



Young Goodman Brown

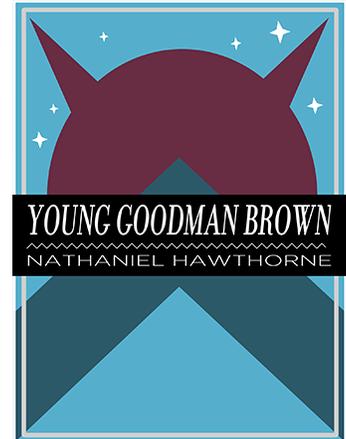
by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Things To Know/ Things To Think About

Like many of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories, "Young Goodman Brown" takes place in a reimagined colonial America during the 17th century, despite being written during the 19th century.

Hawthorne's great-great-grandfather, John Hathorne, had been a judge during the Salem Witch Trials, and critics maintain that Hawthorne was plagued by a sense of ancestral guilt for his family's complicity in sending over twenty women to die at the stake. By writing about the past, Hawthorne is able to both expiate his family's guilt, and analyze the social and religious climate that culminated in the Puritan zealotry of the Salem Witch Trials. Although the story is realistic, "Young Goodman Brown," written in the American Romantic tradition, blurs the line between dream and reality, natural and supernatural.

The story chronicles the protagonist, Young Goodman Brown, as he sets out to complete an unspecified task in the ghostly woods outside Salem. Although Brown has dark forebodings about his mission, he is comforted by thoughts of soon returning to his new bride, Faith--a woman of unsurpassed purity and sweetness. In the woods, Goodman Brown meets an infernal acquaintance bearing a peculiar resemblance to his own. Based on explicit and implicit comments made by the acquaintance, it can be gleaned that he knew Brown's father and grandfather, and wants to initiate Brown into a dark brotherhood. Although Brown is hesitant to follow this strange man with the serpent staff, his resolve continues to waver as he begins to learn just to what extent his community, including his religious mentors, is in league with this dark village father. The story peaks when Brown arrives at his initiation ceremony, and sees his entire village represented, with both saints and sinners happily comingling in front of a flaming altar, surrounded by a small sea of flaming pine trees. As the converts are lead to the altar, to be baptized with "blood" or "liquid fire," Brown is shocked to find that the other convert is none other than his wife Faith. Upon beholding his wife, and imploring her to reject the mark of baptism from the "wicked one," Brown finds himself alone in the forest unharmed, albeit a changed man. This piece is perfect for a lesson on Nathaniel Hawthorne, or the tradition of



short-story writing in America. In addition, the piece works well as part of a lesson on the Salem Witch Trials, early colonial America, and the conventions of American Romanticism.

Standards Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Before Reading

1. Based on your knowledge of history, what comes to mind when you think of “Puritans”? In your opinion, what values do Puritans stand for?

During Reading

1. How does the setting add to the meaning of the story: *dreary road, gloomiest trees, narrow path creeping through, lonely, peculiarity in solitude?* (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3)
2. Think about the use of names in this story. For example, **Faith** and **Goodman Brown**. What do these names suggest about their owners? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4)
3. Based on examples from the text, what evidence suggests that the man Goodman Brown meets in the woods may in fact be the devil? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1)

After Reading

1. At the end of the story, the “dark figure” expresses his desire to introduce Goodman Brown to the “communion of his race.” Based on the reading, what is the exact nature of this communion? And what are its implications for those who fully accept it? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1)
2. Essay: Consider the following interpretations. Supply examples of specific textual evidence supporting each interpretation. Then compose a cogent thesis statement for each interpretation. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1)
 - “Young Goodman Brown” is an inward psychological journey where Goodman Brown discovers evil in himself but refuses to acknowledge it.
 - “Young Goodman Brown” is a coming of age story about a young man who desires to abandon his faith to have one last “fling,” to “taste the forbidden fruit,” before settling into a strict Puritan life.
 - “Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote “Young Goodman Brown” to expose and denounce Puritan attitudes and hypocrisy.

Connections In Text

1. Edgar Allan Poe was actually a friend, and contemporary of Hawthorne. Although their writings, arguably, can both be characterized as romantic, they also differ in a number of ways. Using the Books That Grow library, compare “Young Goodman Brown” with a short story by Edgar Allan Poe. In a paragraph or more, describe the similarities and differences in the style and themes of each story. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.9)

Further Readings

For Teachers:

http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/early_nineteenth/hawthorne_na.html

This link provides teachers with a brief, albeit informative history of Hawthorne’s life, complete with insight into the inspiration behind many of his novels and short stories.

For Students:

<http://www.sparknotes.com/short-stories/young-goodman-brown/>

This link provides students with a detailed analysis of “Young Goodman Brown’s” plot, characters, themes and settings.

Vocabulary

G8 Challenging Vocabulary:

congregation (8), heathen (8), tremor (8), revered (8), wholly (8), winsome (8), dejection (8), infinite (8), resplendent (8), atrocious (8), unyielding (8), instilled (8), discernible (8), eccentric (8), monotonous (8), jovially (8), admonish (8), revered (8), epitaph (8), basin (7), brandish (7), domestic (7), eloquence (7), omen (7), pious (7), psalm (7), reputation (7), appealing (7), ambling (7), luster (7), deterring (7), brood (7), aghast (7), commenced (7), advent (7), compact (7), allies (7), apt (7), elude (7), ambition (6), anxiously (6), bliss (6), canopy (6), confronted (6), conscious (6), consider/considerably (6), contrasting (6), converse (6), convert (6), deed (6), despair (6), dusk (6), illuminating (6), justified (6), lull (6), staggered (6), stupefied (6), sympathy (6), self-conscious (6), acquaintance (6), fascinated (6), dazed (6), appalled (6), bore (6), eccentric (6), comrade (6), converse(6)

G6 Challenging Vocabulary:

ambitions (6), anxiously (6), appalling/appalls (6), acquaintance/acquainted (6), bliss (6), bore (6), canopy (6), comrade (6), confronted (6), conscious (6), considerable/considerably (6), converse (6), convert (6), dazed (6), deed/deeds (6), despair/despairing (6), dusk (6), fascinated (6), glumly (6), illuminating (6), justified (6), lull (6), quaver (6), relished (6), seclusion (6), self-conscious (6), staggered (6), stupefied (6), sympathy (6), bound (5), burdened/overburdened (5), case (5), charming (5), chorus (5), concealing/concealed (5), divine (5), dreary/drearier (5), grave (5), lore (5), mingled (5), rage/raging (5), splendor (5), uttering (5), veiled (5), verse (5), vices (5), weary (5), widows (5), withered (5), avance/advanced (4), agony (4), appeared (4), applauding (4), arch (4), assembly (4), beckoned (4), cling (4), comment (4), council (4), court (4), draws (4), dreadful (4), fashion (4), foot (4), gaily (4), gleamed/gleams (4), interpreting (4), manner (4), mocked/mock (4), ordination (4), parted (4), premonition (4), quivered/quivering (4), scene (4), serpent/serpentine (4), threshold (4), tolled (4), urges (4), vegetation (4), wreaths (4), youth/youths (4)

G4 Challenging Vocabulary:

advance/advanced (4), agony (4), appeared (4), applauding (4), arch (4), assembly (4), beckoned (4), cling (4), comment (4), council (4), court (4), draws (4), dreadful (4), fashion (4), foot (4), gaily (4), gleamed/gleams (4), interpreting (4), manner (4), mocked/mock (4), ordination (4), parted (4), premonition (4), quivered/quivering (4), scene (4), serpent/serpentine (4), threshold (4), tolled (4), urges (4), vegetation (4), wreaths (4), youth/youths (4), abruptly (3), bend (3), edge (3), encourage (3), errand (3), favor (3), frightening (3), glared (3), harmony (3), hollow (3), howling (3), mass (3), merrily (3), minister (3), must (3), pace (3), range (3), remarkable (3), rumor (3), suspect (4), trembling (3), wickedness (3), wine (3), wonder (3), world (3), worship (3), wriggle (3), avoid (2), break (2), choir (2), companion (2), compare (2), damp (2), deep (2), discussed (2), eager (2), excitedly (2), feared (2),

find (2), funeral (2),future (2), grasp (2), liquid (2), resist (2), respected (2), sermon (2), sincere (2), snatched (2), teaching (2)

G2 Challenging Vocabulary:

avoid (2), break (2), choir (2), companion (2), compare (2), damp (2), deep (2), discussed (2), eager (2), excitedly (2), feared (2), find (2), funeral (2),future (2), grasp (2), liquid (2), resist (2), respected (2), sermon (2), sincere (2), snatched (2), teaching (2) wife(1) ribbon(1) thought(1) husband(1) finish(1) early(1) curve(1) road(1) kill(1) strange(1) lonely(1) branch(1) crowd(1) glance(1) corner(1) clock(1) huge(1) annoy(1) approach(1) fair(1) gather(1) appear(1) grab(1) grave(1) garden(1) guest(1) cry(1) mystery(1) porch(1) family(1) thunder(1) evening(1) home(0) street(0) kiss(0) whisper(0) dream(0) voice(0) after(0) King(0) secret(0) friend(0) snake(0) forest(0) Above(0) laugh(0) earth(0) human(0) fire(0) morning(0) night(0) alone(0) listen(0) street(0) again(0) child/children(0) sad(0) blood(0)