

Literary analysis of young goodman brown essay sample

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The characters: Goodman Brown, a round and dynamic character, is the main character in this short story. He is dynamic due to the fact that he undergoes a realization of what is happening and has been happening in the world around him. Faith, the wife of Brown, is defined as a flat and static character. She serves as a point of reference for her husband and her position is unchanging. With that being said, Faith serves a dual purpose; not only as his wife but as the term Faith is conveyed within itself. The Old man/ Devil, is established as a round and static character. Without his part this story would not have the same effect. He is the protagonist, and as always he is looking for new followers. Goody Cloyse was the woman dubbed as a witch in the Salem Witch Trials, and she ultimately lost her life during the era of the Puritans. She is considered flat and static because her character remains unchanged, and quite frankly exposes her true self without shame. Deacon Gookin, the town's teacher of the Lord's word, is considered flat and static. This stems from the fact that he is merely used as an image to belittle the strength of man for Goodman Brown. The Minister, yet another man of God, is a flat and static character and travelling companion of Deacon Gookin. He serves no real purpose other than contributing to illustrating the fall of those who we hold dear with our salvation. What: A young husband ventures into parts unknown to meet a man, against the better judgment of himself and his wife; ironically named Faith. Throughout the duration of this journey he realizes that everything he holds in high regard has been touched by the beast. At last he is broken and makes the ultimate sacrifice to become a follower and not a leader.

Where: The story takes place along a dreadful path that leads into the woods and the majority of the story takes place on the road. Within the woods is the gathering place where the “ conversion” of the new members takes place, and here he sees what he has chosen not to see, the corruption of man. The final scene occurs in the streets of Salem, Massachusetts; at this time the illusion of what Brown has believed the world truly is comes back into focus.

Why: Brown, almost appears as a virgin to the ways of the world. With this innocence he faces three themes: the banality of evil, the ingenious of man, and the expression that the greatest trick the Devil ever achieved was convincing man he didn't exist. How: Hawthorne captures the banality of evil within this story by allowing the reader to see how evil rears its ugly head in the purest and “ trustworthy” people and offices we hold dear.

It emerges within our law enforcement, government, teachers, and last but not least the church. Men have also been known to place their wives in an official position, regardless of the image of their dominance over them. The Devil uses “ Faith” as the straw that not only breaks his back, but crushes his faith. Brown believes that Faith will lead him to heaven, regardless of the choices he made because she is a “ blessed angel”. “ I have been 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 you father a pitch pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Phillip's War.” (12th Edition Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing, 2013)

Aside from the ways of life passed down from his predecessors and catechism schooling Brown ventures out into the night. He knows that the advisory of man awaits him but he appears to be unnerved by the matter. The hellfire and brimstone that he grew to fear, did not allow him awareness that he is in the presence of the oldest evil ever known. The lengths to which his ignorance reaches is unknown, however it is clearly displayed that even the Devil being called the Devil within his presence isn't enough to make believer out of Brown. Lost with in his ignorance the Devil merely shows him what he knows will be enough to bend his will, and justly he succeeds. In Brown's world the things that he has respect or holds honor for can be blemished by evil. "“ The Devil” screamed the pious old lady. “ Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?” observed the traveler, confronting her, and leaning on writhing stick.” (12th Edition Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing, 2013)

The Devil is a liar. He appears to Brown as a non-threatening old man to secure his trust. Even throughout the course of religion the Devil has taken on many forms to entice man. Even with the signature signs of the presence of evil, they go unnoticed. As a society, we have adapted of image of the Devil to be this foul and sinister looking creature. With the blinders perfectly in place, Brown never really sees it coming. The greatest trick ever performed by the Devil is convincing man that he doesn't exist and he succeeds because we never see him coming. “ And yet, through the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, an as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world.... But the only thing about him, that could be fixed upon as remarkable, was his staff which bore likeness of a great black

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snake, so curiously wrought, that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself, like a serpent.

This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by uncertain light.” (12th Edition Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing, 2013) Hawthorne’s Young Goodman Brown the reader to issues that he viewed important during the era in which it was written. Among the prevailing themes are the banality of evil, the ignorance of man, and the greatest trick the devil achieved was convincing man he did not exist. Evil exists in all walks of life as it has since its origin. But as conscious humans we must accept and beware of its existence. Ultimately, the survival of our souls depends on it.

Reference

(2013). 12th Edition Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing. In X. Kennedy, & D. Gioia, 12th Edition Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing (pp. 94-95). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Inc.