounded by evil and worship the Devil like other people in the community. Hawthorne indicates that humans usually commit misdeeds in the dark and suggests that both goodness and evil exist in our minds because they are part of human nature.

Another significant symbol is the staff which is the fellow-traveller's support. The fellow-traveller's staff looks like a serpent. Hawthorne describes it as having the "...likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent" (83). The shape is a symbol of Satan's snake. He gives his staff to Goodman Brown to persuade him to go quickly into the forest. The fellow-traveller says: "Take my staff, if you are so soon weary..." (83). The serpent-shape of the staff implies that it is the instrument of the devil.

According to the Old Testament, Adam and Eve were the first man and woman in the world. God placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden, called Eden, where several fruits and trees grow. God warned Adam not to eat the fruit of one particular tree. One day a serpent came to Eve and told her that if she ate the forbidden fruit, she would gain knowledge. So Eve ate some of the fruit and gave some to Adam. When God knew that Adam and Eve had disobeyed him, he punished them by forcing them to leave Eden (Rowland and Stanford 66). Satan in the guise of a serpent tempted Eve to commit original sin (Hutchison 84). Thus, the staff in the shape of a snake is a symbol of

Satan's snake. In "Young Goodman Brown," the fellow-traveller represents the evil that guides Goodman Brown to commit sin. Likewise, the fellow-traveller uses his staff to tempt Goodman Brown to attend the evil meeting. The staff is the tool that provides the impulse for Goodman Brown to commit sin. After first refusing the staff, Goodman Brown accepts it from the Devil and continues along the evil path.

To sum up, Hawthorne presents many symbols to support the theme of the story. The theme of "Young Goodman Brown" is that evil is part of human nature. In the story the dark figure who is the leader of evil says:

"Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hopes that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome, again, my children, to the communion of your race" (89).

Hawthorne proposes his perception of human nature. At the beginning of the story Young Goodman Brown is a good and optimistic man. Later, the Devil leads him to the forest where evil resides. Consequently, he finds that the people around him

whom he thought to be good are bad. Then he feels disappointed and cannot accept that humans are both good and bad. He does not trust anyone; not even his wife. He becomes a miserable and distrusting man. He isolates himself from the community after he comes back. His life becomes a failure. Finally, he lives alone in suffering and dies in agony.

Moreover, Hawthorne presents human nature as possessing both good and evil. In society, people who can accept human nature can live happily. In other words, if they cannot accept it, they will be unhappy.

In conclusion, Hawthorne applies his religious beliefs to his writing. His experience in the past makes him wonder what real morality is because he suspects his Puritan ancestors persecuted the Quakers. The Puritan society had very strict rules. According to Ketsuda Vanit, the Puritans rejected people of other religions. They usually punished Quakers who did not agree with them, for example by whipping them in public. The Puritans presented themselves to the public as good Christians. In contrast, their actions were cruel (7). Hawthorne felt ashamed to be part of a group who

had persecuted the Quakers. "In Young Goodman Brown", he employs many symbols to clarify the story's theme that good and evil constitute human nature.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This chapter presents the outcome of the study. Conclusion and a discussion are presented. In addition, some interesting issues for further study are suggested.

#### Conclusion

Hawthorne employs symbols to present human nature in order that the readers will understand it better. The study has found that in "Young Goodman Brown", Hawthorne uses significant symbols, such as characters, settings and an object, to illustrate the theme of human nature.

Firstly, Goodman Brown, Faith, Goody Cloyse and the fellow-traveller are characters. The names "Goodman Brown" and "Faith" are used to express different aspects. Hawthorne presents Goodman Brown to be a good man who is not mature.

He thinks people are only good. When he knows that his fellow-townspeople are not good because they participate in the evil ceremony, he cannot accept them. In fact, people have both goodness and evil. Faith, who is Goodman Brown's wife, is good and bad. She symbolizes Goodman Brown's religion. He believes in the Puritan religion. Goodman Brown marries Faith because he wants to cling to Faith in heaven. Goodman Brown's ancestors, Goody Cloyse and Deacon Gookin are Puritans. Although they are very strict in their religion, Hawthorne proposes that they have both sides: goodness and evil. The fellow-traveller symbolizes the devil.

Secondly, the forest and village are symbols. The village symbolizes a meritorious and moral place because people in the village are well-behaved. The symbol of the forest is different from the village. It is a symbol of evil and the residence of evil. Evil usually hides in darkness.

The last symbol is the staff. The emblem of the staff is a snake that is a tool of Satan. It impels a good man to do a bad thing.

The study clearly shows that Nathaniel Hawthorne presents human nature through symbols in the moral story "Young Goodman Brown." Human nature has both good and evil sides. Nobody has only the good side. If people accept this fact, they can live happily in the world. According to the Bible, Adam and Eve committed original sin because they ate the forbidden apple. Thus human beings are inherently sinful.

Hawthorne believes that there are evil spirits in the world. There are demons everywhere, both in the sunshine and darkness. He intends to show the readers the reality of life in order that they will be aware of depravity. Everyone can be tempted by sin. People cannot avoid the sin in their minds, but they can decide what is right or wrong. They have to adapt themselves appropriately in order to live in society.

Hawthorne suggests that if they do not accept the truth and attempt to avoid it, they will not be happy. Similarly, Goodman Brown has conflicts with himself and with the society, so he cannot live in society happily. He chooses to isolate himself from society. Finally, he is miserable and desperately alone in the village.

At the end of “Young Goodman Brown”, it is for readers to decide if Goodman Brown actually went to the evil worship or it was only a dream. Whichever, he is still now aware of people’s sinfulness. He does not trust anyone and rejects everybody in his community. Consequently, he has a miserable life. In fact, he cannot avoid human nature.

Hawthorne uses his background in the Puritan religion to present his perception of the truth about life. He portrays the people in Goodman Brown’s community as seemingly good, but he clearly shows that evil is visible in people’s choices of action. It is not in men’s ideology or even their religion.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

The researcher would like to suggest a few topics for further studies.

1. A study of Hawthorne use of symbols in his other stories.
2. A study of the impact of religious belief and background on other American writers of the time.

3. A study to compare and contrast Hawthorne's ideas with the Buddhist concept of the "Middle Way".

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