

The theme of puritanism and piety in the minister's black veil



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The story is about when Reverend Hooper enters the church to give a sermon. On this day, the reverend was different because he had a unique dressing style. He had a black veil, which covered the larger part of his face apart from the mouth and chin.

People were surprised with the dressing style of reverend on this day (Colacurcio, 373). However, when he began to deliver the sermon, the congregation was unusually moved. The reverend starts by greeting the congregation but people felt astonished and no one was ready to interact with him. Hooper's veil become relevant during the funeral in the afternoon. She bends down towards the body as his veil hangs down. In this case, the reverend believed that the she could see his face if she were alive. After viewing the body, he covered his face with the black veil. He then walks out of the church and left people in suspense. Some people asserted that he could be walking with woman's ghost. Finally, he presided over the wedding in the same evening while in the same dressing code.

Many people questioned the dressing style of Reverend Hooper but they could not gather strength and ask him. Some people believed that the reverend was insane because he appeared in a unique dressing code. Consequently, certain people perceived him as sinner and he could be atoning for participating in a crime by hiding his face. A section of the congregation decided to go and see him but could not inquire about his veil. Elizabeth, fiancée of the reverend was the only person who did not fear him despite appearing in an astonishing dressing code. Elizabeth played a pivotal role by creating ease among the congregation. She demanded the reverend to uncover his face and explain to the people the reason for appearing in

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such a dressing code. Elizabeth warned her fiancée that people were talking ill about the dressing code. For example, she explained to the reverend that the congregation believed he committed a grave sin. However, Hooper declined to uncover his face and asserted that all people were sinners. After that, Reverend Hooper begged Elizabeth to live with him forever because he was lonely. He also promised Elizabeth that their reunion would make his veil to come off. Elizabeth was not at ease because he believed the reverend was evil. She was afraid of the veil and decided to break off their engagement. Hooper then later remained isolated from the rest of Milford.

Despite the fact that people perceived Reverend Hooper as a sinner, the veil made the reverend an impressive preacher. His sermons were different when he wore the veil. For example, before wearing the veil, his sermons sounded mild and pleasant. People also believed in his speeches when he did not wear the veil. The narrator of this story suggests the sermons are not that different hence the reverends are supposed to deliver similar sermons. Other people also believed that the black veil converted them into Christianity. Precisely, Hooper gained reputation across New England.

After some years, Reverend Hooper fall sick and Elizabeth was nursing him in the deathbed. Despite the fact that they did not marry each other, Elizabeth still loved reverend Hooper. Some clergymen including Reverend Clark praised his moral reputation while he was in the deathbed. Hooper was still putting on his veil while lying on the bed. The clergymen pleaded with him to allow them to remove his veil to see his face. However, he remained ardent that his veil should not be lifted on earth. This persistent prompted Reverend Clark to ask him what made him to hide his face. He asked reverend Clark <https://assignbuster.com/the-theme-of-puritanism-and-piety-in-the-ministers-black-veil/>

why Milford feared him for that long instead of fearing each other. He also asserted that he could be condemned after all people confessing their dishonesty and feel free with each other (Sadoff 247). In this case, he confirmed that the dishonesty of people made him to wear the black veil in his face. He did not want to see dishonest people. The clergymen were shocked because Hooper did not want to uncover his face. As a result, the clergymen decided to bury him with his face covered.

Religion is one of the themes that come out clearly from this story. The narrator brings forth tenets of puritans. The story takes place in a puritan community with unique understanding of the role of religion in the society. The puritans were Christian Protestants who existed in early 1600s. However, the rulers banished them from the country for having subversive beliefs. After that, they moved to certain parts of America to establish small colonies. According to the puritans, all human beings were sinners by default because they inherited it from Adam and Eve who were the first human beings to live on earth. For this reason, they believed that education and morals were the only ways of entering the Kingdom of God. They lived a simple life to avoid troubles and sins (Levine 374). For example, they did not believe in dancing, singing, wearing bright colors or playing. They concentrated on their piety and believed their behaviors were outward manifestation of their good deeds.

Hawthorne also dig deeper to bring out the conflict between Hooper who believed in puritanism and Milford. At the onset, the town's people are thinking secular as they make their ways to church. Some people were

laughing while others were admiring the opposite sex. Hooper decided to
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cover his face using black veil as a sign of believing in puritan virtues. He behaved in a way that opposed the beliefs of Milford. For example, he did not have the pleasure of marriage and friendship (Glausser 375). When Elizabeth failed to love him, he decided to be alone. Hooper remained solid that he did not mind what people said about him. He asserted that he was concerned with the reward in the heaven instead of earning marks from the human beings.

The narrator of this story also brings forth the flaws and contradictions of puritanism. Reverend Hooper covered his face with the intention of attracting the attention of people while delivering sermon. However, people had a conflicting perception about the black veil. They believed that Hooper committed a grave sin that made him to cover his face. People pleaded with him to uncover his face but he refused because he was trying to observe and obey the virtues of puritans. The narrator also brings out the aspect of love in the story. The love between Elizabeth and Hooper did not work out because of the conflicting beliefs. Elizabeth feared the black veil of Reverend Hooper while the reverend expected Elizabeth to love him regardless of the black veil that covered his face.