

# The innate nature of sin

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The Innate Nature of Sin Nathaniel Hawthorne was an author who consistently wrote about satires of the Puritan time. His short stories often revolved around themes of sin and how no one could escape from committing sin. The short stories “ The Minister’s Black Veil” and “ Young Goodman Brown,” written by Hawthorne, reflect these themes through elements of fiction, such as plot, setting, symbolism, and point of view. “ The Minister’s Black Veil” is about a town’s minister who walks into Sunday Congregation with a heinous black veil covering his face.

The veil shields him from the sins of the rest of the world, and the rest of the world from his sin. “ Young Goodman Brown” is about a newly married man who leaves Faith, his wife to follow a man into the forest, where Satanic Rituals occur. These Satanic Rituals are powered by the people Goodman Brown had once known to be the most religious. Through the elements of fiction, the short stories “ The Minister’s Black Veil” and “ Young Goodman Brown,” show how there is no way for one escape from committing sin, no matter who they are. One of the stories Hawthorne writes is “ The Minister’s Black Veil. The story starts when a minister walks into his weekly Sunday sermon with a veil that covers his face.. The veil is seen as symbolic with sin, because the minister has started to wear his sin on his face. He is shunned from the town, as people start to grow uncomfortable in his presence. The veil is a constant reminder of their sins as well. When the Minister goes to a funeral of a girl, he walks in with the veil and stoops down to the corpse’s level, and when by accident his face unveiled (just to the corpse) “ the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. (“ Black Veil”

337). When the corpse sees the face of the minister, it shudders in reaction. This reaction gives hints about what may be behind the black veil. It shows that what is behind the black veil is so dark, and horrible that even a dead body has a reaction, and the only reaction a dead body can have is fear of what may be coming next. At its end, there's nothing the corpse can do about its life and how it was lived: with or without sin. Seeing all the sin behind the veil scared the corpse, as it was a reflection of all the sin it could not longer escape.

All of its sin had caught up with the corpse as it lay in the coffin. Then the Minister continued to make a sermon, praying that everybody be prepared for death when what is underneath the veil is revealed. This scene says that death is when all of one's sins come to catch up with them, and everything underneath the veil is revealed as they are judged before God. The veil, in this sense, can be anything as a cover for sin. For the Minister, it was a physical a piece of cloth that covered his face.

For other's it can be their personalities; how they behave around others can deceive others of their sin. After the funeral, the Minister goes to a wedding and just about he's about to take a sip of his wine, after wishing the couple happiness, he sees his own reflection: " catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered – his lips grew white – he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet – and rushed forth into the darkness. (" Black Veil" 338) In this scene, the Minister is, for the first time, seeing himself with the veil. His reaction is much similar to that of his congregation: fear.. Here, we see an element of fiction: Symbolism. The veil

is symbolic for sins the Minister has committed. When he sees this veil, hHe feels fear – so much fear – that he drops what he is holding and flees. The fear of sin the veil ignites in him causes him to run, , as if to escape from them. He cannot let anyone see what he sees, as he is the only one who truly knows what his sins are.

His sins are so frightening because he knows that eventually he will be accountable for every single one, and the veil will one day be pulled off. Even he, the Minister of the church, cannot escape from his sin, and eventually at death, everyone’s sins will catch up with him or her: At that point, there is nowhere to run. The next story, “ Young Goodman Brown,” is about a young man who is leaving his wife to go meet someone in the forests. He meets a man, who looks like an older version of himself, (actually the devil) and tells him that he wishes to go back to his village.

He tells the man, hisfamilywas full of good Christians, and that he is ashamed to be associated with the devil. As he tells the Devil that he has to follow a different path, the Devil responds “ Well Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that is no trifle to say. ” (Hawthorne 326) When the Devil says this, Goodman Brown gets confused: He believed his family to be of one of the most religious, and to see them associate themselves with the devil seems to be a lie. He believes that there must be rumors about his family.

He can’t accept the fact that his father, and grandfather, who were known to be pious people, associated themselves with the Devil of all people. Goodman Brown waves off some people the Devil names, saying that they choose their own path. Then he says to the Devil that he would not be able

to talk to the Minister of Salem Village if he were to go on. The Devil's response to this is " Thus far the elder traveler had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snakelike staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy. (Hawthorne 327) Here, the Devil bursts into laughter when Goodman Brown suggests the Minister is a good Christian man. Goodman Brown is offended at the man for proving all of his acquaintances wrong. He learns in this story that nobody, not even his good little Faith, can escape the Devil. His father, grandfather, the Minister, and Faith have all be revealed to be following the Devil, and it's something he cannot escape. In Conclusion, both short stories, " Young Goodman Brown" and " The Minister's Black Veil" by Nathaniel Hawthorn, reveal the inevitable sin of the people we trust the most.

It shows us that nobody can escape sin, and it's innate of human nature. When the town's people first see the Minister with his veil, their reactions are all of shock and fear. During his first sermon with the veil " Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them behind his awful veil and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. " (Hawthorne 336) Here, Hawthorne is describing the effect the veil had on the people of that town.

Everybody who was at the sermon felt as though Minister Hooper had crept up to them, and discovered their sins of actions, and their sins of thoughts. It says even " the most innocent girl" felt her sins being discovered. This quote states that nobody can escape from sin, despite trying your hardest. The innocent girl should have been free of sins, but she feels the fear of her sins

being unveiled just as everyone else. The fact that the Minister came into the sermon with his “ sins” on his face, people actually felt fear and power from his sermon.