Allegory

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Discuss and compare the allegory in " Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and " Young Goodman Brown". In Ambrose Bierce's " An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge", the allegory is derived based on the flowing characteristic of time. The story of Confederate supporter Peyton Farquhar shifts from the current to the past where the situation is projected as if to possess the value of the time at present, and this occurs to illustrate the flexibility of time including the perceptions and logic attached to each timeframe. What seems to be the ongoing event of Farquhar's execution becomes interrupted by a slip into another dimension of time when the protagonist, already confronted with the noose, imagines himself escaping the dread of the moment. He speaks to mind " throw off the noose and spring into the stream -- By diving I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, take to the woods and get away home" (Bierce, The Project Gutenberg).

Farquhar's imaginary escape into another space and time begins at the point he falls off the edge of the bridge, in which the period that follows after he shuts his eyes corresponds to his newly rendered sharp perception that brings him to an ideal state of reaching his home and meeting his long yearned-for wife. He experiences wandering in the woods prior and hears strange sounds, then by the time he comes close the wonderful sight of his wife and home, time returns to the actual reality of his hanging. Here, the character of Farquhar allegorizes how flexible the time could get as he embodies an extended metaphor in a " vast pendulum". Apparently, there emerges a huge lapse between the points of falling and feeling the noose strangle Peyton's neck and it is within this span that Farquhar invents the other favorable world with its own rule of time. In the light of such allegory, one learns that time may lose control when the power of determination to

subdue it with the mind and the senses combined to create the possibility of drifting into another realm apart from the real.

On the other hand, Nathaniel Hawthorne's " Young Goodman Brown" consists of allegorical elements that are themselves found in characters as well as in the symbolism of significant places and objects in the story which basically depicts the metaphorical journey of a man in Salem. It is of huge essence to recall the witchcraft trials that took place in Salem the year 1962 where nineteen men and women accused of performing witchcrafts were taken to Gallows Hill near Salem to be hanged. While the journey appears literal, the man's being accompanied by the devil in the course makes it a spiritual trip and his marriage to Faith manifests the allegory that signifies the degree of man's attachment to the principles of Christianity. Apart from his wife or Faith who expresses " Prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that shes afeard of herself sometimes" (Lombardi), Young Goodman Brown is led by the devil to the forest the darkness of which allegorically stands for the natural tendencies of a human heart toward evil. The idea that Brown cannot be with Faith and forest at the same time alludes the basic truth that there is no way ' good' and ' evil' may be combined to appease a man in a single setting.

Both the allegories of " Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and " Young Goodman Brown" present a similar theme about ' making a choice'. Brown wavers between his two opposing inclinations – good and evil which both constitute his nature whereas Farquhar's choice rests on his decision to perceive and manipulate time constraints according to circumstances that favor him.

Works Cited

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