Puritan superstition as reflected in Nathaniel hawthorne’s young goodman brown

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1. Introduction
1.1 Background of Choosing the Subject

Literary works consist of several genres such as novel, poetry, drama and short story. From the four literary genres, the short story is one of literary forms, which has few characters and needs a short time to comprehend. As stated by Guerin that short story by its nature, concentrates upon a single incident or action. He said, “It has few characters, its setting and characterization must be rather evoked than developed in detail. Its effect must be made quickly and sharp since the most effective story is short enough to be read at one sitting.” (Guerin, 1979, p.7).

The writer puts great interest on short story, because of its complexity. The reader will be easy to understand the contents of the story, because the reader only needs few times to read. The plot, characters, setting and theme are usually simple and easy to comprehend.
Among American writers, Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1960), is known as a novelist and critic and also famous as the short story writer of tales of the mystery and macabre. Hawthorne had written some novels and short stories. He was an author who has great contribution in manifesting the idea of Puritanism. His writings are mostly based on the historical facts combined with the reality in his own life and society. (Turner, 1980, p.232). The Puritan life, especially in Salem had inspired and enriched his literary imagination. As stated by Turner he tried to portray problem of life dealing with the original sin, inheritance guilt, and haunted soul. (Turner, 1980, p.233).

A collection of his short stories, Twice – Told Tales was printed in 1837, and the book had a modest success. Another collection of his story was Mosses from Old Manse. It was published in 1848. This collection was written and collected from magazines that had published his earlier works.

One of his greatest short stories is Young Goodman Brown. Its theme is also Puritan, because the author, Nathaniel Hawthorne, is known as one of the most outstanding writers who heirs his grandfather who was Puritan. “…Hawthorne, as often been said, wrote much Puritan because he was himself a Puritan in temper…” (Doubleday, 1967, p.9). By reading the story, it is obvious that the setting of time, place, atmosphere and dialog of the story is merely about Puritan life in New England. “…Hawthorne in Young Goodman Brown ‘finds in witchcraft’ a marvelous ready to his hand and arising from very beliefs held in his own New England…” (Doubleday, 1962,p.55). Witchcraft is
one of the Puritan’s beliefs of superstition, including the nature of wild jungle, Satan, devil, big trees and some terrible animals like a huge snake.

The writer is much interested in the short story *Young Goodman Brown*, because the superstition phenomena in the story can also be seen in our surrounding in Indonesia. The superstition phenomena can be found in many traditional people and places such as at some villages in Java, Dayak in Kalimantan, Kubu in Jambi, many tribes at Irian Jaya and so on. Javanese also believe in superstition and many things dealing with supernatural things, such with the sacred place, big trees, snake and other supernatural powers.

In the short story, the protagonist Young Goodman Brown went to wild jungle to meet witches. In his rest, he fell a sleep and dreamed that he seemed to meet satan, witches and many devils. He had to fight against them, because his task in his journey to the wild jungle was to find witches.

The short story offers a vivid picture of Puritan belief in superstition. It is presented with allegory and symbol. The symbols in *Young Goodman Brown* are jungle, Satan, devil, witches, a huge tree and a sacred journey. “…The allegory such as emerges from the narrative, easily and naturally as it seems to the reader, pointed up by the interesting significance Hawthorne sees in the name of the title character, Young Goodman Brown and that of his wife, Faith”. (Doubleday, 1967, p.55).

1.2 Problem Statement
The problem that will be analyzed in this thesis is based on the background explained before. In order to reach the goal, the writer chooses the following problem statements: How is Puritan superstition reflected in Hawthorne’s *Young Goodman Brown*?

**1.3 Theories and Approaches**

This research is conducted by the boundaries of American studies. This means that interdisciplinary approach is going to be applied in this study. American Studies attempts to analyze the problem through interdisciplinary study as what Mc. Dowell said in his book *American studies* “For such it is useful to separate the academic disciplines into three great divisions. The social sciences are that deals with both facts and values, the humanities are concerned chiefly but not wholly with facts. In such a classification, history when it deals with values falls among the humanities and among the social science when it deals with facts”. (Mc. Dowell, 1948, p.7). The approaches applied in the research are structural, objective biographical and sociological.

Since the primary source of this study is a work of literature this study will apply literary approach. In relation to this approach, this study applies structural approach as the aid to comprehend the literary work and to go to the deep interpretation. The objective approach is used to find out Puritan Superstition portrayed in *Young Goodman Brown*. The Phenomena of Puritan Superstition is portrayed through character, setting of time, setting of place, plot and theme. The biographical approach will be useful to examine the background of the author’s
life and point of view that emerge in the completion of the creative process of the writer. The last approach used in this thesis is sociological approach. This approach is used to analyze literary work in order to know the social effect on individual, (Guerin, 1970, p.55). The study of literary work from sociological point of view will show us the society condition through the media of language. The application of sociological approach in this thesis is intended to describe the reality of Puritan life in Salem New England 1692. In American studies discipline, the story or the works of art are viewed primarily as a mental fact, which is used as evidence to show certain phenomenon in American culture at a certain time. Robert Sklar in *American Studies in the Realities of America* states that the nature of American society could be discovered by studying its reflections in the imaginations and intellects of men and women who stood both within and outside culture, who preached to it and criticized it and created its enduring symbols and models. (Sklar, 1981, p.599).

In accordance with Leitch assertion, Henry Nash Smith, one of the prominent scholars of American Studies theories states that the student of literature should take account of sociological, historical, and anthropological data and methods. (Smith, 1980, p.14). It is clear that the American Studies discipline stresses on the interdisciplinary point of view. In relation to this idea, Tremaine McDowell, another prominent American Studies theorist in his book entitled *American Studies* suggests the interdisciplinary point of view in understanding the work of literature. He argues:
The central theme of American life in this unity within diversity, the diversity within that characterizes life in the United States. Considering the unique characterization of American civilization which are represented by history, philosophy and fine arts and social science can be understood only from the interdisciplinary point of view (McDowell, 1973, p.73)

This study applies the library research method that takes text of work of art as an object of the study. The primary data is collected from the main source, the short story *Young Goodman Brown* (Guerin, 1979, pp. 301-315), while the supporting data is collected from books, criticism and journal. The supporting data is analyzed to support the main data to get the facts of the Puritan superstition in America, especially in 1692. Data is presented descriptively and analytically in this thesis and it is supported by the American studies theory which takes account of sociological, historical and anthropological data and methods. Every part and essence of the short story will be visible because of applying this interdisciplinary point of view, so the problems of this study will be answered clearly.

*Young Goodman Brown* deals with the American social condition during the Puritan Age in the seventeenth century especially stressing on the Salem tragedy of Witchcraft in 1692. To understand the social phenomenon in this story, it is very important to elaborate the sociocultural phenomena of the Puritan society in the seventeenth century and the Puritan’s belief.

Moreover, this study also explores Hawthorne’s point of view of the Puritans superstition in the seventeenth century. Since the concept of the Puritan
superstition is influenced by his concept of life, this research also attempts to relate the short story with the biographical study of the author as well as the basic culture and history of the American Puritan in seventeenth century. Thus by using the holistic orientation, it is expected to answer the question why in his position as a Puritan’s descent he chooses to expose the Puritan superstition as the theme of the short story *Young Goodman Brown*.

In analyzing the short story, we have to know about its author as a person who creates it. The biography of an author can give a description about his life, experiences and ideas, which influence much on his writing. Although there are a lot of books that reveal Hawthorne’s biography, here the writer still involves the author’s biography to make the readers easier in understanding this research.

**1.4. Literature Review**

Nathaniel Hawthorne is famous American writer of 19th century. He descendant of a line of worthies who was born on the fourth of July 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. In his line of worthies, he was the sixth generation of a Puritan family who was carrying the Puritan doctrine. Bradley in *The American Tradition in Literature Vol. 1* stated that Hawthorne’s ancestors were the authority who strictly kept and applied the principle of the Puritanism in their life and society. (Bradley et al eds. 1962, p.56)
Nathaniel Hawthorne’s first ancestor is William Hathorne (the family spelled it that way until Nathaniel Hawthorne himself later added “w” to his family name). Related to his first ancestor as a powerful man who was very strong in carrying his religion believes. Bible in his one hand shows his paternal doctrine where Puritanism refers to be the Bible and a sword in his hand shows his paternal doctrine Puritanism refers to be the Bible as its fundamental law.

Hawthorne’s description about his ancestor gave him a sort of bad feeling and disappointed with the past. He felt that the history that was made by his ancestor haunted his mind as an inherited guilt. He admitted to being haunted by the figure the prominent but guilty ancestor who “…was present to his boyish imagination, as far back as he can remember.” (Unger, 1974, p.223)

William Hathorne’s sin is dealing with the persecution of Quakers. It stated in The Custom House as follows:

“ He was like wise a better persecutor, as witness the Quakers, who have remembered him in their histories, and relate and incident of his hard severity towards a woman of their sect, which will last longer. It is to be feared, than any record of his better deed, although these were many.” (Hawthorne in Bradley Sculley, 1962, p.20)

William Sewel in his History of Quakers reports that William Hathorne ordered “Anne Collemen and Four of her friends” to be” whipped through Salem, Boston, and Dedham”(Turner,1980, p.61). Hawthorne himself presents William action in his short story Young Goodman Brown through the
statement of Brown’s companion on the forest trail,” I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem” (Turner, 1980, p. 76).

The Puritan situation at that time, they belief of superstition, which lead them to the witch hunting in Salem New England in 1692 and the Puritan hunted them because according to the Puritan they have a supernatural power from satan. Satan was a God enemy and because of the collaboration with God’s enemy, the witches were hunted and then condemned by the Puritan. They believe that witches are their enemy because Satan live in their soul Puritan hunt witches then hang them for their sin.

…While it is ideal of religious concentration they also shared in the superstition and bigotry of their day. If the Puritans hanged twenty person as witches at Salem in 1692, it was equally true that in England one notorious which finder alone was responsible for sending three hundred witches to the gallows between 1645 – 1647 (Horton, 1952, p. 44).

2. Analysis

2.1 Character and Characterization

Characters are the people in narration, and characterization is the author’s presentation and development of characters (Griffith, 1986, p. 46). The writer will
be analyzing the characters that are important in the short stories to answer the problem statement.

2.1.1 Young Goodman Brown

In this short story the main character is Goodman Brown. He is wrought from the stuff of Puritan superstition. Hawthorne described Goodman Brown as a good Puritan. Goodman Brown is intensely religious man who is hagridden by thought of sin and evil. (Steinmann & Willen, 1967, p.130). He has been married for three months to a pretty woman. He is devoted to his wife Faith, whose name he uses like a shield for his soul.

At the beginning of his walk through the woods, Brown runs into the Devil who tries to convert him. This is shown by the Devil’s offering of the staff to Brown. The Devil goes on to say that Brown’s family has had dealings with evil in the past; examples used are the Salem witches trials and the killing of Indian non-combatants. This may be Hawthorne’s way of dealing with guilt he might have felt over his own forbear’s action during those times. Brown goes on to say that he could not bear the shame of betraying his faith while the Devil is naming people known and respected by Brown to try to show him that it would not really be that bad if Brown joined the witches’ coven. When Goody Cloyse is encountered, Brown learns how she truly feels about him. Goody Cloyse also freely takes up the Devil’s staff. Proud of himself for denying the Devil, while again using his wife’s name to strengthen his resolve, Brown discovers that his respected Minister, Deacon Gookin, and even the Indians are all servants of the
Devil. When Brown learns that his wife has given into the temptation of the Devil, the Christian belief he is struggling to keep is shaken from him. “My Faith is gone!” “There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil! for to thee is this world given.” (YGB, 1979, p.309). This shows that the most important thing in Christianity, his faith, is lost. Throughout the night, Brown finds out more than he ever wanted to know about how his fellow Puritan townsmen have betrayed their faith by giving in to their darker desires, he even feels his father urging him onward to do the same. All that he learns in the night is too much for him, and it changes a devoted husband with bright hopes and a wife whom he loves to a tired, beaten, questioning and almost faithless man.

2.1.2. Faith.

She is Young Goodman Brown's wife. She is a pretty woman and she uses the pink ribbons of her cap. She comes from the stuff of Puritan Superstition and Faith is a religious woman. Faith and Brown have been married for three months. She was sure that her husband still loved her though she did not live with him.

Actually, Faith did not agree when her husband Goodman Brown went and she asked him not to go an "errand". Faith had strong foreboding about his journey and pleads with him to postpone it. She felt worried when Goodman Brown was venturing into the woods to meet with devil. He left to unquestionable faith in God with his wife.

2.1.3. Goody Cloyse
She is a witch. In this story, Goody Cloyse a woman who taught him religion and good Christian principles as a youngster and also, that pious teacher of catechism (YGB, 1979, p.312). She looks like unreal, because, when Young Goodman Brown, in his rest, fell a sleep and dreamed that he seemed to meet Goody Cloyse. Young Goodman Brown had to fight agains the witches, because his task in his journey to the wild jungle was to find witches.

Actually in this story, Goodman Brown tries to deny the Devil and Goody Cloyse also the Devil's stuff. Goodman Brown is proud of himself to deny the Devil, but Goodman Brown do not know, the witches like Goody Cloyse "good or evil". Goody Cloyse is also human like Goodman Brown or everybody else. She could make mistakes just as Young Goodman Brown does.

2.1.4. Deacon Gookin

He is the old man. Deacon Gookin is minister of Puritan Stuff, "Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived and waited at the skirt of that venerable saint, his revered pastor, but irrevently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church…"(YGB, 1979, p.301).Brown seen Deacon Gookin is pinnacle of Christian faith and piety.

Deacon Gookin is also a hypocrite man. He looks like a good man but he is like ordinary "human". He has good and evil in his life. Brown felt his respected Minister Deacon Gookin is servant of the Devil, because he always tries to destroy the witches.
2.2. Setting

William Kenney in *How To Read and Write About Fiction* mentioned that setting is everything that happens, somewhere at some time. The element of fiction that reveals the where and when of event is called setting (Kenney, 1966, p.39). Hawthorne portrays many of the story’s settings as comparable to Biblical settings. *Young Goodman Brown* is described in the story as being a "good man." He is a proud resident of Salem Village as well. As anyone who claims to have graduated high school knows, Salem Village was an epicenter of religious knowledge in its day. It was in 1692 when Puritan society dominated the belief of Salem society, so without a doubt, in the story Goodman Brown knew his Bible like the back of his hand. Being of Puritan descent, *Young Goodman Brown* has surely encountered the Bible everyday of his life. As Brown treads through the forest alone and is confronted by the devil, Hawthorne uses his knowledge of the Bible to construct a forest similar to the forest in which Jesus of Nazareth was tempted by the devil. The Garden of Eden is also similar in that the Garden was the site of Adam and Eve’s temptations as well. Brown was assuredly tempted by the devil. So, it seems that, through anecdotal likeness to the Bible, Brown’s dream was definitely of things of which he was familiar with.

2.3. Plot

Plot is the most comprehensive element in a story or novel. Tennyson said that plot in literature means scheme of event in a story, and in positive sense it is the whole area of design and order in a literary work (Tennyson, 1970, p.13).
Young Goodman Brown is a short story; that is, a relatively brief narrative of prose fiction (ranging in length from 500 to 20,000 words). The story started in one evening near sunset sometime in the late seventeenth century. Goodman Brown, a young man who has been married only three months, prepares to leave his home in Salem, Massachusetts, and his pretty young bride, Faith, to go into the forest and spend the night on some mission that he will not disclose other than to say that it must be performed between sunset and sunrise. Although Faith has strong foreboding about his journey and pleads with him to postpone it, Brown is adamant and sets off. His business is evil by his own admission; he does not state what it is specifically, but it becomes apparent to the reader that it involves attending a witches Sabbath in the forest, a remarkable action in view of the picture of Brown, drawn early in the story, as a professing Christian who admonishes his wife to pray and who intends to lead an exemplary life after this one night.

The rising action begins when Brown, having left the village, enters the dark, gloomy, and probably haunted forest. He has not gone far before he meets the Devil in the form of a middle-aged, respectable - looking man whom Brown has made a bargain to meet and accompany on his journey. Perhaps the full realization of who his companion is and what the night may hold in store for him bow dawns on Brown, for he makes an effort to return to Salem. It is at best a feeble attempt, however, for, though the Devil does not try to detain him, Brown continues walking with him deeper into the forest.
As they go, the Devil shocks Goodman Brown by telling him that his (Brown's) ancestors were religious bigots, cruel exploiters, and practitioners of the black art in short, full fledged servant of the Devil. Further, the young man is told that the very pillars of New England society, church, and state are witches (creatures actually in league with the Devil), lechers, blasphemers, and collaborators with the Devil. Indeed, he sees his childhood Sunday School teacher, now a witch, and overhears the voices of his minister and a deacon of his church as they ride past conversing about the diabolical communion service to which both they and he are going.

Clinging to the notion that he may still save himself from this breakup of his world, Goodman Brown attempts to pray, but stops when a cloud suddenly darkens the sky. Babel of voices seems to issue from the cloud, many recognizable to Brown as belonging to godly persons, among them his wife. After the cloud has passed, a pink ribbon such as Faith wears in her cap flutters to the ground. Upon seeing it, Goodman Brown is plunged into despair and hastens toward the witches assembly once there, he is confronted with a congregation made up the wicked and those whom Brown had always assumed to be righteous. As he is led to the altar to be received into this fellowship of the lost, he is joined by Faith. The climax of the story comes just before they receive the sacrament of baptism: Brown cries to his wife to look heavenward and save herself. In the next moment he finds himself alone. The denouement (resolution, unraveling) of the plot comes quickly. Returning the next morning to Salem, Goodman Brown is a
changed man. He now doubts that anyone is good, his wife, his neighbors, the
official of church and state and he remains in this state of cynicism until he dies.

Hawthorne uses symbolism to write a story that is open and ambiguous to
interpretation. The story is supposed to be about Hawthorne himself who is
growing up in a time when many Puritan children are leaving the Puritan faith.
There are many times in the story when he is questioning his faith by listing the
examples of religious infractions by his peers. For all this, it is a wonder
Hawthorne was not eaten by the despair and guilt he lets Goodman Brown feel.
Some of his tales move in an atmosphere of supernaturalism as mysterious as that
of Young Goodman Brown, was supernatural and obviously unreal. And it will
paint the soul against a strange dark background of legend, superstition and
mystery that is essential colors may glow more vividly. “Then face to face you
may see man’s in most it glorious being its futile dreams, its hopeless remorse its
disillusions, its fatal flaws it glorious if impossible aspirations.” (YGB, 1979,
p.303). In some such manner to fix the essential spiritual experiences of mankind,
separating them sharply from their superficial and temporary surroundings, is the
triumph of Hawthorne’s idea.

Young Goodman Brown begins when Faith, Brown’s wife, asks him not to
go on an “errand”. Goodman Brown says to his “love and (my) Faith” that “this
one night I must tarry away from thee. (YGB, 1979, p.301)” When he says his
“love” and his “Faith”, he is talking to his wife, but he is also talking to his “faith”
to God. He is venturing into the woods to meet with the Devil, and by doing so, he
leaves his unquestionable faith in God with his wife. He resolves that he will “cling to her skirts and follow her to Heaven”.(YGB, 1979, p.302). This is an example of the excessive pride because he feels that he can sin and meet with the Devil because of this promise that he made to himself. There is a tremendous irony to this promise because when Goodman Brown comes back at dawn, he can no longer look at his wife with the same faith he had before. When Goodman Brown finally meets with the Devil, he declares that the reason he was late was because “Faith kept me back awhile”(YGB, 1979, p.303). This statement has a double meaning because his wife physically prevented him from being on time for his meeting with the devil, but his faith to God is psychologically delayed his meeting with the devil. The Devil had with him a staff that “bore the likeness of a great black snake”(YGB, 1979, p.303). The staff, which looked like a snake, is a reference to the snake in the story of Adam and Eve. The snake led Adam and Eve to their destruction by leading them to the Tree of Knowledge. The Adam and Eve story is similar to Goodman Brown in that they are both seeking unfathomable amounts of knowledge. Once Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge they were expelled from their paradise. The Devil’s staff eventually leads Goodman Brown to the Devil’s ceremony, which destroys Goodman Brown’s faith in his fellow man, therefore expelling him from his utopia. Goodman Brown almost immediately declares that he kept his meeting with the Devil and no longer wishes to continue on his errand with the Devil. He says that he comes from a “race of honest men and good Christians”(YGB, 1979, p.303) and that his father had never
gone on this errand and nor will he. The Devil is quick to point out however that he was with his father and grandfather when they were flogging a woman or burning an Indian village, respectively. These acts are ironic in that they were bad deeds done in the name of God, and it shows that he does not come from “good Christians.” When Goodman Brown’s first excuse not to carry on with the errand proves to be unconvincing, he says he can not go because of his wife, “Faith”. And because of her, he cannot carry out the errand any further. At this point the Devil agrees with him and tells him to turn back to prevent that “Faith should come to any harm” (YGB, 1979, p.305), like the old woman in front of them on the path. Ironically, Goodman Brown’s faith is harmed because the woman on the path is the woman who “taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser.” (YGB, 1979, p.305). The Devil and the woman talk and afterward, Brown continues to walk on with the Devil in the disbelief of what he had just witnessed. Ironically, he blames the woman for consorting with the Devil but his own pride stops him from realizing that his faults are the same as the woman’s. Brown again decides that he will no longer continue on his errand and rationalizes that just because his teacher was not going to leave, why should he “quit my dear Faith, and go after her” (YGB, 1979, p.307). At this, the Devil tosses Goodman Brown his staff (which will lead him out of his Eden). He “applauds himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet his minister. And what calm sleep would be his… in the arms of Faith!” (YGB, 1979, p.307). This is ironic because at the end of the story, he
cannot even look Faith in the eye, let alone sleep in her arms. As Goodman Brown is feeling good about his strength in resisting the Devil, he hears the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin. He overhears their conversation and hears them discuss a “goodly young woman to be taken in to communion” that evening at that night’s meeting and fears that is may be his Faith. When Goodman Brown hears this he becomes weak and falls to the ground. He “begins to doubt whether there really was a Heaven above him” and this is a key point when Goodman Brown’s faith begins to win. Goodman Brown in panic declares “With Heaven above, and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!” (YGB, 1979, p.308). Again, Brown makes a promise to keep his faith unto God. Then “a black mass of cloud” (YGB, 1979, p.308), goes in between Brown and the sky as if to block his prayer from heaven.

Brown then hears what he believes to be voices that he heard before in the community. Once Goodman Brown begins to doubt whether this is really what he had heard or not, the sound comes to him again and this time it is followed by “one voice, of a young woman” (YGB, 1979, p.309). Goodman believes this is Faith and he yells out her name only to be mimicked by the echoes of the forest, as if his calls to Faith were falling on deaf ears (YGB, 1979, p.302). A pink ribbon flies through the air and Goodman grabs it.

At this moment, he has lost all faith in the world and declares that there is “no good on earth” (YGB, 1979, p.309). Young Goodman Brown in this scene is easily manipulated simply by the power of suggestion. The suggestion that the
woman in question is his Faith, and because of this, he easily loses his faith. Goodman Brown then loses all of his inhibitions and begins to laugh insanely. He takes hold of the staff which causes him to seem to “fly along the forest-path” (YGB, 1979, p.309). This image alludes to that of Adam and Eve being led out of the Garden of Eden as is Goodman Brown being led out of his utopia by the Devil’s snakelike staff. Hawthorne at this point remarks about “the instinct that guides mortal man to evil” (YGB, 1979, p.309). This is a direct statement from the author that he believes that man’s natural inclination is to lean to evil that good. Goodman Brown had at this point lost his faith in God, therefore there was nothing restraining his instincts from moving towards evil because he had been led out from his utopian image of society.

At this point, Goodman Brown goes mad and challenges evil. He feels that he will be the downfall of evil and that he is strong enough to overcome it all. This is another demonstration of Brown’s excessive pride and arrogance. He believes that he is better than everyone else is in that he alone can destroy evil. Brown then comes upon the ceremony, which is setup like a perverted Puritan temple. The altar was a rock in the middle of the congregation and there were four trees surrounding the congregation with their tops ablaze, like candles. Red lights rose and feel over the congregation, which cast a veil of evil over the congregation over the devil worshippers. Brown starts to take notice of the faces that he sees in the service and he recognizes them all, but he then realizes that he does not see Faith and “hope came into his heart” (YGB, 1979, p.312). This is the first time that
the word “hope” ever comes into the story and it is because this is the true turning point for Goodman Brown. If Faith was not there, as he had hoped, he would not have to live alone in his community of heartens. Which he does not realize that he is already apart of Salem. The ceremony then begins with a cry to “Bring forth the converts!” Surprisingly Goodman Brown steps forward. “He had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought…” (YGB, 1979, p.314). Goodman Brown at this point seems to be in a trance and he loses control of his body as he is unconsciously entering this service of converts to the devil. The leader of the service then addresses the crowd of converts in a disturbing manner. He informs them that all the members of the congregation are the righteous, honest, and incorruptible of the community. The sermon leader then informs the crowd of their leader’s evil deeds such as attempted murder of the spouse and wife, adultery, and obvious blasphemy. After his sermon, the leader informs them to look upon each other and Goodman Brown finds himself face to face with Faith. The leader begins up again declaring that “Evil is the nature of mankind” and he welcomes the converts to “communion of your race” (YGB, 1979, p.313). (The “communion of your race” statement reflects to the irony of Brown’s earlier statement that he comes from “a race of honest men and good Christians”). The leader than dips his hand in the rock to draw a liquid from it and “to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads” (YGB, 1979, p.314). Brown that snaps out from his trance and yells “Faith! Faith! Look up to Heaven and resist the wicked one!” (YGB, 1979, p.314). At this, the ceremony ends and Brown finds himself
alone. He does not know whether Faith, his wife, had kept her faith, but he finds himself alone which leads him to believe that he is also alone in his faith.

Throughout the story, Brown lacks emotion, as a normal person would have had. The closest Brown comes to showing and emotion is when “a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew” (YGB, 1979, p.314). The dew on his cheek represents a tear that Brown is unable to produce because of his lack of emotion. Hawthorne shows that Brown has “no compassion for the weaknesses he sees in others, no remorse for his own sin, and no sorrow for his loss of faith.” (Easterly, 1991, p.330) His lack of remorse and compassion “condemns him to an anguished life that is spiritually and emotionally disassociated.” (Easterly, 1991, p.341) This scene is an example of how Goodman Brown choose to follow his head rather that his heart. Had Brown followed his heart, he may have still lived a good life. If he followed with his heart, he would have been able to sympathize with the community’s weaknesses, but instead, he listened to his head and excommunicated himself from the community because he only thought of them as heathens. *Young Goodman Brown* ends with Brown returning to Salem at early dawn and looking around like a “bewildered man.” He cannot believe that he is in the same place that he just the night before; because to him, Salem was no longer home. He felt like an outsider in a world of Devil worshippers and because his “basic means of order, his religious system, is absent, the society he was familiar with becomes nightmarish.” (Shear, 1992, p.545).
He comes back to the town “projecting his guilt onto those around him” (Thritt, 1996, p.114). Brown expresses his discomfort with his new surroundings and his excessive pride when he takes a child away from a blessing given by Goody Cloyse, his former Catechism teacher, as if he were taking the child “from the grasp of the fiend himself” (YGB, 1979, p.315). His anger towards the community is exemplified when he sees Faith who is overwhelmed with excitement to see him and he looks “sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.” (YGB, 1979, p.315). Brown cannot even stand to look at his wife with whom he was at the convert service with. He feels that even though he was at the Devil’s service, he is still better that everyone else because of his excessive pride. Brown feels he can push his own faults on to other hand look down at them rather than look at himself and resolve his own faults with himself. Goodman Brown was devastated by the discovery that the potential for evil resides in everybody. The rest of his life destroyed because of this inability to face this truth and live with it.

The story, which may have been a dream, and not a real life event, planted the seed of doubt in Brown’s mind which consequently cut him off from his fellow man and leaves him alone and depressed. His life ends alone and miserable because he was never able to look at himself and realize that what he believed were everyone else’s faults were his as well. His excessive pride in himself led to his isolation from the community. Brown was buried with “no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.” (YGB, 1979, p.314)
Hawthorne has employed his symbolic method to portray some enduring, profound, genuine trait in human nature. He might have said, “It is my task to search out and show you that hidden, complex, and mysterious thing, the human soul. Everything superficial, every humdrum daily fact and petty annoyance, every wrapper of familiar custom and usage which might obscure your vision.” (YGB, 1979, p.306)

Hawthorne also viewed that we should laugh at violence. Hawthorne is implying, that human experience is complex yet finally all interconnected; that to enter into the maturity of democracy is to accept a condition of moral complexity, even ambivalence. Young Goodman Brown has a ritual of blood and fire that inducts us into the human community and “shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt.” The Puritan superstition is showed through the main character’s journey. Goodman Brown who doubtless as a young Puritan colonist out on a mysterious nighttime mission, where he still join most of the members of his community in some unnamed ceremony of fire, presided over by someone very resembling a stock literary Satan.

“The sympathy of your human hearts for sin” is the way Hawthorne expresses the saving grace, the negative capability that must be exercised in a democracy. It is an option that Goodman Brown chooses not to take, and it is he who becomes a disgruntled and disillusioned loner: “A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man, did he become, from the night of
Young Goodman Brown was also reflected the philosophy of believing reason as an enlightenment in American thought. It was the thought of John Locke’s who was one of the most influential people in the late 17th century. He was a renowned philosopher who established radical ideas about the political, social, and psychological ideals of mankind. One of his philosophical ideas, which he is said to be the founder of, is British Empiricism. This idea holds that “all knowledge is derived from experience whether of the mind or the senses” (Empiricism, 1998, p.480).

In any man’s life, there arises such a point in time where he comes to the realization that there is a sense of evil in the world. Whether it is by something as subtle as locking the door at night before going to bed or being directly confronted at gun point as a man demands your tennis shoes, at some point man will realize that the innocence of his childhood does not last forever. Locke believed that people gain knowledge from their own personal experience. For Young Goodman Brown, this experience comes with his journey into the forest with the fellow traveler as chronicled in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story. Initially, Brown was, as his namesake foretells, a “young, good man” who believes in man’s basic goodness, yet within the inner desires of his heart wishes to see what all the world had to offer. Therefore, he set off on a “journey” into the forest to explore the world of this unknown evil. The story of Young Goodman Brown is a classic
example of the empiricist ideas of Locke in how the intrigues of the unknown beckoned Young Brown as he experienced the transition between his initial idea of man’s basic goodness to the reality that evil exists in the heart of every man.

However, before we can analyze Young Goodman Brown’s journey in the forest, we must first look into empiricist ideology and assess whether Young Goodman Brown qualifies. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* gives 4 major ideas about empiricist experience based upon their ideology. These views are shared by Locke and many other empiricists. The first is that:

Experience is intelligible in isolation, or automatically, without reference to the nature of its object or to the circumstances of its subject. Hence an experience can be described without saying anything about the mind which has it, the thoughts that describe it, or the world which contains it  

(Empiricism, 1998, p.480)

Likewise, Hawthorne describes Young Goodman Brown’s experience without divulging much into his inner thought. The interpretation of his thought is mostly left up to reader response. The empiricist experience is, therefore, one in which the experience is in and of the mind.

The second idea states that:

The person who undergoes experience is in some sense the recipient of data that are imprinted upon his intelligence irrespective of his activity: the person brings nothing to experience, but gains everything from it .  

This idea directly relates to Brown’s journey as he goes along on a daunting quest for no particular reason, but to find out something which is unknown to him. Through the journey, Young Goodman Brown gains his knowledge of a sense of evil.

The next empiricist idea holds that:

All method is scientific method. To discover the nature of the world, it is necessary to develop a method of experiment whereby all claims to knowledge are tested by experience, since nothing but experience can validate them (Empiricism, 1998, p.480).

Thus, Young Goodman Brown’s journey is, in essence, his “experiment” of dabbling into the unknown. His former knowledge is tested by this experience, and his ideas on life, religion, and “Faith” are then challenged.

The final empiricist idea states that:

All facts about the world can be reduced to what are facts was much as experiences confirm claims to knowledge as facts; hence on claims to knowledge of a transcendental world can have any foundation (Empiricism, 1998, p.480).

It is this final idea that puzzles Young Goodman Brown and sends him on his journey. He does not understand the concept of good and evil, and the journey will test his “knowledge” of God.

Now that the story falls under empiricist ideology, we can begin to assess what the journey was meant to and did for Young Goodman Brown in the empiricist
view. In the beginning of the story, Young Goodman Brown is displayed as the “good man” with little knowledge about evil. He describes himself and his family name as “a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs” (Hawthorne, 1948, p.269). He goes on later to say that they “are a people of prayer and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness” (YGB, 1979, p.304). Young Goodman wants to pursue on this journey as he proclaims that he is going “too far! (while) unconsciously resuming his walk” (YGB, 1979, p.303). The struggle within him dictates that he is a good man who shouldn’t be embarking on this evil journey, yet he is driven by this forbidden fruit syndrome of wanting what he can not or should not have.

The transition in Young Goodman Brown occurs all along the journey. Throughout, he is defending everyone else’s “goodness” in not wanting them to see him “consorting with” this stranger (YGB, 1979, p.305). The shock comes to Young Brown as he is defending his namesake, and the fellow traveler tells the innocent Brown that he is “we acquainted with [his] family” (YGB, 1979, p.304). The traveler goes on to tell about the sins of his forefathers. Young Goodman Brown learns that his grandfather “lashed [a] Quaker woman,” and his father “set fire to an Indian village” (YGB, 1979, p.304). Young Goodman Brown still has his doubts that these acts could be true of good Christian men and his ancestors. As they proceed in the woods, Brown sees Goody Cloyse, a woman who taught him religion and good Christian principles as a youngster. He also sees the minister and Deacon Gookin, all pinnacles of Christian faith and piety. He once
again does not wish them to see him with this stranger, so he hides out of the way. However, he comes to find that these people are very familiar with “the devil;” (YGB, 1996, p.305). He observes the conversation and consul amongst them, and that they too have a wicked heart which desires evil.

However, the transition really hits home when Young Brown sees his wife in the mix. He cries aloud, “Faith! Faith!,” not truly believing that his darling wife could be hinged in this evil. This was the turning point in Young Brown’s naiveté Young Goodman Brown’s transition concludes as he realizes the truth of man’s evil nature. He realizes that everyone, whom he holds dear, virtuous, true, and pious, is a fellow sinful traveler just like himself. The transition can be summated in one line spoken by Young Goodman Brown. “My Faith is Gone! …. There is no good on earth, and sin is but a name” (YGB, 1979, p.309).

This transition is in direct correlation with a few of Locke’s ideas about man’s journey of life. Vivienne Brown, a writer for the journal of the history of ideas, said about Locke’s concept of man that, “(Locke) argue(s) that man has no knowledge of real essences, even of such a thing as pebble or a fly, and certainly cannot know the real essence of God which is immeasurable more inaccessible” (Brown, 1999, p.85). This unknown is evident in Young Goodman Brown, as he does not know what is real with his “faith,” and does not understand not only the evil, but in essence, he does not fully understand God. It is this lack of knowledge, which causes his fall.
Locke also comments on “Moral Good and Evil” in his “Essay on Human Understanding”. He says that, “Moral good and evil is the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to some law” (Locke, 1974, p.222). Young Goodman Brown breaks this “law” with his journey into the forest, and meddles into a world which man would deem as an “evil purpose” (Hawthorne, 1948, p.268).

2.4. Theme

Theme is the meaning of a story (Kenney, 1966, p.12). In Introduction to English Literature, it is stated that theme is the central idea or thesis of work. *Young Goodman Brown* has a background in the old superstition of witchcraft, and a theme of disillusion. In this story *Young Goodman Brown* comes to realize, with sickening abruptness, the pollution of sin in the hearts of those whom he had thought most pure and whom he had most deeply reverenced. The springs of his nature are embittered and he becomes a “darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man.” (YGB, 1979, p.313).

The central theme of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown*, is the conflict in Goodman Brown between joining the ranks of the devil and remaining "good". It is a very difficult personal journey for Young Goodman Brown; as he travels through the wood to follow an inner desire to become a witch, all the while thinking on all of the "god" things [like his wife Faith] he would be leaving behind. This internal conflict ultimately destroys the Young Goodman Brown and creates a new man.
3. Conclusion and Suggestion

3.1. Conclusion

In this analysis, the discussion of *Young Goodman Brown* will cover the Puritan and the superstition phenomena which covers everything deals with devils, aroused in the story. In this case the phenomena through is find out the plot, setting, character and theme of the story. It is also seeks Hawthorne's view about the Puritan Superstition.

3.1.1. Puritan Superstition as Reflected in *Young Goodman Brown*

The views and beliefs of the people of that era were if anything to an extreme. Whatever they believed they worshipped with a vengeance. This extreme faith can be compared to the current time "Career Goal." If the people of today cannot pursue a career and succeed, they feel as if their life has no meaning. This is most likely to have its roots from the protestant work ethic. The ethic, in general, says that you must work hard to please God and compete for a place in heaven. This story is about such people. The modern day person has taken this work ethic and given it a greedy twist. People of today fight for position, status or power just as much as the pioneer puritans worshiped and studied the bible. The puritans would take the word of bible as the word, without interpretation, only translation by the minister of the community. Although these career driven people do not have a book to guide their path, they pursue it nonetheless. Some of these
people have lost, or never had the belief, of reaching heaven, or even its existence. These people are the peers of the believers and set the rules or guidelines for career goals. So in effect the status in the community is a way of saying they are better. The people who do not believe in any god-like being fight in an effort to make their mark on the world, for this is the only they can be recognized or remembered.

3.1.2. Hawthorne's view of Puritan Superstition

Conclusively, Hawthorne uses his characters to reveal their inner desires and secretive passions deals with Puritan superstition. He plants unanswered questions in the minds of his readers, just as life itself is one big unanswered question (Meyer, 2000, p.267). For Young Goodman Brown, these questions leave him in despair. Young Goodman Brown emerges as a man who has seen the truth about good and evil. He has been redeemed out of the infantile intellect in which he began into a whole New World where every man is in the same sinful boat. His experience has taken him through this empiricist transition of knowledge about good and evil. He has partaken of the forbidden fruit, and now his whole world as he once knew it has been lost. He is left “with a guilt that he is unable to recognize and admit” (Tritt, 1996, p.114). Everything he thought about the good, virtuous nature of man has been erased and Young Goodman Brown is left nothing to hinge upon, but a truth he knows little about.

3.2. Suggestion
The writer realizes that this thesis is still far from perfect but hopefully it could give a better understanding to other students who want to study puritan superstition particularly the short story in *Young Goodman Brown*.

To the reader from all the explanation above it is clear that biographical, sociological and structuralism approach is able to several the puritan superstition in *Young Goodman Brown*. Indeed would have a wides understanding of Nathaniel Hawthorne in *Young Goodman Brown*.

However this thesis is limited on the analysis from the man character Young Goodman Brown, who experienced some superstition happening in his journey into the jungle, as long as in the jungle he get good and evil experiences. Which mean that there are several other aspect. It is possible to analyze this story from another point of view by using historical background for example it.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


