

**REVIEW ARTICLE**



## **DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Discourse analysis in *Young Goodman Brown* by Nathaniel Hawthorn with an emphasis on the author's style and the character's discourse is the most important concern in this paper.

Before going on the deep of the subject, in order to clarify the topic, the main lexical terms should be defined. According to Oxford Dictionary (Fourth Edition) the origin of Discourse comes from Old French discours, from Latin *discursus*; which means running to and from. And, Discourse analysis (DA), is a general term for a number of approaches to analyzing written, vocal, or sign language use.

And also Style refers to discourse technique a writer uses to convey his message either in prose or in verse; a manner which reveals the writer's tonality. This personal way of organizing ideas can be laid on syntax, figure of thought, and rhetorical questions.

So by looking at the discourse in fiction, examining the active interaction between the speaker and the addressee and the language that mediates their relationship is necessary.

Once again, the communication and interaction between the author/narrator and the characters and readers are important factors.

In general, it can say that the discourse in *Young Goodman Brown* reveals Puritanism and Hypocrisy of Puritan culture. *Young Goodman Brown's* journey into self-scrutiny, which results in his loss of virtue and faith.

In this paper the author will focus on structural and linguistic approaches: In the first approach the structure of Nathaniel Hawthorn in *Young Goodman Brown* will be studied. The second one will analyze the different styles used by Nathaniel Hawthorn.

Key words: Discourse analysis, author's style, narrative method.

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## INTRODUCTION

It seems necessary to write down some lines about the author. Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. Because of the involvement of his ancestor in the Salem witch trials , Nathaniel later added a "w" to make his name "Hawthorne" in order to hide this relation. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821, and graduated in 1825. Hawthorne published his first work, *Fanshawe*, in 1828. He published several short stories after that which he collected in 1837 as *Twice-Told Tales*. His masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*, was published in 1850. A political appointment took Hawthorne and family to Europe before their return to The Wayside in 1860. Hawthorne died on May 19, 1864.

Many of Hawthorne's writing centres in New England, many works featuring moral allegories with a Puritan inspiration. His fiction works are considered part of the Romantic movement and, more specifically, Dark romanticism. His themes often center on the inherent evil and sins of humanity, and his works often have moral messages and deep psychological complexity. His published works include novels, short stories, and a biography of his friend Franklin Pierce.

## DISCUSSION

The story starts at sunset in a village named Salem, as young Goodman Brown leaves his wife, Faith, for a duty in the forest. Faith begs 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, carried a staff looked like a black serpent.

Other inhabitants of the village were in the woods that night. Suddenly *Young Goodman Brown* hears his wife's voice in the trees so decides to fly through the forest by the old man's staff. At the ceremony he and Faith approach the altar, he shouts at Faith to look to heaven and resist. After that he finds himself alone in the forest, next to the cold, wet rock.

The next morning, he arrives at his home , he is not sure whether the previous night's events were real or a dream, but his belief he lives in a Christian community is distorted. He loses his faith in his wife, along with all of humanity. The story concludes: "And when he had lived longer, and was borne to his

grave...they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom."

### Author's style:

Generally, style refers to the manner in which an author chooses to write to his or her audience. A style reveals both the writer's personality and voice, but it also shows how she or he perceives the audience.

Considering the above definition, it can be said that although Nathaniel Hawthorne uses a simple style in *Young Goodman Brown*, he has a "detailed" style. Twenty five thousand words describing people and places in detail ; based on two brief visits were recorded by Clarice Swisher in "Nathaniel Hawthorne: a Biography". By using detailed style, it seems that each and every selected word is meaningful in his sentences. For example the opening sentence:

"*Young Goodman Brown* came forth at sunset, into the street of Salem village, but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife."(1).

By omitting any word in this sentence, the reader will loose some meaning.

In this short story, Hawthorne uses an imaginative style. Behind each description a strong poetic imagination is laid. Consider his description of the second traveler and his staff:

"As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveler was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still, they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder 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 would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner-table, or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him, that could be fixed upon as remarkable, was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought, that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must

have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light."(2).

In "Hawthorne's books an aesthetic reality can be claimed; an "unreal" opposite of the physical world would be merely constituted and a noncommittal parallelism between Imagination and Actuality can be seen in his works too, which are stated by Charles Feidelson, Jr. in "Hawthorne as Symbolist". In fact, Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* includes excessive use of comparison. In this paper, simile and metaphor will be our main concern.

#### Metaphor:

"Well; she's a blessed angel on earth. . . . I'll cling to her skirts".(1).

"You will think better of this by-and-by,' said his acquaintance, composedly."(4).

#### Simile:

"His staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake." (2).

"Twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent."(2).

"His snakelike staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy."(3).

"Was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished"(4).

"He seemed to fly along the forest-path, rather than to walk or run." (6).

Another point in this part is using both "show" and "tell" styles equally. In a Glossary of Literary terms, M.H Abrams distinguishes between the showing approach and the telling approach. In "showing" the author merely presents the characters talking and acting and leaves the readers to infer what motives and dispositions lie behind what they say and do". In "telling" the author intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate, the motives and dispositions qualities of the character". Below is the example of showing technique in the text:

"And now, my children, look upon each other."(8).

"They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar."(8).

"Lo! There ye stand, my children," said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad, with its despairing

awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. "Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream! Now are ye undeceived! Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome, again, my children, to the communion of your race!" (8).

And the "telling" style as follows:

"So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to Egyptian Magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveler alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened."(4).

The deepest roots of man's moral nature were touched by unique gift of Hawthorne, the creation of strongly symbolic stories which was stated by Edmund Fuller and B. Jo Kinnick in "Stories Derived from New England Living". According to this quotation, Hawthorne uses many different examples of symbolism throughout the story. He may choose this style to help the reader understand the story better. Names and colors are the most important factors in the story.

#### The narrative techniques:

After the analysis of the author's style, let us consider the narrative techniques which is a bridge between linguistics and literature.

In this part a narrative method which is applied in *Young Goodman Brown* is studied: dialogism

#### Dialogism

By using dialogues between two or more characters, the author will reveal his thoughts. In this section, we are talking about dialogues and then monologues.

#### 1. Dialogues

At the beginning of the story, in the dialogue between Goodman and his wife, Faith , the author uses a warm language in order to show the love between them:

"Dearest heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, "pr'ythee, put off

your journey until sunrise, and sleep in your own bed tonight. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts, that she's afraid of herself, sometimes. Pray, tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year!"(1)

"My love and my Faith," replied *Young Goodman Brown*, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married!"(1).

Gradually when the story comes to middle and when the symbol of evil enters the story, the tone of dialogues change and the reader feels a "tremor" in Goodman's voice:

"You are late, Goodman Brown," said he. "The clock of the Old South was striking, as I came through Boston; and that is full fifteen minutes agone." (2). "Faith kept me back awhile," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected. It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying." (2).

## 2. Monologues

Hawthorne uses monologues in different part of the story for different reasons. By this method he allows the reader to hear what he is thinking and helps him to be connected to characters.

For example a part of Brown's interior monologue in the third paragraph:

"My journey . . . forth and back again, must be done 'twixt now and sunrise".(1) suggests that the "dream" of the night woods becomes the encounter portion of the journey

And also an example of foreshadowing can be found during this monologue:

"What a wretch I am to leave her on such an errand.... Me thought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done tonight. But no, not would kill her to think it." (1).

Here Hawthorne hints both at Brown's later confusion over whether he had dreamed his

experience and the symbolic death of Faith's innocence at the Black Mass.

Hawthorne writes a monologue in which the Devil truly pushes Goodman Brown over the edge of doubt and into the black hole of disbelief.

'Lo! There ye stand, my children,' said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad, with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race, 'Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped, that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived! Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome, again, my children, to the communion of your race,'(8).

With this, the Devil persuades Brown to continue on the journey towards the baptism.

## CONCLUSION

At the end of this work, it is necessary to say that our main concern was to find out Nathaniel Hawthorn's techniques in *Young Goodman Brown*. To reach our goal, we have divided this work into two main parts.

In the first part, we have analyzed the style of Nathaniel Hawthorn in this short story to express his ideas. Then, we have examined the different literary techniques found in this short story.

All by all, it is fitting to underline that Nathaniel Hawthorn through his writing fulfils the features which characterizes the Puritan community. In fact, he uses religious notions to say that true faith lies not behind what one claims to be, but in one's actions .

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