

## INTRODUCTION

"Young Goodman Brown" is a short story published in 1835 by American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne. The story takes place in 17th century Puritan New England, a common setting for Hawthorne's works, and addresses the Calvinist/Puritan belief that all of humanity exists in a state of depravity, but that God has destined some to unconditional election through unmerited grace. Hawthorne frequently focuses on the tensions within Puritan culture, yet sleeps his stories in the Puritan sense of sin. In a symbolic fashion, the story follows Young Goodman Brown's journey into self-scrutiny, which results in his loss of virtue and belief.

The story begins at dusk in Salem Village, Massachusetts as young Goodman Brown leaves Faith, his wife of three months, for some unknown errand in the forest. Faith pleads to her husband to stay with her, but he insists that the journey must be completed that night. In the forest he meets an older man, dressed in a similar manner and bearing a physical resemblance to himself. The man carries a black serpent-shaped staff. The two encounter Goody Cloyse, an older woman, whom Young Goodman had known as a boy and who had taught him his catechism, in the woods. She complains about the need to walk and, the man rudely throws his staff on the ground for the woman and quickly leaves with Goodman.

Other townspeople inhabit the woods that night, traveling in the same direction as Goodman Brown. When he hears his wife's voice in the trees, he calls out but is not answered. He then runs angrily through the forest, distraught that his beautiful Faith is lost somewhere in the dark, sinful forest. He soon stumbles upon a clearing at midnight where all the townspeople assembled. At the ceremony, which is carried out at a flame-lit altar of rocks, the newest acolytes are brought forth—Goodman Brown and Faith. They are the only two of the townspeople not yet initiated. Goodman Brown calls to heaven and Faith to resist and instantly the scene vanishes. Arriving back at his home in Salem the next morning, Goodman Brown is uncertain whether the previous night's events were real or a dream, but he is deeply shaken, and his belief he lives in a Christian community is distorted. He loses his faith in his wife, along with all of humanity. He lives his life an embittered and suspicious cynic, wary of everyone around him. The story concludes: "And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave... they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom."

**Levy** declares that the problem of man's journey into the mystery of evil is offered in a very comprehensive way. Brown's wife, Faith, the wife of three months, "is simply "Faith," and Goodman Brown is Everyman". The agreement he has run into with Satan is the universal one, reinforced by such signs as the virtue with which he convinces himself that he can turn aside from his treaty and assures himself of his noble intentions.

Another satisfactory explanation of the ambiguity of the story is to notice in it Hawthorne's suggestion that the unbelievable events in the forest were the outcome of an ego-induced fantasy, the self-justification of a sick mind. It becomes obvious that these incidents were not experienced; they were willed. Most notably is that Goodman Brown has accepted them as truth. The most common reading of the tale, as **Michael Tritt** claims, asserts Brown's loss of faith in himself and in his companions. Critics argue that due to his night time experience, Brown comes to believe all men are dishonest and unavoidably evil. However, another explanation is that Brown's confusion, and subsequent withdrawal, is caused by his belief (however misguided) that he nevertheless remains unchanged.

As **Hurley** discusses that Goodman Brown becomes unaware of his own association with evil; he does not realize sinfulness in himself but only in others. That is probably his most terrible sin. He has lost not only faith in his fellow men but his compassion for them. The psychoanalytically oriented critics interpret Goodman Brown's helplessness in terms of the projective mechanism of the dream or fantasy, which they regard as symptomatic of mental illness. Moreover, **Michael Tritt** explains that in an effort to escape his guilt-consciousness and the related moral anxiety, Brown projects his guilt onto the people around him. It can be asserted that the horrors of Brown's dream vision and his criticism of others stem from the projection of Brown's subconscious guilt. As identified by **Freud**, the process of projection typically functions to "defend" the individual from nervousness, also it is described as "when aspects of ourselves (usually negative ones) are not recognized as part of ourselves but are perceived in or attributed to another". The result is that while guilt exists, it exists only at the subconscious level. Consequently, Brown's distraction at the end of the story originates with a guilt he is unable to recognize and admit.

Similarly, Levy points out that Brown's submission to evil is a suggestion that the demands of the id have overtaken the ego; his prolonged resistance is a denial of the wishes that are the source of his projections. His conflict originates in the superego, whose task is to punish the ego for its defections and, as the voice of conscience, to repress the satisfactions of the instinctual life. If we wonder why the witches' Sabbath ends with such breathtaking abruptness, the answer might be that the ego cannot tolerate the threat of destruction that awaits it if the initiation rites take place. The sexually fraught demands of the id are put down, though at a terrible price the purpose of witches' gathering in the forest on this night is to initiate new members, including Brown as well as his young wife. It is the attendance of Faith that most dismays Brown. Metaphorically, it can be perceived easily that Brown's loss of his wife to the witches symbolizes his loss of "faith" in God and man. But the prominence of Faith is more than this, especially when regarded as the anima archetype. The anima is the "feminine nature of man's unconscious" and is always projected upon the person of the beloved. From one perspective,

***Faith with the good pink ribbon, "poor little Faith," "kept me back a while," "her dear little heart," "heaven above and Faith below," "where is Faith," "look up to heaven, Faith,"***

is an image of maternal presence. From the other perspective, Faith with the bad pink ribbon is murmuring wildly in his ear, "is not bent on heaven, but on a place where she will find the object of her legitimate desire, which cannot be Brown- the-son, but must be Brown-the-father". Goodman Brown is not afraid that she will deceive him as a wife, but that she will deceive him as a mother, and that is the reason of his fears that the devil father-figure is coming to claim her.

Another important aspect is the setting of the story, in terms of time, the duration of Brown's journey is from sunset to sunrise. Concerning place, the village Salem stands for peace, light and knowledge since it was established by Puritans with strict rules and moral values. On the contrary, the forest stands for terror, darkness and evil where Brown meets devil. Thus, the conflict between these two places is interesting. Brown left the village because he was urged by libidinal instincts. In the forest, he saw the people of Salem who accompanied the devil. His wife

was one of them. The village is, therefore, compared to the conscious since it is a place of moral and social order while the forest represents for the unconscious. Brown's ego controls his id as long as he has Faith, Cloyse, and the deacon and minister, and he believes that he is able to persist on the pious path; nonetheless, when he sees these people he formerly thought of as religious and moral figures, he can't avoid the feeling of "a loathsome brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart," and the ego is overrun by the id. In psychoanalytic terms, **Levy** claims that "Young Goodman Brown" is about the defeat of the id by the ego and the superego. The result of this destruction is that Brown, miserable and resentful, belongs neither to the Devil's party nor to that of the Puritan faith and the Puritan community. In addition, the withdrawal and pessimism that envelop him after coming back to the village occur not because he has yielded to the devastating vision of evil in the forest, but because he has repressed it. The ego forbids him to accept his evil desires as his own; therefore he projects them upon his wife, whose innocence he now suspects, and upon the other people, in whose goodness he can no longer accept as true. Consequently, Brown refuses to recognize that evil, knowledge and their sources are inherent parts of all human nature. In this meaning, as a result, it is finally irrelevant whether or not Brown's experiences "really" occurred.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is quite clear now, that how interesting this story is, and as much as we argue about it there is much more. It was explained that Brown's night time journey to the forest can be described as journey to his unconscious, and the depravity of human nature which is universal. **Freud's** projection process was indicated as Brown's attempts to project his guilt upon the people around while he is unable or afraid to admit his own unconscious guilt, as a result, Goodman Brown becomes unaware of his own association with evil; he does not realize wickedness in himself but only in others. Later, Brown's loss of his wife, Faith, symbolizes his loss of faith in God and man. Another significant aspect was the setting of the story and how it connected to the psychological meaning of the story, the conflict between the village, which represents moral values, social principles and religious beliefs (typically conscious),

In contrast with the forest which represents the darkness of human nature and its evil services ( typically unconscious ).

Young Goodman Brown is about the downfall of the id by the ego and the superego. This results in Brown's misery and gloom. Brown's ego forbids him to admit his evil desires are his own; thus, he projects them upon his wife , whose virtue is now suspects, and upon the other people and he distrusts all around him. Accordingly, Brown refuses to know that evil is an inborn part of all human nature.

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The story is set during the Salem witch trials, at which Hawthorne's great-great-grandfather John Hathorne was a judge, guilt over which inspired the author to change his family's name, adding a "w" in his early twenties, shortly after graduating from college. In his writings Hawthorne questioned established thought—most specifically New England Puritanism and contemporary Transcendentalism. In "Young Goodman Brown", as with much of his other writing, he utilizes ambiguity.

"Young Goodman Brown" is often characterized as an allegory about the recognition of evil and depravity as the nature of humanity. Much of Hawthorne's fiction, such as *The Scarlet Letter*, is set in 17th-century colonial America, particularly Salem Village. To convey the setting, he used literary techniques such as specific diction, or colloquial expressions. Language of the period is used to enhance the setting. Hawthorne gives the characters specific names that depict abstract pure and wholesome beliefs, such as "Young Goodman Brown" and "Faith". The characters' names ultimately serve as a paradox in the conclusion of the story. The inclusion of this technique was to provide a definite contrast and irony. Hawthorne aims to critique the ideals of Puritan society and express his disdain for it, thus illustrating the difference between the appearance of those in society and their true identities.

### PURITAN INFLUENCE

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" is a short story with strong Puritan influence. Puritanism is a religion demanding strict moral conduct and strong faith. Puritans held that Christians should do only what the Bible commanded. Analyzing "Young Goodman Brown" is dependant upon understanding the Puritan faith. The influence of the Puritan religion is vivid in literary elements such as setting, allegory, and theme.

The Salem Village is historically most famous for the controversial Salem Witch Trials. The Salem Witch Trials were sparked by the political motives and imaginations of the townspeople. Many Puritans were sentenced to death for suspicion of witchcraft. The Salem Witch Trials also contributed to the taboo feeling of the forest.

"Young Goodman Brown" is full of allegorical content relating to the Puritan religion. The names of the characters in "Young Goodman Brown" are the most profound examples of allegory influenced by Puritanism. The protagonist, Goodman Brown, has a name that suggests far more than just a name. "Goodman Brown" for example, is a name that presents the character as a good moralistic man that at all costs resists temptation. Goodman Brown's wife, Faith, has a name that assists in illustrating the downfall of Goodman Brown. After seeing Faith in the forest, Goodman Brown cries, **"My Faith is gone!"**. His wife, Faith was gone along with his spiritual faith. We first see Goodman Brown as a moral Puritan man, and after losing his faith he becomes the opposite. "Young Goodman Brown" has a theme of Puritan nature as well. People often dwell on life's uncertainties so much that they lose the ability to enjoy life. Goodman Brown had a curiosity that made him travel into the wicked

### **FREUD'S PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPT**

In Young Goodman Brown the struggle of the main character can be understood through the Freudian ideas of the id, the ego, and the superego. The id according to Freud is the part of the unconscious that seeks pleasure. His idea of the id explains why people act out in certain ways, when it is not in line with the ego or superego. The id is the part of the mind, which holds all of human kind's most basic and primal instincts. It is the impulsive, unconscious part of the mind that is based on desire to seek immediate satisfaction. The id does not have a grasp on any form of reality or consequence. Freud understood that some people are controlled by the id because it makes people engage in need-satisfying behavior without any accordance to what is right or wrong. Freud compared the id and the ego to a horse and a rider. The id is compared to the horse, is directed and controlled, by the ego or the rider. This example goes to show that although the id is supposed to be

controlled by the ego, they often interact with one another according to the drives of the id.

Freud defined the id as the part of the mind "cut off from the external world, has a world of perception of its own. It detects with extraordinary acuteness certain changes in its interior, especially oscillations in the tension of its instinctual needs, and these changes become conscious as feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series. It is hard to say, to be sure, by what means and with the help of what sensory terminal organs these perceptions come about. But it is an established fact that self-perceptions—coenesthetic feelings and feelings of pleasure-unpleasure—govern the passage of events in the id with despotic force. The id obeys the inexorable pleasure principle".

In order for people to maintain a realistic sense here on earth, the ego is responsible for creating balance between pleasure and pain. It is impossible for all desires of the id to be met and the ego realizes this but continues to seek pleasure and satisfaction. Although the ego does not know the difference between right and wrong, it is aware that not all drives can be met at a given time. The reality principle is what the ego operates by in order to help satisfy the id's demands as well as compromising according to reality. The ego is a person's "self" composed of unconscious desires. The ego takes into account ethical and cultural ideals in order to balance out the desires originating in the id. Although both the id and the ego are unconscious, the ego has close contact with the perceptual system. The ego has the function of self-preservation, which is why it has the ability to control the instinctual demands from the id.

"The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface. If we wish to find an anatomical analogy for it we can best identify it with the 'cortical homunculus' of the anatomists, which stands on its head in the cortex, sticks up its heels, faces backwards and, as we know, has its speech-area on the left-hand side. The ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body. It may thus be regarded as a mental projection of the surface of the body, representing the superficies of the mental apparatus."

The superego, which develops around age four or five, incorporates the morals of society. Freud believed that the superego is what allows the mind to control its impulses that are looked down upon morally. The superego can be considered to be the conscience of the mind because it has the ability to distinguish between reality as well as what is right or wrong. Without the superego Freud believed people would act out with aggression and other immoral behaviors because the mind would have no way of understanding the difference between right and wrong. The superego is considered to be the "consciousness" of a person's personality and can override the drives from the id. Freud separates the superego into two separate categories; the ideal self and the conscience. The conscience contains ideals and morals that exist within society that prevent people from acting out based on their internal desires. The ideal self contains images of how people ought to behave according to societies ideals.

### **PSYCHOANALYSIS OF YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN**

The main character Goodman Brown is the representative of the ego because he tries to follow the social structure of the puritan town that has been a central part of his life and rejects his urges to join in the unholy congregation. His belief that being righteous in his current life will lead to greater rewards keeps him from joining the congregation. The townspeople led by the character referred to as, "old man" represents the id because they ignore social rules and join together, sinners and saints alike, to celebrate the initiation of a new member. Their only concern is with fulfilling their own needs and they ignore any societal structures that would get in the way of their pleasure. The Superego is represented by the social structure that guides the normal lives the townspeople live during the day. By ignoring their normal tendencies they mask their wickedness behind a presentation of culturally accepted behaviours. Thinking of the story in these terms can be helpful in understanding the ending. When Young Goodman Brown, the ego, tries to unify the opposing realities of the towns real nature, the id, with the presentation of a normal puritan town, the superego, he suffers from feelings of repression and becomes, "A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful" man. In this way Freud's theories of psychoanalysis can be

helpful in understanding that the story is about the damaging psychological effects of repression.

Brown's repression is caused by the split between the ways he feels he should act, represented in the story through piety, and the way that he feels people really want to act, represented in the story by the hedonistic congregation of the townspeople. His inability to merge these two ideas is what leads him to becoming repressed and detached from society.

Young Goodman Brown's role as the moderator between desires and social obligations becomes evident early on in the story. As he steps out of his house he is thinking, **"Well, she's a blessed angel on earth, and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven"**.

It can be seen that he is already struggling with the split between his desires and his obligations. Even though he does not really want to leave he is able to, **"With this excellent resolve for the future"**. Brown is able to delay his immediate gratification because of the knowledge that he will be able to satisfy it in the future. Brown's need to hide his inner desires is seen again when he hears horses riding by in the forest. Brown is found ducking into the woods as he is, **"conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither"**. Brown is motivated by the social stigma against people travelling in the woods. He is willing to exchange his current discomfort for the pleasures he will receive from remaining an upstanding member of the community. Both these actions show that Brown acts in the role of the Ego because he attempts to mediate between his desires and his social obligations.

In contrast to this, the strange man he meets, sometimes referred to as old Goodman Brown, represents the id of the story because he is completely motivated by immediate gratification. His basic nature is revealed in the description,

**"And yet, thought the older person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who not would have felt abashed at the governor's supper table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither"**.

Whether walking through the woods or dining at the King's table old man is equally comfortable. This shows that he is not concerned with his presentation in society but only in following his own desires. The difference between the old man and young Goodman Brown can be seen again when they meet Goody Clayse in the woods. Young Goodman Brown immediately feels the need to hide his presence because, "she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going". Instead of acting in a similar manner, in order to guard his reputation, the old man strolls up to her and even jokes-with her about making potions, "**Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe**". This highlights the difference between Young Goodman Brown who is constantly striving to hide his inner desires to blend in with society and old man who acts however he wishes to, whenever he wants to.

We get a sense of Brown's struggle between his desires to join the wickedness of the town and his need to remain true to his social structure when he watches the climax of the heathen gathering. When old man puts forth the command for the new imitators to step forward Brown feels, "**a loathsome brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart**". We get the sense that part of Brown's psych is pulling him towards joining in the unholy brotherhood. This struggle is highlighted even more when Brown approaches the inner circle of the meeting.

Brown does not know whether the congregation in the forest was a dream or reality it still affects his psyche just the same. Upon waking the next morning his entire world view is changed by the events of the previous night. Whether or not the events were real does not matter because Brown's eyes have been opened to the inner desires of the townspeople. He begins to view the townspeople's actions as a mask that covers their evil natures. Upon the old minister coming up to him and blessing him Brown, "**shrank away from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema**". Even when his wife approaches him he, "**looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting**". Brown finds himself unable to unite the inner desires of the townspeople with the social standards he is accustomed to. He is left feeling his nature repressed and,

"A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream."

His repression leads to him becoming detached from the world around him. He no longer even enjoys the company of his family and finds himself, "Often, awakening 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".

Eventually, Young Goodman Brown is left a hollow, empty man. His inability to merge the base desires he sees in himself and the townspeople with his social understanding of the world leads him to psychosis. Instead of confronting what he believes he saw or joining in the wickedness he represses his vision and removes himself from society. By looking at these events through the lens of Freudian psychology we can see that there is a psychological explanation for his detachment at the end of the story. The disjoint between the inner desires of him, and possibly the townspeople, and the social expectations of his puritan town cause him to become repressed.

### CRITICAL VIEWPOINT

Literary scholar Walter Shear writes that Hawthorne structured the story in three parts. The first part shows Goodman Brown at his home in his village integrated in his society. The second part of the story is an extended dreamlike/nightmare sequence in the forest for a single night. The third part shows his return to society and to his home, yet he is so profoundly changed that in rejecting the greeting of his wife Faith, Hawthorne shows Goodman Brown has lost faith and rejected the tenets of his Puritan world during the course of the night.

The story is about Brown's loss of faith as one of the elect, according to scholar Jane Eberwein. Believing himself to be of the elect, Goodman Brown falls into self-doubt after three months of marriage which to him represents sin and depravity as opposed to salvation. His journey to the forest is symbolic of Christian "self-exploration" in which doubt immediately supplants faith. At the end of the forest experience he loses his wife Faith, his faith in salvation, and his faith in human goodness.

Herman Melville said "Young Goodman Brown" was "as deep as Dante" and Henry James called it a "magnificent little romance". Hawthorne himself believed the story made no more impact than any of his tales. Years later he wrote, "These stories were published in Magazines and Annuals, extending over a period of ten or twelve years, and comprising the whole of the writer's young manhood, without making the slightest impression on the public." Contemporary critic Edgar Allan Poe disagreed, referring to Hawthorne's short stories as "the products of a truly imaginative intellect".

Modern scholars and critics generally view the short story as an allegorical tale written to expose the contradictions in place concerning Puritan beliefs and societies. However, there have been many other interpretations of the text including those who believe Hawthorne sympathizes with Puritan beliefs. Author Harold Bloom comments on the variety of explanations, Stephen King has referred to the story as "one of the ten best stories written by an American". He calls it his favourite story by Hawthorne and cites it as an inspiration for his O. Henry Award-winning short story, "The Man in the Black Suit".

Brooks & Warren state that Goodman Brown enters the forest, which early Puritans thought to have been a haunt of natural and supernatural evil. Though they have been displayed as a "real" forest and journey, there are clear hints that they have been philosophical and psychological symbolism. Once the real devil appears, "that is strange enough, but when we realize his resemblance to Brown, and later to Brown's father, we find suggested a "communion" of evil in the blood a communion that in the end turns out to be universal". From the beginning, Hawthorne has challenged Brown's belief through the narrator's elusive insistence that Brown has carried all his thoughts of evil, and hence all the evil of which he is capable, into the forest with him. Young Goodman Brown's initiation involves a 'night journey' that is comparable considerably to the hero's night in mythology.

This terrifying experience, according to Carl G. Jung, signifies the hero's descent into the unconscious, which, he says "is the situation of the primitive hero who is devoured by the dragon". Those who make the descent, argues Jung, are momentarily "overpowered by the unconscious and helplessly abandoned, which means that they have volunteered to die in order to beget a new and fruitful life in that region of the psyche which has hitherto lain fallow in the darkest unconscious". Furthermore,