

Ambiguity in young goodman bro



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Ambiguity in Young Goodman Brown Summary: The story "Young Goodman Brown" is portrayed as a straight forward tale of a man on a venture.

It is not overly difficult to comprehend or interpret, however it does have several great ambiguities. _____ "Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting? (387)" The story "Young Goodman Brown" is portrayed as a straight forward tale of a man on a venture. It is not overly difficult to comprehend or interpret, however it does have several great ambiguities. As Hawthorne's tale has a great deal of symbolism, it is all in retrospect to the ambiguous entities within the tale. The formalistic approach will be used to analyze the ambiguities in the story, mainly focusing upon the use of dark and light contrasts. The questions of why did Goodman Brown leave his wife Faith and venture into the forest and was his journey into the forest a reality or a dream bring a grand weight of ambiguity upon the shoulders of this tale.

First, I would like to go into question of Goodman Brown's choice to enter the woods. As I look into the story and why Brown would have ventured into the forest, I look at two perspectives. The first being that the journey into the forest acted as a spiritual task that Goodman Brown felt he must complete. On page 377 it states that, "having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came." This could be his way of proving himself worthy in some way due to the fact that he says that neither his father nor his grandfather had completed his task at hand.

The second idea is in the reasoning that Hawthorne had simply utilized it as the setting and forged the story around the forest and its characterized

darkness and evil notions compared to that of the town which is light and absent of evil until Goodman Brown returns. This is a definite formalistic observation in the contrast of forest and the town. The forest is used as a setting which Hawthorne utilizes to expose the faults in all of mankind, including the self professed religious. No matter which way you believe, Hawthorne has successfully left the issue as a mystery and an undeclared element of the narrative.

Then comes the second impending question of whether or not the story even happened; whether or not the tale was a dream, or an actual occurrence in the life of Goodman Brown. Entering the text, there is no conclusive evidence of a dream state. It states, " Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset, into the street at Salem village. (375)" Simply speaking, Goodman Brown sets forth upon a journey complete with a clearly stated beginning and an end.

However, the middle is left for one to question. Once in the forest, the story begins to offer characteristics that would not relate to a truthful tale in the conscious state by Goodman Brown. This mostly due to Goodman Brown encountering villagers who vanish, and staffs that conform to a snake's body as shown on page 376 where Hawthorne states that, " But the only thing about him that could be of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. " Even Hawthorne accompanies the reader when finding himself unsure of the context of the story, fantasy or reality.

Hence the line from the narrator asking if Goodman Brown had fallen asleep to dream of a witch meeting. Hawthorne leaves many ambiguous questions throughout this story, two major of which I have illustrated. They are nearly all characterized by the use of the formalistic approach to analysis through the contrast of light and dark. It seems as if Hawthorne has left it up to the individuals to read and find for themselves their positions upon the scale in which the struggles between good and evil, the nature of mankind, and the concept of faith balance in the ambiguity of the story.