

First & Last Name

Professor Martin

American Lit. 1

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“Young Goodman Brown”

Passage: “And when he lived long, and was borne to his grave, a hoary corpse, followed by Faith and 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” (Hawthorne 1272).

Question: How does Brown’s overwhelming fear of evil cast a shadow on all that was and is positive in his life?

Issue: Issue of evaluation. The question involves Brown’s emotion stagger from an evil intent, to divine hope, and malicious doubt on all that was positive in his life. Growing up children tend to remember all, particularly moments and people that touched their lives. These people help define what children become as they get older. If this definition of a person is based upon what is perceived as lies, as an adult we begin to question all that we know and doubt all that we love.

Critical Approach: Psychoanalytic Criticism is the best critical approach for this question. A psychoanalyst can take a situation and see it dissipate moment by moment. Goodman Brown’s psychological state becomes trapped in a moment. It slowly breaks down from a clear conscious mind to a mind that dwells on evil that may be lurking around. The beginning of the end starts with Goody Cloyse his first and constant Christian spiritual leader. Although, the Devil tells him that his father and grandfather walked the same path it does not achieve the same psychological impact as a personal witness between the Devil and Goody Cloyse. These types of encounters

along the path are ultimately the cause for all positive influence out of his life and the demise of a once bright positive state.

Answer: Brown's intentions in the beginning of the story allow his fear for evil to subside. The people and voices that Brown encounters awaken a fear that was within Brown all along. Brown searches the Heaven's for answers when he fears that his beloved Faith may cross unto the dark side as well. His gained knowledge of those that followed the path of Satan frighten him, he did not intend to realize that his own deeply trusted figures in his life followed the path of Satan. With this knowledge everything that he accepted as truth are now accepted as lies and doubt. He no longer has the capability to trust, love, or believe that he only finds solace in misery and doubt. This fear overshadows all positives in his life such as his wife, children, and friends and ultimately, dies with fear and misery.