

All Themes from Young Goodman Brown by Nathaniel Hawthorne

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ABSTRAK

Dalam "Young Goodman Brown," Goodman Brown, adalah seorang pria muda yang meninggalkan istrinya, Faith, dan berkelana ke hutan pada suatu malam, meskipun istrinya memintanya untuk tinggal. Di hutan, ia bertemu dengan seorang lelaki tua misterius yang ternyata adalah iblis. Iblis membawanya ke sebuah pertemuan di mana Goodman Brown menyaksikan anggota komunitasnya yang dihormati, termasuk pendeta dan istrinya, berpartisipasi dalam ritual setan. Pengungkapan ini menghancurkan persepsi Goodman Brown tentang dunia dan keyakinannya terhadap orang lain. Dia menjadi kecewa dan kehilangan kepercayaan pada semua orang, termasuk Faith, yang pernah dia hargai. Di akhir cerita, dia kembali ke desanya, seorang pria yang berubah, tidak percaya dan terputus dari orang-orang di sekitarnya. Ceritanya mengangkat tema-tema iman, godaan, kehilangan iman atau kepolosan, dan lain-lain. Dalam artikel ini penulis ingin menyajikan unsur-unsur prosa fiksi, khususnya tema-tema yang menjadi inti cerita, melalui berbagai sumber yang diperoleh.

Keyword: Tema; Nathaniel Hawthorne; Young Goodman Brown

ABSTRACT

In "Young Goodman Brown," Goodman Brown, is a young man who leaves his wife, Faith, and ventures into the forest one night, despite her pleas for him to stay. In the forest, he meets a mysterious old man who turns out to be the devil. The devil leads him to a gathering where Goodman Brown witnesses respected members of his community, including his minister and his wife, participating in a satanic ritual. This revelation shatters Goodman Brown's perception of the world and his faith in others. He becomes disillusioned and loses trust in everyone, including Faith, whom he had once cherished. At the end of story, he returns to his village, a changed man, distrustful and disconnected from those around him. The story explores themes of faith, temptation, loss of faith or innocence, and etc. In this article the author wants to present the elements of fictional prose, especially the themes that are at the core of the story, through various sources obtained.

Keyword: Themes; Nathaniel Hawthorne; Young Goodman Brown

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1. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of Literature by expert according to (Klarer, 2004:1) says that in most cases, "literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word". In the world literature there are various kind of literary works such as poetry, prose, drama, etc.

Prose is one of kind literary works according to (Lindsay Kramer, 2023) Prose, pronounced *prōz*, is defined as writing that does not follow a meter or rhyme scheme. It's writing that uses correct grammar and presents ideas clearly and in a step-by-step way. Prose writing includes works of fiction and nonfiction.

From the story of Young Goodman Brown, the author wants to find the elements of the story, namely the main theme of the story. According to (J. T. Bushnell, 2021) "A theme is a central, unifying idea. It's the bigger issue that emerges as the characters pursue their goals. It has less to do with whether they'll win the

race, or get the date, or find the treasure, and more to do with the deeper questions and conflicts about identity, philosophy, or morality that arise during their attempts.”

Young Goodman Brown tells the story of a young man named Goodman who is married to his wife named Faith. At the beginning of the story, Goodman wanted to leave home and leave his wife, he wanted to go to the forest. His wife Faith begged her husband not to go, but Goodman insisted on going. Goodman then left his house with prayers and words of love from his wife. When Goodman arrived in the forest he saw a mysterious old man, and it turned out that the old man was a devil. The demon tempted and even invited Goodman to come with him to see the rituals carried out by people. When Goodman saw many people carrying out satanic rituals, he was very surprised that many of his relatives, especially the servants at his church, were also worshiping devils. Not only that, respectable people also do it. Then the devil took him to another place and he showed that there was also a group of residents who were carrying out a ritual. How shocked Goodman when he saw that his wife was also involved in satanic rituals. In the end, Goodman didn't trust anyone, including his wife. He felt disappointed seeing the behavior of his relatives, and he even lost his faith.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

he data collection technique used by researchers is the library research method, namely library study. According to (Mestika Zed, 2003, Kumparan) from a website source entitled *"Understanding Library Study and its characteristics"*, *"library study is a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading, recording and processing research materials"*. The library method is a research method carried out by taking data or sources from books, magazines or other sources. By using library research methods we can solve the problem being researched.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the author wants to solve the problems in the previous chapter regarding the theme in the story. There are several things that become themes in the story. One of them is from the utterance of the main character in the story.

A. *Loss of Faith*

"My Faith is gone! . . . There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil! for to thee is this world given."

At this point in the story, the identification of Faith the woman with the quality of faith in God or man is perfectly precise. Goodman has lost both at the same time and promptly becomes a frightening figure in his own right, flying through the forest, cackling and blaspheming on his way to the Satanic ceremony.

Hawthorne depicts the decline of trust as a continuous journey. At the ceremony, Goodman thinks he has regained both Faith and faith at least twice, once when he sees no sign of his wife in the congregation, and again when he cries out to her to look up to heaven and resist the devil. Ultimately, he doesn't actually lose her, but he spends his days with her surrounded by anger and doubt, having given up all belief in any type of kindness or love from people. Although he is next to his wife in bed, he feels like he has lost her, and he keeps turning away from the essence of faith in the same way.

In "Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the main character, Goodman Brown, goes through a serious loss of faith during his time in the woods. This loss is both real and symbolic, indicating his move from innocence and strong belief to disappointment and hopelessness.

Several important reasons lead to Goodman Brown's loss of faith:

Meeting the Devil: In the forest, Goodman Brown encounters the devil, who shows him that many respected and religious people in his town, including his wife, Faith, have secretly turned to sin. This realization deeply disturbs Goodman Brown, making him doubt the goodness of those around him and whether their faith is genuine.

Temptation and the Vision of Evil: Throughout his journey, Goodman Brown sees various people from his life—his wife, religious leaders, and other townsfolk—engaged in sinful behavior or helping the devil. This vision confronts him with the idea that everyone, even those he trusts most, might be pretending or corrupt. This understanding makes him lose his belief in others' purity and, consequently, in the goodness of humanity and his own faith.

Loss of Faith or Innocence: Goodman Brown's idealized image of his wife, Faith, is shattered when he catches her participating in the devil's gathering. This loss of his "faith" (his wife and his religious belief) emphasizes the idea that both good and evil exist within everyone. It shows that people are capable of both good deeds and wrongdoing, which weakens Goodman Brown's earlier belief in the complete goodness of his community and his faith.

Psychological Effects: After his experience in the forest, Goodman Brown comes back to his village as a different person. He becomes suspicious, bitter, and isolated from others. His loss of faith goes beyond just religious doubt; it represents a change in his mind and emotions. He can no longer see the world with the

same innocence and hope, and the darkness he experienced in the woods permanently changes how he views reality.

In the end, Goodman Brown's loss of faith highlights the story's examination of the complicated nature of humanity, the struggle between good and evil, and the vulnerability of personal belief. His journey represents the disillusionment that can occur when one suddenly faces the darker sides of life.

B. The Victory of Evil

In "Young Goodman Brown" there's a point that appears to offer a chance for a joyful conclusion, highlighting the possibility of the main character and his spouse being saved. However, this optimism is misleading because it is a tale crafted by Hawthorne. Yet, one can imagine how the narrative could have evolved differently if told by someone else. The pivotal instance happens when Goodman and Faith are on the verge of being initiated into the wickedness by the devil personally:

"Faith! Faith!" cried the husband. "Look up to Heaven, and resist the Wicked One!"

At this important moment, Young Goodman Brown turns away from the devil and decides to seek redemption. This choice, however, makes no difference. It doesn't really matter if any of the things that happened in the woods actually occurred. Evil wins even when it's not real because the bad side of human nature is enough to make life feel like a living hell here, even if there's not one in other places.

Hawthorne is content to let the reader think that Goodman might have been dreaming, and even to raise this possibility, because he knows how compelling his view of humanity really is. After Goodman learns that the decent and religious people in his life are dishonest and insincere, this seems so reasonable that he quickly believes it to be true the rest of his life. Hawthorne is not concerned with any struggle in the universe between God and the devil over the fates of humanity. The story stops with death because the author does not need to go beyond the grave to make his point that, on earth, evil has already won.

C. Sin

The central topic is key in "Young Goodman Brown," delving into the natural wickedness of people and the insincerity in Puritan culture. As Goodman Brown travels through the woods, Hawthorne shows how widespread sin is and how quickly people can give in to temptation. The tale criticizes the false piety in religion and the disappearance of purity, highlighting how wrongdoing can result in disappointment and hopelessness.

Goodman Brown's meeting with different people from the town in the woods shows the common wrongdoing among those he used to see as devout. Individuals such as the minister, Deacon Gookin, and Goody Cloyse, who are held in high regard as religious figures, are uncovered as followers of the devil. Their involvement in evil ceremonies highlights their disrespect and deceit, as they publicly promote goodness while secretly indulging in bad behavior. This contrast emphasizes the idea of religious dishonesty, hinting that wrongdoing is a fundamental aspect of human nature, even among those who seem to be virtuous.

The character of the mysterious old man who walks with Goodman Brown symbolizes the devil and the lure of temptation. His extraordinary powers and awareness of the sinful actions of Brown's ancestors stress that sin has a long history and continues to be relevant. The old man's presence triggers Goodman Brown's awareness of the widespread evil surrounding him. Even though he initially tries to resist, Brown's experience with the old man shows how easily people can be tempted, demonstrating how simple it is for someone to go off the right path.

Hawthorne's intentional uncertainty about what happens in the forest highlights how deeply sin affects Goodman Brown's mind. Whether the events were real or imagined, their effect on Brown is profound. He starts to feel let down by his community and no longer trusts his wife or his faith. This change from innocence to disillusionment shows how harmful sin can be, as Brown finds himself alone and resentful, struggling to align what he sees as sin with what he once believed.

Ultimately, "Young Goodman Brown" portrays sin as an inescapable aspect of human existence, challenging the notion of inherent goodness and exposing the moral failings of society. Through Goodman Brown's journey, Hawthorne critiques the superficial piety of Puritanism and reveals the complex and often hidden nature of sin within individuals and communities.

D. Human Nature

In "Young Goodman Brown," the main idea of human nature is examined through the main character's adventure into the woods, where he faces the two sides of humanity. Hawthorne investigates the natural evil and deceitfulness found in people, raising questions about sin and the delicate nature of human spirituality. The tale implies that evil is a component of human nature, leading to despair and a breakdown of trust in people.

Hawthorne's family's role in the Salem witch trials sparked his interest in guilt and evil. In "Young Goodman Brown," he leaves it unclear whether Brown's experience is real or just a dream and what it could mean for understanding human nature. The story ponders if humans are born evil and the ways evil manifests in our lives. Brown's hopelessness comes from a loss of faith in humanity, recognizing the presence of evil,

and allowing it to diminish the value and happiness in life. The actual evil may be the feeling of guilt, causing individuals to perceive evil everywhere.

As Brown travels through the forest, he encounters locals going to a "black mass." Hawthorne describes one person as looking similar to Brown, hinting at a possible family link. This meeting, along with figures like Good Cloyse and Deacon Gookin, suggests that evil is integral to human nature. Nonetheless, their actions in town reveal they are not truly evil, merely flawed. If evil can be seen as imperfection, then it genuinely reflects human nature. "The enemy of the good is the perfect."

Hawthorne illustrates a grim view of human nature by showing people exposing their true selves at a devil-worshipping celebration. This is different from "The Minister's Black Veil," where one character conceals his dark side, suggesting that everyone has hidden immorality. Both stories convey Hawthorne's message that all humanity struggles with the seven deadly sins. "Young Goodman Brown" displays human nature openly, while "The Minister's Black Veil" conceals it, prompting readers to ponder what lies beneath the surface.

E. Temptation

In "Young Goodman Brown," the idea of temptation is a key point, showing the conflict between good and bad within people. Hawthorne looks at how even the most religious people can fall into wrongdoing. The tale uses symbolism to show that temptation is something everyone faces and that human faith can be fragile. Through Goodman Brown's adventure into the woods, Hawthorne questions the Puritan idea of natural goodness and reveals the dishonesty found in society.

Goodman Brown starts his journey by choosing to meet the Devil in the woods, which shows his curiosity and readiness to face temptation. Even though he is unsure at first, Brown finds himself going deeper into the woods, which stands for the attractive nature of sin. The Devil's convincing ways and the fact that Brown's ancestors have traveled this same path emphasize how easily people can give in to temptation. Brown's struggle to resist shows how slipping into sin can be gradual, with each step making it simpler to follow a wrong way.

"Faith kept me back awhile," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

The allegorical elements in the story emphasize the theme of temptation. The forest represents a place of lawlessness and chaos, contrasting with the ordered society of Salem. Brown's wife, Faith, symbolizes both his spouse and his spiritual faith, which he leaves behind to explore the dark side of human nature. This expedition into the woods uncovers the widespread sinfulness in his society, resulting in his enduring isolation and loss of belief. The narrative indicates that even a fleeting brush with temptation can yield enduring repercussions.

The allure of the Devil's promise to reveal humanity's hidden sins is a strong temptation for Goodman Brown. This temptation captivates Brown's inquisitive nature, presenting him with insight into the darker aspects of human behavior. Nevertheless, Brown eventually declines the Devil's baptism, apprehensive about uncovering the evil within himself and his wife, Faith. This choice illustrates the risks associated with succumbing to temptation, as the wish to "understand" can result in a forfeiture of purity. Hawthorne's depiction of Brown's anguish and disillusionment emphasizes the relentless nature of Puritan beliefs and the dangers of giving in to temptation, even for a brief moment.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories and novels dive into the dark corners of Puritan society, exploring sin, guilt, and redemption. His works, like "The Scarlet Letter" and "Young Goodman Brown," use rich symbolism and allegory to critique moral codes and reveal hidden sins.

Hawthorne's work mixes romantic themes with gothic features, forming a distinctive style that explores the complexity of human nature. He challenges the ideas of transcendentalism, placing emphasis on the effects of existing in a critical community and the inner conflict between right and wrong in people.

4. CONCLUSION

From the story Young Goodman Brown by Nathaniel Hawthorne, we get many of the themes of the story. In this story the author discusses three themes, namely, Loss of Faith, The Victory of Evil, Sin, Human Nature, and Temptation. Hawthorne's works also touch on the morality and spirituality of the society of his time. The theme created by the author is very clearly visible in one part of the main character's conversation with another character. Readers also easily get the essence of the story, the moral of the story, and even the elements of the story.

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