

UNIT 2

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-1864)

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN, THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL & RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER

I. INTRODUCTION: BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Puritan characteristics = analysis of mind + somber outlook on living + tendency to withdraw from his fellows --> worked in solitude

Objectives of contemporary magazine --> quality of American readers

Never renounced youthful dreams + fixed in Puritan attitudes (Salem)

"Local color" + subconscious mind of New Englanders --> relationships

Man/God & Man/Man --> conclusions neutral, inconclusive, pessimistic

Akin to Poe + anticipated James --> founder of Am. psychological novel

Never moved by literary modes/criticism --> "a most unmalleable man"

--> family, work & earth (New England) --> Indolence, petulance, intolerance of fools & deceptive softness of prose

First American artist in the novel --> aesthetic-moral principles

Special quest = history of artistic mind --> self-assured, sardonic, hardheaded & secret place of solitude & meditation

Twice-Told Tales (1837-1842) upon some seventy-five --> *Mosses from an Old Manse*, 1846 = canon of Hawthorne's short story/sketch

The Snow Image (1852) & 2 posthumous volumes

Tales anticipate themes & characters in longer narratives (Dimmesdale = Parson Hooper; Chillingworth = Rappaccini; Hollingsworth = Aylmer)

Little advance in technique of short story (leisure & indefiniteness & absence of precision = Irving), but single poignant mood

High artistic excellence (homage of Poe, Melville & Henry James)

Differences "romance" and novel, but no definition of theory of fiction

Fiction = illustration of moral concepts & loneliness in his purposes

Hawthorne's poverty begot his riches & In Puritan experience discovered enduring fabric of art

II. *YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN* (1835)

Quite simple but too compressed (so fast) --> overset painful teaching & sober practice of pious lifetime & moral panic --> lethal blasphemy

Narrator suggests "instinct that guides mortal man to evil"(Calvinistic)

Brown's readiness to overthrow all authority (adolescent experience & oedipal hostility --> rage in his response ('manhood' smoldering too long)

Hawthorne believed in the Devil no more literally than we do & silent power of sexuality (motives & identity)

In his world, "covenant" = pact Calvinist God made with Christ & agreement by which saints accepted vicarious atonement --> mystic substitute for 'contract' or 'compact' in Puritan's consensual theory of government --> named origin & essence of church/congregation

Brown avoids parodic baptism *in nomine diaboli* --> initial intention of "errand" more tentative than to "go over"

Setting out for the forest, Brown --> feels guilty & confident --> impossible, but salvation an illusion

Faith, entreats him to "tarry" with her on this "of all nights in the year"

--> converts concern into suspicion

Brown nervously imagining things --> settle his conscience (allegory)

"Presumption" (act of declaring one's salvation already certain) --> Calvinists' eternal predestination not on merit but gift of faith

Goodman Brown creeping out at that crack suspending ordinary rules --> trusting safety + assuming salvation in spite of devilish transgression

Suspect settled appearance of virtue in most familiar acquaintances

Doctrine of "visible sanctity" = to be purest in world (Savior elected)

New World Order = churches to identify saints and bring together

Interdependency ==> social dimension of Puritan faith

What if an unhappy Puritan doubts good faith of individuals whose assurance of salvation had become so entwined with his own?

His welcome to the Community of Evil = farewell to covenantal delusion

Not all evidence visible --> process begins with hearsay

Climax involves ordering of persons charged + than evidence presented

Line imagination-being, perception-conviction, suspicion-proof broken

Characters on the forest --> no shadow (appear/disappear)

Antique doctrine of "specters" = persons appear in places remote --> witch accusers to maintain their allegations against persons

In his contest with Devil, Brown tries to make it all depend on his "Faith"

Intentional reality hidden = moral appearances are spectral --> All Goodman

Brown knows is he flirted with Evil but not espouse it

Guilty self-knowledge (-> suspect Faith of suspecting him) --> doubts victory of her virtue --> Psychoanalytical "guilty projection"

Discovery of Saints & detection of witches = parts of same problem --> specter evidence = negative test case of visible sanctity

Brown's believing to doubting all virtue but his own --> outline of definitive Puritan dilemma

III. *THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL* (1837)

In parables & fables --> "statements of fact, which do not even pretend to be historical, used as vehicles for the exhibition of a general truth"

Mr. Moody & Mr. Hooper (aberrant & threatening) --> "only a material emblem had separated him from happiness"

Reverend Hooper's "simple piece of crape" <--> "mystery which it obscurely typifies" = historical Mr. Moody <--> fictional character

Space --> Ironic distance marked by "faint, sad smile" that "glimmer[s] from [the] obscurity" of the "double fold of crape".

Narrator, like Hooper, offers no specific explanation for the character's unaccountable behavior --> act of veiling in Moses (Exodus 34:33) =

Reverend Mr. Hooper --> elaborate figural reading

Biblical parables = veils with double purpose (revealing & concealing) Story opens with description of communal life in "real" town (Milford, Connecticut) --> perfect solidarity of signs & meanings

Immediate effects of "simple piece of crape" defamiliarizes him

Story insists on literalness of veil & becomes a figure for trope itself

Veiled Hooper (disfigured figure) uncanny appearance --> disturbs relationship literal/figural

Hooper speaks figuratively, but literal veil prevents traditional untroubled response to his words ("snatched both his hands from beneath the bed-clothes,

and pressed them strongly on the black veil" in response to Reverend Mr. Clark's plea)

Relationship literal/figural veils (& acts of "snatching") no symmetrical Not even Elizabeth's "direct simplicity" can break the spell of the veil

Hooper's words & face veiled in that are figurative/parabolic expressions, public utterances as exoteric expression of esoteric message

For Hawthorne, relation writer's personal identity-form of manifestation = part of larger problem of relation human being's inner & social beings Writer's work = veil & manifestation of intimate concerns --> characters figuratively veiled themselves (pseudonyms: Aubépine, Oberon...)

Writer's "external habits, abode, casual associates" = veils that "hide the man, instead of displaying him" & his characters veils/disguises he wears

Substituting for self-presence = figure of a "literary man" --> Self = veiled self --> an "I" or subject represented by signs/markers

To give death a face & body = figure/refigure it & imply a dependency on figurative language that defaces & gives a face

Corpse = veiled corpse --> disrupts our conception of literal <--> figural by disturbing system of analogies that energizes text

Corpse takes place of living body --> veil becomes veil of a veil --> possibility that face, self, spirit, soul are figures

Hooper's "pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them"

We (= Father Hooper's congregation) denied a "face to face" relation with author concealed behind veil of text & he (= Hooper) insists on text's material & emblematic status

"The Minister's Black Veil" = "putatively historical" & presents its actualities as signs/emblems that signify something other than themselves ==> require interpretive action from reader

Hawthorne's text turns insiders into outsiders (= Christ's parables)

"Romance" --> maintains tension hidden/shown (something in reserve)

Ordinary words (= Hooper's veiled face) "are a mystery" because detached from present moment & living "I" ==> presuppose fact of death (Mr. Joseph Moody of York, Parson Hooper & author)

Romance & parable = "Posthumous papers"

IV. RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER (1844)

"Beautiful and unsophisticated girl" & voluptuous creature (Beatrice) who enraptures Giovanni Guasconti --> male perception of Woman & defenselessness of women against male domination in American society (abused by her father, applied science as manipulative power)

Giovanni exploits her even more by projecting upon her the guilt that he feels for own sexual desire & "purity" (in a sexual sense) = maiden focus of popular art --> sexual ambivalence

Social significance of applied science in symbolical representation of impact of technology ("adultery of various vegetable species")

Margaret Oliphant --> mistake of writing for "an intellectual audience"

No rebellion of avant-garde artist --> sketch developed as poetry

Sources in old European literature (Rappaccini's garden = Eden)

"Rappaccini's Daughter" --> Romantic discovery: Enlightenment inadequate to account either outer realm (natural fact)/inner realm (spiritual fact or human heart) --> American culture in Hawthorne's day could not confront such matters, only suggestion

Collapses at the end into current clichés: man = brute & woman = angel

Denigrated: "artistic confusion", "contradictory", "topicality" &

"Americanness" --> women in Hawthorne's life, women's stereotypes in popular culture, uneasiness about virility, "intercultural romance"

Influences: "Miracles Controversy", "Immortality Controversy", controversy of medical empiricism

Old school "historical and deconstructive" <--> young critics "biographical data" + "theological controversy and intellectual history" & Hawthorne's "own ambivalence about the women closest to him"

Distinguishing author/narrator = facilitate irony to implicit author

Tale's insistent language of "evidence" & Reunite Hawthorne and narrator --> "interpersonal drama" (allegorical & thematic)

Deallegorizing Beatrice --> trivializes a tale deliberately ambitious, yet few referential items (Aristotle, *The Prince*, Voltaire for *Candide*)

Puritanism not capacious of all subjects --> First called "Writings of Aubépine" (pseudonymous) --> real name in *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837

Prefaced a tale with separate foreword (reader's responsibility & virtual instructions) --> Reader to look for center of "interest" among "less obvious peculiarity" in "subject" than aforementioned "manners"

Exceptionally unconfident regarding finished tale (ambitious)

Tieck, Montagne & Voltaire

Pair Hawthorne with Voltaire + than Balzac or others

Voltaire concerned with Truth <--> Tieck with Beauty (or effect)

Hawthorne reached his limit with "Rappaccini's Daughter"