

Psychoanalysis



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Hawthorne Hawthorne Young Goodman Brown was called the " Puritanical representative young hero-a Calvinist Everyman." (Jacobs, p. 2) He demonstrated this through his repeated sin of judging others, rather than focusing on his own sins. Goodman Brown criticized the Calvinistic doctrines by refusing to acknowledge his own sins at the Sabbath. He got sucked into the temptation of sexual pleasure while criticizing others on the matter.

Why are Puritans susceptible to hypocrisy Four preconditions for falling prey to hypocrisy are delineated. The reasons for Puritans complex attitude to hypocrisy, both condoning and condemning it, are also explored. Hypocrisy is the false claim to virtue. It always refers to consciously intended deception by a person in a position of trust. Making use of literary examples, the investigation starts with the delineation of three readily apparent preconditions for falling prey to hypocrisy. Idealization of the hypocrite is seen as a defense against a dread of uncertainty on the part of the person who succumbs to hypocrisy. The addition of a third precondition, the force of powerful desire, completes the introduction.

A selective review of historical and philosophical studies of hypocrisy over the past twenty-five hundred years situates the problem of the susceptibility to hypocrisy. Must idealization lead to credulity I do not think so. Belief, even strong belief, need not be credulous, and idealization, though it always involves some substitution of wish for judgment, is not always used as a defense. But when idealization and belief are fueled by anxiety, independent judgment, fragile under the best of circumstances, may fail. So idealization as defense against the dread of uncertainty may be expected to create the credulity that is one precondition for successful hypocrisy. But unrelenting credulity may come about also from great desire, especially in those inclined

to magical thinking and other immaturities

and weaknesses of personality Although hypocrisy depends only on the intentions of the hypocrite, to understand the significance of hypocrisy

requires attention to both

participants in the hypocritical event. As the hypocrite has received centuries

of consideration by playwrights and philosophers, and even by

psychoanalysts (e. g., Bergler 1943; Rangell 2000), there will be relatively

little need to elaborate here on the psychology of the hypocrite. I want to

emphasize, however, that as analysts we take it for granted

that a variety of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious influences lead to

the intentions and actions of the hypocrite. We also take it for granted that

responses such as idealization serve to create mutuality between the two

participants in hypocrisy.

What was the intention of the Puritans Was it only in an effort to avoid

persecution that they fled England, or did they wanted to build a society on

their own ideologies and beliefs Did it work How they were able to maintain

social cohesion and what was the role of the individual The Holy Bible was

the text that provided Puritans with spiritual, moral, social, and legal

guidelines. Their theocracy was based on the exegesis of the clergy. It was

the Puritan's devout belief that assured social cohesion and compliance by

the individual. It was also the threat of punishment that maintained the

cohesion. The Puritans believed that it was their responsibility not only to

monitor their behavior but also to rid their society of any evil influences. This

responsibility required citizens to be aware of their neighbor's actions and

attitudes. Within the Puritan belief system existed the premise that Earth

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was a battleground for good and evil and; therefore, anything that existed was on one side or the other. It was especially true in the New World. Hawthorne prepares the reader for symbolic inference through the setting. He recreates the time period most remembered of the Puritans: the Salem witch trials. Evidence of this is found through references to time period and historical and familial allusion. The time period is established with the description of Goodman Brown as the son of a man who fought in King Philip's War. This war was fought between 1675 and 1676, and a son would have been of marrying age by the early 1690's. The Salem witch trials were in the year 1692, and the story is likely set just before this date. Nancy Bunge argues that Hawthorne uses history to examine issues of community and individualism explaining both the madness in Salem and much subsequent madness" (Bunge 11). This time period is important, as it illustrates the village of Salem in its heightened state of religious oppression and strict moral code, which helped snowball the effect of verbal allegations of witchcraft against innocent people. Thomas Johnson stated of the time, Belief in witches was generally questioned by no one...[they] accepted certain phenomena as due to witchcraft" (Pilgrims 1). Cotton Mather, a prominent Massachusetts theologian wrote a manual which was used to prosecute the witches' (Salem 1), and helped generate an unbalanced fascination with witchcraft" (Pilgrims 1). This indicates that the time was ripe for religious persecution. The Puritans' belief in witches was strong enough proof' for Hawthorne's ancestors and their contemporaries to condemn twenty innocent Salemites to death based on purely spectral evidence. 4 It could be said that Young Goodman Brown was a result of Hawthorne's guilt that he felt because of his ancestors' involvement in the Salem witch trials.

Yet, this view by itself would drastically narrow the focus of Hawthorne's intent, prohibiting the greater, multiple meanings behind the story. It is widely known and historically accepted that Hawthorne's ancestors were involved in the witch trials as well as in other atrocities against Native Americans and Quakers. By using the reference to family, however, it is not necessarily a condemnation of those ancestors. This story acts as a defense for all of mankind, if not specifically for his ancestors. For Goodman Brown, like his ancestors, fails to distinguish between the specter or shape of a person and the person himself" (Martin 83). Hawthorne's tragic hero repeats the sins of his fathers, and it becomes clearer that Man's fate involves sin and struggles of faith. Another clue to Brown's realization of sin is that he creates the devil figure in his own image. This acts as a projection of himself as the embodiment of evil. This fuller understanding of the self as a sinner, rather than viewing the world around him as sinning, is a nineteenth-century phenomenon of Unitarianism⁵, which Hawthorne seems to struggle with as Narrator of the seventeenth-century story about Goodman Brown.

As we explore greater depths of the story, it becomes more apparent that the focus is on society and mankind as a whole, not the specific two or three bad apples' of his hereditary lines. After all, in Young Goodman Brown'', the devil had given his staff to the Egyptian magi' among many others, implicating man through the ages as capable of evil. The timelessness of mankind's sin is revealed within the Puritans as well as in the Narrator's focus years later (through the eyes of Unitarianism). This idea of evil past, present and future is just another example of the allegorical nature the story has in relation to the Fall of Man. Brown is representative of the past, exemplifying the group dynamics of the religious society of the Puritans.

McPherson calls him the Puritanical representative young hero - a Calvinist Everyman" (McPherson 73), which he demonstrates through his repeated sin of judging others, rather than focusing on his own sins.

Also important to the allegory is the setting, which Hawthorne chose to be in Salem in the religious hysteria that shrouded the trials. At the time of the trials, books were being written on the nature of witches, spectral evidence was introduced as solid proof of guilt, and the disciples of Puritanism followed what was dictated by the elect. It is the elect which proves to be an important issue for Young Goodman Brown." Calvinistic principles had five main points, abbreviated as TULIP. Four of the points defend and give power to the elect' (i. e., those who were chosen by God), the remaining point is for everyone else (the Everyman', as Goodman Brown was). The idea of Total Depravity', whereby men are unable to exercise free will because of their hereditary corruption' through Adam and Eve, is the most known doctrine of Calvinism. Therefore, the Calvinists - as well as the Puritans - believed that there were a few chosen people who set the rules based on what they claim is their direction from God. Others, not part of the elect, or still unaware of their status with the elect, were left feeling doomed for hell. On one end, their lives feel wasted with repentance, as only the elect went to heaven, and a contradictory uneasiness grew from the other end, a discomfort with the barriers predetermined for them. This idea became symbolized through the church as a struggle between light and darkness. The light representing the freedom from sin that the elect enjoyed and the darkness representing man's personal sin, a darkness which all of Goodman Brown's fellow townspeople shared. This darkness is brought to life in the critical forest scene of Young Goodman Brown". A basic tenet of the Puritans was that

after the Fall, all but an elect group [are] irrevocably bound for hell" (Pilgrims 1). This gloomy doctrine of predestination presented by Calvin was turned into means for man to commit atrocities either out of known salvation as part of the elect, or out of hopelessness of never knowing God regardless of actions or will. The ideology of the church began to spin into hypocritical moral will" (Shear 547) and was questioned by no one, as the elect were the decision-makers. The doctrine bewilders Goodman Brown: he's damned if he does, damned if he doesn't. It's a tough choice.

Goodman Brown also criticizes the Calvinistic doctrines by refusing to acknowledge his own sins at the Sabbath. In his Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin regards original sin as our nature" and that it cannot be inactive" (Kazin 35). Man was to be free from sin, yet the leader and founder of the Calvinists stated himself that it was in man's nature to sin. This, as a doctrine, fails to be convincing to Brown and leads to hypocrisy within his village. According to William Stein, the other failure on the part of the Calvinists was the strict belief that the devil's sovereignty is comparable to God's" (Newman 342). Hawthorne makes a point of placing the devil in the role of teacher, where he persuade[s] the hero to take his religion seriously" (Crews 107). This irony reflects the anti-Puritan view of Hawthorne, who does not reject the church or God, but who recognizes the dangers of strict Calvinistic indoctrination that concentrates on the sins of the world, rather than personal sins. By placing such an emphasis on the power of the devil, man's hopelessness is magnified, for redemption for the majority is impossible" (Newman 342). The forest depicted in Goodman Brown's journey, then, is crucial in order to emphasize the separation of man's blindness to corruption and evil, and man's insight into personal sin. The

blindness occurs in the town, where light is everywhere and churches abound. In the wilderness, where no church had ever been gathered" (Hawthorne 335), Brown is confronted by the devil himself, and is faced with a test of his faith. A crowd celebrates the witches' Sabbath and his wife, Faith, and family and fellow townspeople are all there. This dreamlike depiction of the forest is intentional in its ambiguity, providing enough information to talk academically about, but leaving out enough details to make it eternally debatable. One critic said of Brown, he is a prisoner of his own psychology" (Shear 545). Others have attributed Brown's state of mind in Freudian concepts, such as projection', paranoia' (Shear 545), patriarchal rejection', and neurosis' (Levy 115). Another interesting theory discussed by several critics centers on the oedipal complexity of the final forest scene. The father motions for Goodman Brown to join him, among the sinners, while the mother begs him to leave. More convincing, perhaps, is Newman's argument that Brown subsumes the cultural psychology of the nation in [his] individual psychology" (Newman 338). Cultural psychology, as developed in this argument, is greatly overtone in sexual connotation. It can be combined with the oedipal tendencies to understand the Puritanical stance on sexuality in marriage. The Puritan version was that a couple should only be engaged in sexual contact for procreational purposes, not recreational. One source states that sexual repression in Puritan New England...[led to a] tendency for out of control behaviors to spread in crowds" (Salem 1). This would lend itself to speculation that the repressive' nature of seventeenth-century marital sexuality, indoctrinated by the Puritans, led to the hysteria and mob mentality' of the witch trials.

One Puritanical belief is that women could not be truly touched by God... Any

woman who dared to speak the word of God must surely be an instrument of the devil" (Puritan 1). Most ironic in this belief is that Goody Cloyse⁷ had taught Brown his catechism. The Puritan doctrine that barred women from personal relationships with God, in a sense, barred them from confronting personal sin. Hawthorne states that there was a world of meaning in his reference to Goody Cloyse's use of the word catechism⁸, and it is with this ambiguous inference that one could connect this statement to sexuality. Cloyse boasts that she knows Brown's grandfather carnally, suggesting that the catechism' she taught him involved sexual sin (i. e. adultery). She reminds Goodman Brown that his own family was motivated to sin, and seeing his father in the forest only proved her words true. His new marriage to Faith seems to catalyze this Faith allegory occurring in the forest. His test of Faith is also the faith his wife has in him, and that he has in her. Brown's father welcomes him to marital sex and procreation with an acceptance of his passion. His mother tries to turn him away, in order to protect him from the sin of sexual pleasure, which her son fears he will encounter with his new wife. The fear is not unfounded in this context.

According to James C. Crews, Brown was fleeing from the sexuality of married love... to a place where he can voyeuristically and vicariously enjoy that which he directly shuns" (Keil 33). This spiritual crisis that Brown encounters is what begins his journey, feeling as though he is the only man who feels sinful. What he discovers on his way is that all of those whom he regarded as religious teachers had taken part in the sin of sexual pleasure as well. What's more, Brown seems unwilling to sacrifice his sin' for redemption and rebirth, a blunt rejection of Puritan doctrine. Martin argues that Goodman Brown's insistence upon this one night" represents man's irrational

drive to leave faith... and... adventure onto the wilder shores of experience" (Martin 85). It is man's destiny to want to use the gifts of God (i. e. sex), which in turn become their doom, for evil is the nature of mankind" (Hawthorne 340).

The climactic moment of Brown refusing to give up his sinful ways might at first seem evil, but what it represents to him is a rejection of Puritanical ideas that sexuality is sinful. He has nothing to lose, according to the church. He is damned anyway, if he has discovered he is not one of the elect. What good would rebirth do for him if he is already dead in the eyes of Calvinistic predestination The Fall of Man is masterfully recreated in Young Goodman Brown", and is reminiscent of Milton's Paradise Lost and the biblical Eden. One critic goes as far as to say, the old story here is, of course, the story of the fall of Adam through the temptation of Eve. But Eve is renamed Faith" (Becker 16). Hawthorne manages to portray Faith convincingly, as both a physical and metaphorical element of the story. As Harris states that It all comes down to a refusal [of Brown] to accept his own humanity or anyone else's" (Harris 44). Brown's inability to see the sins of humanity blinds him, and after the Sabbath⁹, his eyes were rudely awakened to the reality of evil of mankind, or the wickedness in this dark world" (Hawthorne 340). The disturbing reality decimates his soul and leaves him embittered and angry for the rest of his days for his dying hour was gloom" (Hawthorne 341). What is again ironic, is the doctrine of the church which seems hypocritical in its own teachings, that exercising one's gifts of God (i. e. sexuality) yields miserable ruin"', but that this ruin and misery is necessary for one to come to a knowledge of God" (Calvin 593

The Puritans believed that there were a few chosen people who set the rules

based on what they claim is their direction from God. Calvin regarded "original sin as our nature and that it cannot be inactive." (Jacobs, p. 3) This was not convincing to Brown and led to hypocrisy within his village. His anti-Puritan view, which does not reject the church or God, concentrates on the sins of the world, rather than personal sins. Then there was Goody Cloyse. It was said, "Any woman who dared to speak the word of God must surely be an instrument of the devil." (Jacobs, p. 4) This is an assumption that the religious are actually the evil-doers working under Satan. It was ironic that Goody Cloyse had taught Brown his catechism. The Puritan doctrine "barred women from personal relationships with God, barred them confronting personal sin. (Jacobs, p. 5) Cloyse stated that she knew his grandfather carnally; suggesting what she taught him involved sexual sin. She had reminded Goodman that his own family was motivated to sin, and seeing his father in the forest proved her words true. His father welcomed him to marital sex while his mother tried to turn him away to protect him from the sin of sexual pleasure. It was dire now due to Goodman Brown just getting married to his wife. In the end, he refused to give up his sinful ways. The "scarlet letter" was considered a great legend to bear upon those who have sinned.

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It was originally said to be "a mere scarlet cloth tinged in an earthly dye-pot, but others believe it was red-hot with eternal fire. This legend came upon after the sinning of Hester. It was said, "it seared Hester's bosom so deeply, that perhaps there was more truth in the rumor than our modern incredulity may be inclined to admit." (Hawthorne, Ch. 5) Legends such as this are hard to prove now after all these years. They also were said just to scare someone

of an act or deed. Mistress Hibbins was the Governor's sister, and she was executed as a witch. If this is regarded as authentic, and not a parable, " it is an illustration of the minister's argument against sundering the relation to a fallen mother to the offspring of her frailty. Even thus early had the child saved her from Satan's snare." (Hawthorne, Ch. 8)

In the context of Hawthorne, women are seen as evil due to a man's temptation. In those days, women were put to blame for causing any sexual acts. It was considered their fault because they tempted man. When both parties seem as only one is to be blamed. They are seen as guilty of sin, and punished for such. Goodman Brown was a prime example. He was set out to save others of sin, but instead he got sucked into temptation as well. This was considered the hypocrisy towards the Puritans. However, he did focus on the sins of others instead of his own. This is where we learn that we should not criticize others on what they do if we are going to do the same.

Conclusion

The following excerpt is the conclusion of " Young Goodman Brown." It opens just after Brown has seen Faith, and he is still upset and shocked from the experience. He cannot decide whether it was a dream or reality. (Hawthorne frequently used actual historical figures in his stories; notice that here he mentions Goodie Cloyse, who was Sarah Cloyce, one of the condemned witches in the Salem trials.)

Things to Remember While Reading " Young Goodman Brown":

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born over one hundred years after the end of the Salem, Massachusetts, witch craze.

Hawthorne's ancestors had an especially strong impact on his imagination and on his name (Nathaniel added the " w" to his last name in order to

separate himself from the evil acts of his ancestors). William Hathorne settled in Boston in the 1630s and was involved in the persecution of Quakers (members of the Society of Friends). William's son John was one of the chief judges in the Salem witchcraft trials (see Chapters 3 and 4).

From "Young Goodman Brown"

"Faith! Faith!" cried the husband [Goodman Brown], "look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one."

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. "What God doth the wizard pray to" quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse [Sarah Cloyce], that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her

husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting

Be it so if you will; but, alas! It was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.

What Happened Next . . .

Hawthorne went on to write *The Scarlet Letter*, which is the most widely read of his literary works. In 1852 Hawthorne was appointed overseas U. S. consul (official government representative) at Liverpool, England, where he served from 1853 to 1857. Upon returning to the United States in 1860, he and his

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wife settled into their first real home at Concord. After a mysterious illness, and refusing to take medical attention, in 1864 Hawthorne died in his sleep. Before his death he had started writing four new books, none of which was ever completed.

Did You Know . . .

Nathaniel Hawthorne believed that what one generation of a family did came back to haunt later generations. He believed it so strongly that it even showed up in one of his books, *The House of the Seven Gables* (which also happens to be a house in what used to be Salem Village): " the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones

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