

EXPLORATIONS OF LIMINALITY: NEW HISTORIC AND PSYCHOANALYTIC
READINGS OF HAWTHORNE'S SHORT STORIES

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of
The School of Continuing Studies
and of
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts
in Liberal Studies

By

Abigail E. Crain, B.A.

Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.
March 14th, 2015

EXPLORATIONS OF LIMINALITY: NEW HISTORIC AND PSYCHOANALYTIC READINGS OF HAWTHORNE'S SHORT STORIES

Abigail E. Crain, B.A.

MALS Mentor: Arnold Bradford, Ph.D

ABSTRACT

Nathaniel Hawthorne has long reigned as one of the prominent creators of the American romantic short story genre that developed during the first half of the nineteenth century. Beginning with his contemporary critics and still true to this day, Hawthorne has notoriously presented a veritable conundrum for those scholars who attempt to understand just who he was, both as an author and a man, and the underlying message(s) of his stories. As early as 1850, reviewer Anne W. Abbott wrote that Hawthorne's "style may be compared to a sheet of transparent water...while in its clear yet mysterious depths we espy rarer and stranger things, which we must dive for, if we would examine."¹ While Hawthorne's writing is precise, eloquent, and stylized, the deeper meanings of his stories often exist in the unreachable, mysterious and indefinable depths of the human condition and its values. Many critics rely on the literary criticism popular in their own time (ex. Deconstruction, New Criticism, Feminism, etc.) as the sole framework to use in interpreting and understanding Hawthorne's stories. While the merits of these criticisms are not to be discredited by any means, a more all-encompassing approach to understanding Hawthorne is well overdue.

1. Anne M. Abbott, "The Scarlet Letter," in *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Critical Assessments Volume I*, ed. Brian Harding (Mountfield, East Sussex: Helm Information Ltd., 1998), 249.

This thesis uses a combination of psychoanalytic and new historic frameworks to argue that Hawthorne's character's function, significance, perception and reception changes over the period of time exhibited in each story (like that of history itself). By combining the new historical lens with the psychoanalytic lens, the changes within each character as they navigate through their complicated journeys are thus exhibited with greater clarity. First, the historical backdrop will be analyzed, followed by a new historic analysis of the story, based significantly upon textual resonance and Hawthorne's use of historical interpretation.

This thesis then explores the journey toward liminality, as well as the effects of existing within a liminal understanding of self and community. The focus is upon three of the protagonists from Hawthorne's short stories: Robin Molineux from "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Goodman Brown from "Young Goodman Brown," and Reuben Bourne from "Roger Malvin's Burial." Robin and Brown are initially presented as obtuse and overconfident characters who, throughout their respective journeys find themselves by the end of the stories existing wholly outside of the clearly defined structures that were in place at the beginning of the stories. While the focus of Robin and Brown's journeys is upon the change, the focus of Reuben's journey is more upon the exploration of the effects of liminality upon the understanding of self. In all three stories, this liminality outwardly appears to leave the characters in a state of ambiguity, but it is just this undefined "outsiderness" that reveals or uncovers a newly defined or understood set of values for the character.

CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
INTRODUCTION: DEEP AS DANTE	1
CHAPTER 1. FRAMEWORK FOR LITERARY ANALYSIS	4
CHAPTER 2. THE OBSCUREST MAN OF LETTERS	14
CHAPTER 3. AM I HERE, OR THERE?	27
CHAPTER 4. BUT WHERE IS FAITH?	51
CHAPTER 5. WHERE AM I? WHITHER AM I WANDERING?	80
CONCLUSION: TIME TRANSCENDENT QUESTIONS	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY	115

INTRODUCTION

DEEP AS DANTE

There is no one thing for which he is more remarkable than his power of finding the elements of the picturesque, the romantic, and even the supernatural, in the everyday, common-place life, that is constantly going on around us. He detects the essentially poetical in that which is superficially prosaic. In the alembic of his genius, the subtle essence of poetry is extracted from prose. The history, the traditions, the people, and the scenes of New England, have not generally been supposed favorable to the romance-writer of the poet; but, in his hands, they are fruitful and suggestive, and dispose themselves into graceful attitudes and dramatic combinations.

--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *North American Review*, April 1842

Hawthorne contents himself with unveiling the movements of the inner man, and the growth of motive and reflection, while the outward world is quiet or forgotten. Not that he does not often give to his pieces a high dramatic interest, but his favorite study is that of the affections and inward impulses of man. There is often an air of mystery about the person and actions of his characters, while they are still real characters, accurately defined and delicately shaded and colored.

--Nathan Hale Jr., *Boston Miscellany*, 1842

The excerpts above, written by Hawthorne's contemporaries in the early nineteenth century, praise Hawthorne's short stories for two different reasons. While Longfellow applauds Hawthorne for his expert manipulation of everyday history of his New England Confederation, Hale Jr. focuses on Hawthorne's ability to delve into the depths of man's inward self. One critic places great stake in Hawthorne's writing as it relates to history, while the other finds the inward drama and mystery of Hawthorne's characters to play the more significant role in his stories. Is the distinction of Hawthorne's writing more historically based, or more psychologically based?

This thesis will explore three of Hawthorne's early short stories through a dual literary framework that combines both new historical and psychoanalytic literary theories, thus focusing on the two most important aspects of Hawthorne's stories. It will examine these three short stories and analyze how each of the protagonist's locations in

time and history, coupled with his motivations and actions, touch upon the unreachable, mysterious and indefinable depths of the human condition and its values.

This dualistic approach will first set each story within its own particular historical framework, as it is determined and interpreted by Hawthorne. Hawthorne specifically and precisely chooses the historical framework of each story so that the history itself plays a critical role in illuminating each protagonist's journey. In a seemingly outward contradiction, Hawthorne at the same time uses his vast historical knowledge of his beloved New England as a semi-fictional backdrop, subtly changing dates, names and public opinion of actual historical events as a means of providing, provoking and evoking the emotions of both his characters and his readers alike.

Following a discussion of the implications that arise from both the blatant and subtle new historical aspects of the story will be a close psychoanalytic reading of each protagonist's journey through the story. Hawthorne accomplishes this by either exposing the protagonist's shift from a static and/or obtuse character to a more liminal character, or by exploring the psychological effects upon a character who is forced to make a difficult moral decision.

In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" and "Young Goodman Brown," and "Roger Malvin's Burial," the protagonist is initially presented as a clearly defined one-dimensional character. In "Roger Malvin's Burial," the protagonist's naiveté is not so evident because the story does not focus upon the interactions that cause a change in the character, but rather on how the feeling of guilt manifests itself in the protagonist's psychological (mis)understanding of self. All three of these characters are forced to navigate a liminal state, rife with ambiguity, ambivalence, and confusion. Still, though

this liminal state is seemingly ambiguous, it actually works more as an enlightened condition because it uncovers a newly defined or understood set of values for the character. Ultimately, this dualistic approach to Hawthorne's stories will expose Hawthorne's expert ability to write short stories, no longer than a dozen pages each, that are somehow still "deep as Dante," and time transcendent.¹

¹ While the author of this article was left anonymous at the time of publication, it is unanimously agreed among scholars that the author is Herman Melville, *Literary World*, August 24, 1850.

CHAPTER 1

FRAMEWORK FOR LITERARY ANALYSIS

This thesis will explore the complexities of the protagonists in Hawthorne's short stories by approaching the analysis of these characters using two different lenses of literary criticism: new historic and psychoanalytic. The application of these two complicated and at times contradictory critical lenses to Hawthorne's short stories (all of which are also complicated and contradictory), will be used to further examine Hawthorne's own interpretation and conception of the amalgamation of history with the inner self. The following is a fairly brief overview of the two critical lenses as they will be applied in this thesis. The new historical outline will focus specifically on the interrelationships among Nietzsche, Foucault, and Greenblatt and how their theories can be applied to Hawthorne's short stories. The psychoanalytic portion of this chapter is based solely on the Freudian tradition, with focus specifically on dreams, the uncanny, and the delineation between the conscious and the unconscious. This chapter will conclude with a description of the process of analysis that will be used in each story, and how the two critical lenses will be applied within this process.

The use of an historical critical lens as a means of literary analysis has undergone many changes, especially in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Placing a text within an historical framework remained for many decades the uncontested requirement for proper literary analysis. The logic behind this is fairly simple: in order to make sense of a piece of literature, one must delve into biographical, social, cultural and/or political contexts applicable to that piece of literature; however, this required any literary critic to spend a great deal of time researching the extensive background(s)

related to the text.¹ As a result, in the 20th century, scholars markedly turned away from using historical dimensions in their analyses of literature. Instead, scholars of this new criticism school argued that a text should be understood as wholly independent from the subjectivity that is inherent when applying an historical analysis.²

Despite new criticism's massive popularity in the realm of literary theorists, the historical context of literature could not be entirely dismissed. Thus came about the new historical lens, which requires consideration and interpretation of both the literature and the history "behind" a text. A piece of writing can only be understood and interpreted if its historical references are a) considered to be an influential aspect of that writing, and b) understood as interpretations of history, since any writing on history itself has been filtered by the writer of said history. This lens focuses upon the "relations between text both literary and historical and discovers how they trace certain patterns and negotiate various kinds of cultural meaning."³ By focusing on the patterns between different but interrelated texts, new historical critics are able to focus on specific details within a text, subsequently exposing how the relationships between these details are constituted and reconstituted as the outer historical framework about which the piece of text exists itself

¹ Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, "Introduction: Writing the Past," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 505.

² Steven Lynn, *Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory* 4th ed. (New York, NY: Pearson Education Inc.), 38-40.

³ Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, "Introduction: Writing the Past," 506.

changes.⁴

Friedrich Nietzsche and his radical philosophy were highly influential upon the school of new historicism. His various theories reject many of the major preexisting philosophies about history, two of which will be discussed. First, he rejects the idea that accounts of history are accounts of what actually happened. The effect of this philosophy is evident in the new historical idea that history is always an interpretation of actual events. Second, Nietzsche rejects history as progress. History should not be seen as consistently ascending, or even as a straight timeline of events; rather, he argues that there is no logic in history because it does not occur within a rational framework. Therefore, all history is a series of disconnected and discontinuous events.⁵ Nietzsche's later work further traced how "moral values emerge and remerge along multiple and often scattered points in time and place."⁶

The philosophy and scholarship that emerged as a result of Nietzsche's work are extremely broad and extensive, and remnants of his philosophies are resonant not only in the new historical critical lens, but all throughout literary criticism. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on two major thinkers who credit Nietzsche for portions of their theories: Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt.

⁴ Jerome P. McGann, "Introduction: A Point of Reference," in *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. Jerome P. McGann (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 9.

⁵ Pelagia Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory from Plato to Postcolonialism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 114-15.

⁶ Gregory Castle, *The Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 129.

Foucault, influenced by Nietzsche, questioned and challenged many preconceived notions, such as cultural categories, structures, and power relations. Foucault consistently highlighted the problematic relationship between a text and history, because he did not view texts as a way to access world-views or ideologies.⁷ Foucault's early works also promoted his idea of "effective" historians, in opposition to "traditional" historians. Effective historians do not look for unity within historical events, and they stress that both historians and literary critics alike cannot be objective and impartial because they are active participants in history.⁸ As a result, historians should focus on the disruption, differences, and discontinuities in a text.

Additionally, Foucault focused on the role that the author plays in a text. He argued for a transition from critics creating the author into a subject using their own notions of continuities and exclusions to a denaturalization of the categories and unifiers.⁹ Foucault found fault in equating an author and his/her various textual output to specific unifying ideas because it is the critic who constructs this homogeneity. Again, the influence of Foucault's earlier notion that the role of historians as active participants in history and texts as opposed to that of exclusively objective critics is evident in this argument.

Stephen Greenblatt, often credited as the founder of new historicism, used and manipulated the theories of Nietzsche and Foucault as part of the foundation of his extensive and influential works. For example, Greenblatt furthers Foucault's notion of

⁷ Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1997), 31.

⁸ Pelagia Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory*, 294-5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 293-4.

disorder and discontinuity in history in his analyses of Renaissance texts, such as Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Whereas earlier critics recognized in texts a shift from original disorder to a conclusive harmony, Greenblatt and other new historicists recognized these external items, "such as dress, misrecognition and disguise as *producing* that very sense of natural order."¹⁰ This and other Renaissance plays nearly reveal the contradictory and ultimately fictitious nature of Renaissance harmony by initially excluding the chaos and disorder and then using it at the end of the play in such a way that it now appears natural and legitimate.

Greenblatt also advanced the new historicist idea that a culture cannot be represented simply by a description or by a dominant self-representation. It is faulty to attempt to represent a culture in this manner because the act of generalizing a culture "misses the multiple uses, resistances and positions which characterize any culture."¹¹ This idea again takes the notion of discontinuity within the broader idea of history and applies it specifically to the multiplicity of cultural traits. In his essay "Resonance and Wonder," Greenblatt expounds upon this idea of multiplicity in focusing even more specifically on a single phenomenon and how this phenomenon can have essentially unlimited meanings. Textual resonance, which uses any phenomenon that has intersected with a specific text as a medium through which to uncover new meaning, thus becomes an avenue for cultures to find or place legitimacy, morality, or value upon its cultural character.¹² Due to the inexhaustibility of this practice of resonance, there can never be a

¹⁰ Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories*, 199.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 204-5.

¹² *Ibid.*, 215.

single meaning to a text because there is always a new intersection of any one phenomenon with the text itself.

It is evident from the brief outline above that new historical criticism is complicated and evolutionary in nature. The nature of this scholarship that asks the critic to identify, describe, and manipulate the interrelationships between texts and their various social, political and cultural contexts results in innumerable readings of the same text that all have their own specific validity as it relates to the aforementioned phenomenon/text intersection. Consequently, “the meaning of text is determined by its relations to all other discourses rather than its relations solely within an autonomous literary history.”¹³ As such, this idea of multiplicity provides limitless opportunities for critics to analyze any given text.

In the forthcoming analysis of Hawthorne’s stories, a new historical lens will be used as one means of accessing the complexity and significance of his stories. The psychoanalytic discipline, that is significantly based upon Freud’s book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, is another literary lens by which to discover and illuminate the intricacies of Hawthorne’s stories. Until the publication of Freud’s aforementioned book, the human mind was often understood as a unified and readily accessible whole that distinguished humans from other, baser creatures. Freud’s book challenged this notion because in it he posited that humans are unable to access the whole of their own consciousness because the mind contains an entirely other dimension that he labeled the

¹³ Pelagia Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory*, 295.

“unconscious.”¹⁴ In applying this new theory, literary scholars were challenged to reconsider, reevaluate, and reanalyze all aspects of literature, especially character’s convictions, motivations, and identity.

Freud’s theory on dreams was especially influential because he saw dreams as a one way to access the unconscious. The analysis of dreams provides one source of access to the otherwise inaccessible drives of the human self that are beyond the control of the conscious.¹⁵ Essentially, the act of dreaming and the images that come from dreams are the unconscious’ way of expressing desires that are repressed by the human conscious.¹⁶ More specifically, dreams are a complex combination of dream-thoughts and dream-content. For Freud, “dream-thoughts are immediately comprehensible, as soon as we have learnt them. The dream-content, on the other hand, is expressed as it were in a pictographic script, the characters of which have to be transposed individually into the language of the dream-thoughts.”¹⁷ Thus, each dream requires not only recognition of a basically comprehensible outward layer, but also thorough analysis of the less readily recognizable content.

Freud continued his influential work on psychoanalysis by studying the boundaries between the conscious and unconscious. For Freud, humans were able to

¹⁴ Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, “Introduction: Strangers to Ourselves: Psychoanalysis,” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 389.

¹⁵ Pelagia Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory*, 127.

¹⁶ Rivkin and Ryan, “Strangers to Ourselves,” 390.

¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, “The Interpretation of Dreams,” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 400.

function effectively in society when their rational, ordered, and logical conscious was able to exert its control over the irrational and unpredictable nature of their unconscious. The conscious makes a decision to act in a specific way in order to remain within the specific constructs and contexts of a given society. If the conscious loses control over the unconscious desires, then the person no longer exists in a socially acceptable fashion, thus losing their place, or role, within society.¹⁸ This relationship is further complicated because the boundary lines between conscious and unconscious are permeable, so the whole self must constantly navigate the boundaries of this oscillating relationship.¹⁹

Freud continued his analysis of the conscious/unconscious relationship in literature in his 1919 essay, “The Uncanny.” In this essay, Freud discusses the authorial tool of using what he terms as “the uncanny,” where the author writes in such a way that the reader is unsure of whether or not events or characters actually exist within the reality of the story, or are mere illusions created by a character’s unconscious.²⁰ Freud continues in his essay to detail specific processes by which authors can elicit this sense of uncanniness. Using E. T. A. Hoffman’s *The Devil’s Elixir* as an example, Freud introduces the idea of the author using the “double” in such a way that “one possesses knowledge, feeling and experience in common with the other, identifies himself with another person, so that his self becomes confounded, or the foreign self is substituted for

¹⁸ Rivkin and Ryan, “Strangers to Ourselves,” 391.

¹⁹ Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory*, 131.

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 422-24

his own.”²¹ By portraying a character or situation in such a perplexing manner, the author illuminates the relationship between the conscious and unconscious in such a way that the reader must recognize this relationship. This doubling can also expose the dual and oftentimes oppositional nature of the self.²² Freud argues that experiencing the uncanny, similar to critically analyzing dreams, is another avenue by which to access the complex realm of the unconscious.

Although Hawthorne wrote his short stories almost a century before Freud first published *The Interpretation of Dreams*, his protagonists exhibit the complex nature that Freud recognized in the human condition. The protagonists struggle to understand their place within society while at the same time questioning just what their society is and where it exists. Hawthorne’s characters oscillate between recognizing and accepting their place within a societal framework and becoming lost and weary of that same societal framework. Subsequently, the boundary between conscious and unconscious is constantly changing, as dreams and the idea of the “double” work to produce a feeling of uncanniness in both the character and the reader. Thus, a psychoanalytic lens must be used in an analysis of Hawthorne’s stories.

The limitless possibilities for discovering meaning within and outside of a text are inherent in both new historicism and psychoanalysis. A combination of these two critical lenses provides an interesting framework by which to conduct the forthcoming literary analyses of Hawthorne’s short stories. In the following chapters, three of Hawthorne’s stories will be analyzed using a combination of both of these critical lenses. First, the

²¹ Ibid., 425.

²² Goulimari, *Literary Criticism and Theory*, 128.

historical background where Hawthorne specifically situates each of his stories will be reviewed and analyzed using the new historical approach as described above.

Hawthorne's own deliberate manipulation of history, as well as a consideration of the historical literature that Hawthorne had at his disposal (thus, the possible interrelationships formed) will be discussed. After situating the story within Hawthorne's historical framework, the psychoanalytic journey of each of the three protagonists will be analyzed through the aforementioned Freudian psychoanalytic framework. Using this dual approach will highlight Hawthorne's unique and specific way of characterizing each of his protagonists. They at once embody the temperament and mannerisms that make them believable characters in their given historical framework, while also exhibiting the complexities of human psychology that transcend historical time and space

CHAPTER 2

THE OBSCUREST MAN OF LETTERS

The biographical genre, like all other literary genres, relies heavily upon interpretation by the author, but more specifically upon a synthesis of the “facts” of the subject’s life and the author’s hypothesis on the varying degrees of influence that these “facts” play in the author’s life. The vast number of biographies written about Nathaniel Hawthorne not only speaks to the longevity of his influence and renown in American literature, but also presents quite an array of opinions and interpretations of this formidable author’s life. In the following biographical sketch of Nathaniel Hawthorne, a stronger emphasis is placed upon his early life and career as an author, as this was the period of time that the majority of his short stories were composed (approximately 1825-1837). His more well known career that emerged after the publication of *The Scarlet Letter* will also be addressed, but in less critical detail.

That Nathaniel Hawthorne based a number of his novels in Salem, Massachusetts and the surrounding New England area is not necessarily surprising, as not only Hawthorne, but all of his American ancestors also called New England their home. The first of Hawthorne’s ancestors to come to Salem from England in 1636 was William Hathorne, who held many powerful positions, such as the Massachusetts Bay delegate to the New England Confederate of colonies and magistrate to the General Court.¹ William Hathorne was also heavily involved in the pursuit of the heretical Quakers, a passion that he would instill in his son, John Hathorne. John’s position as court magistrate coincided

¹ Brenda Wineapple, *Hawthorne: A Life* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003). The following biographical sketch draws heavily from this thoughtful and laboriously researched biography of Hawthorne called. Unless otherwise specified, dates, names and locations are taken directly from this source.

with the now all too well known Salem Witch trials, where he presumed over one hundred accused witches as guilty.

Joseph Hathorne, who represented the next generation of the Hathorne line, was a farmer of no great governmental or political import. Well-known Hawthorne biographers like Henry James, George Woodberry and Mark Van Doren all agree that after the first two generations of Hathornes, “the third generation lapsed into an obscurity from which it emerged in the very person of the writer [Nathaniel Hawthorne].”² Still, despite this relative obscurity, from the fourth generation of the male Hathorne line emerged Daniel, who was a well-known privateersman and was often known as “bold Hathorne.”³ Daniel’s son, Nathaniel Hathorne, born in 1775, grew up to be a seafaring man who was known for his unwaveringly serious and steadfast personality, a trait that the young Nathaniel often later attributed to himself.

Not only were Hawthorne’s paternal ancestors one of the first families to arrive in Salem, but his maternal ancestry boasted a long New England family history as well. His mother, Elizabeth “Betsy” Clarke Manning (born in 1780), came from a family of successful traders who had been in Salem since 1679.⁴ Whereas the Hathorne family had lost their place in the gentry, the Manning family remained prosperous in their position as traders. Interestingly, Betsy’s father, Richard Manning, owned, along with his own

² George Woodberry E., *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1902), 1-3; Mark Van Doren, *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1949), 5; Henry James, *Hawthorne* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1879), 7.

³ Ibid., 3.

⁴ Mark Van Doren, *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New York, NY: Sloane Associates Inc., 1949), 5.

stagecoach line, all the property on the street where Hawthorne grew up except for the home of Hawthorne's paternal grandmother. Still, despite relative economic differences, Betsy and Nathaniel were married and had three children before the elder Nathaniel died of yellow jack fever while away at sea.

The young Nathaniel Hathorne (he did not change the spelling of his name until after his college years) was the second child, born on Independence Day, 1804. Hawthorne was close with both his older sister, Elizabeth (Ebe), and his younger sister Maria Louisa, although it was with Ebe that Hawthorne shared a special intellectual bond that lasted throughout their lives. After being widowed, Betsy and her three small children lived in the Manning house on Herbert Street with Hawthorne's three aunts (Mary, Maria, and Priscilla) and four uncles (William, Robert, John and Samuel). Hawthorne also had another uncle, Richard, who lived in Raymond, Maine, a location that would soon play an influential role in Hawthorne's life. Prior to this, though, Hawthorne appears to have enjoyed a relatively stable childhood in Salem, until at age nine he severely injured his foot while playing with a bat and ball. This injury required significant time to heal, a time that was spent increasing the complexity of his readings, from *The Pilgrim's Progress* to the more mature and sophisticated Shakespeare, *The Faerie Queene* and *Castle of Indolence*.⁵ In addition to these texts, Hawthorne also read Walter Scott, the *Arabian Nights*, William Godwin, Rousseau, Byron, and Henry Fielding, exposing his early literary tastes in Gothicism, poetry and social comment. Certainly this period, marked by the necessity of entertaining himself indoors for long periods of time, must have contributed to Hawthorne's later imaginative prowess.

⁵ Ibid., 10.

After over a year of recovery, although the actual date ranges from somewhere between 1814-1818, Nathaniel, his mother, and his two sisters left Salem to join Richard Manning in Raymond, Maine. Needless to say, the mere thought of the adventures to be had in the heavily wooded, uncrowded terrain of the Raymond farm excited all of the Hawthorne children. A description in Woodberry's biography on Hawthorne paints an exquisite picture of Hawthorne's new home:

It was pleasantly situated, with a garden and an apple orchard, and with rows of butternut-trees planted beside it...the country round about was wilderness, most of it primeval woods. The little settlement, only a mill and a country store and a few scattered houses, lay on a broad headland making out into Sebago Lake, better known as the Great Pond, a sheet of water eight miles across and fourteen miles long, and connected with other lakes in a chain of navigable water; to the northwest the distant horizon was filled with the White Mountains, and northward and eastward rose the unfrequented hill and lake country, remarkable only, then as now [1902], for its pure air and waters, and presenting a vast solitude.⁶

Young Hawthorne thrived in this environment, enjoying his boyhood freedom and exploring the surrounding areas. While the only text attributed to Hawthorne that survives from this period are excerpts from a diary of questionable origin and authorship, Hawthorne's letters to his family after leaving Raymond reveal not only nostalgia, but also a great sense of loss and yearning for a return.⁷

The freedom of Hawthorne's Raymond days came to a close when his uncle Robert insisted that Hawthorne return to Salem in order to receive a more refined education. In providing the funds for Hawthorne's education, Robert strictly controlled the education that his nephew received before sending Hawthorne to college in Maine.

⁶ Woodberry, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 7.

⁷ The excerpts from this alleged diary surfaced after Hawthorne's death, their origin discovered to be from William Symmes, an acquaintance of Hawthorne's from his stay in Raymond. For more detail, see Brenda Wineapple, *Hawthorne: A Life*, 35-36.

Contrastingly, Hawthorne appeared relatively indifferent toward his pre-collegiate education, and did not express any strong desire even to attend college. In his letters home, both before and during his collegiate years, Hawthorne made it clear that the professions available to him (doctor, lawyer, minister) after graduation were of no interest to him. Already, Hawthorne foresaw a future for himself in writing, although the vision itself and just how this future will materialize itself was not yet clear to him.

Still, Hawthorne appears to have enjoyed himself while attending college at Bowdoin in Brunswick, Maine. Like many semi-rebellious college students, Hawthorne proved himself to be a fair scholar, who followed his own will freely, and blatantly neglected all forms of public worship at that time required by the college.⁸ In letters home, Hawthorne openly admits to breaking other Bowdoin rules, like gambling, drinking alcohol, smoking cigars and defying restrictions (of movement, work and fraternizing) on the Sabbath. In a more academic sense, Hawthorne also exposed his semi-rebellious nature by not joining the Peucinian literary society, known for being studious and disciplined, and where Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a member. Hawthorne instead became a member of Athenaeon literary club, comprised of those scholars who considered themselves Democrats. Through this club, Hawthorne met and befriended many like-minded men, most notably Horatio Bridge and Franklin Pierce, with whom he struck a lifelong bond of friendship and loyalty. Despite his aloof attitude upon entering college, Hawthorne graduated in 1825 and returned, not to Raymond, but again to Salem, where he would begin embarking on his attempt at a career as a man of letters.

⁸ James, *Hawthorne*, 17; Woodberry, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 21; Wineapple, *Hawthorne: A Life*, 47.

It is at this point in Hawthorne's life that biographical interpretations prove to be anything but unanimous. Overall, after graduating from Bowdoin in 1825, Hawthorne did not immediately achieve the success that he is now known for, but instead spent the next twelve years as the self-proclaimed "obscurest man of letters in America."⁹ Hawthorne biographers interpret this sense of obscurity in many different ways.

Henry James begins his chapter entitled "Early Manhood," that focuses on this twelve year period in Hawthorne's life, with "the twelve years the followed were not the happiest or most brilliant phase of Hawthorne's life; they strike me, indeed, as having had an altogether peculiar dreariness."¹⁰ Still, James qualifies this dreariness as wholly exaggerated, both by Hawthorne himself, and by the public's interpretation of Hawthorne. Using Hawthorne's American notebooks (published posthumously by Hawthorne's wife in 1870) as his main resource, James claims that the notebooks, while not revealing Hawthorne as an extrovert by any sense of the word, do not support the gloom, depression or morbidity that both Hawthorne and his readers later used to describe the man behind the stories. Instead, insists James, Hawthorne's notebooks reveal that during this twelve-year period, Hawthorne was a man who was developing his own imagination and finesse as a writer of fiction. This effort is to be applauded, as James posits, because the literary opportunities for emerging authors of fiction in Salem was quite restrictive. Magazines, newspapers, and their readers did not necessarily seek out the type of complex stories that Hawthorne wrote during this period, which presented a barrier that Hawthorne had to navigate.

⁹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Twice Told Tales*, (Cambridge, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1882), 13.

¹⁰ James, *Hawthorne*, 20.

Woodberry, writing his biography on Hawthorne about twenty years after James, titled his chapter on this period of Hawthorne's life, "The Chamber Under the Eaves," which refers specifically to the room that Hawthorne inhabited during this period in Salem. This return to his childhood influenced Hawthorne to again "preserve his peculiar character...he lived in an intellectual solitude deepened by the fact that it was only an inner cell of an outward seclusion almost as complete, for the house had the habits of hermitage."¹¹ Woodberry accounts for Hawthorne's reclusive behaviors as partially due to Hawthorne's own peculiarities, but also to the lack of socialization within his family home. Woodberry believes Hawthorne's sisters and mother to be painfully isolated and reclusive, which accounts to some degree for Hawthorne's lack of visitors and friends. Woodberry also interpreted Hawthorne's later letters as wholly truthful accounts of the past, readily overlooking the dry and ironical nature of the letters. In writing about his own history, Hawthorne often combined fact with fiction, so that the way in which he describes his life or himself may not be fully accurate.

Mark Van Doren, writing Hawthorne's biography in 1949, begins his chapter on Hawthorne's twelve years post-college, entitled "This Dismal Chamber" (also a reference to Hawthorne's room in Salem) by accepting the fact that there can be many accounts on this period in Hawthorne's life and that the "truth" is difficult to reveal. Van Doren, similar to James, writes that Hawthorne purposefully lived in seclusion because he needed this time to hone his craft. Not only was Hawthorne trying, with minimal success, to learn how to write stories, but he was also "struggling to reconcile the peculiar nature

¹¹ Woodberry, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 27.

of his thoughts and fancies with the taste of the period.”¹² Van Doren writes that Hawthorne lived a tolerable life in Salem, not one full of morbidity. Nor was Hawthorne’s dismal chamber to be equated as his prison, since he regularly travelled outside of Salem. Additionally, though reaching, Van Doren also credits Hawthorne as showing no bitterness in the slowness of his success as a writer. As with Woodberry, Van Doren credits this lack of bitterness to the writings of Hawthorne after he achieved some form of success, when Hawthorne himself was developing his own characterization of himself.

Brenda Wineapple’s 2003 biography on Hawthorne does not specifically highlight this post-collegiate period of Hawthorne’s life as distinctly as the previously mentioned biographers. Instead, Wineapple entitles her chapters on Hawthorne’s life after Bowdoin, “That Dream of Undying Fame” and “Storyteller,” and represents this period of time as Hawthorne’s complicated and contradictory quest for fame. Instead of emphasizing his seclusion (or lack thereof), Wineapple interprets and characterizes this period of time as Hawthorne’s quest to become a famous American writer. Wineapple’s Hawthorne does not inhabit a dismal chamber, drearily honing his craft alone; rather, he rummages “among the dusty wills and papers carefully preserved in Salem, initiating genealogical and antiquarian investigations that lasted a lifetime.”¹³ Hawthorne spends these years justifying his type of fictional writing by modifying, critiquing, and revising his stories so that they will be met not only with his approval, but the approval of his

¹² Van Doren, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 23.

¹³ Wineapple, *Hawthorne: A Life*, 60.

American audience. For Wineapple this period, like many other years of Hawthorne's life, exhibits the ebbs and flows in his writing career.

One point that is not contentious among scholars regarding Hawthorne's post-collegiate years is his unwavering interest in reading numerous historical and fictional books. The records from the Salem Athenaeum during this time still exist and offer an added dimension to Hawthorne's literary pursuits and interests at this time. As anticipated, Hawthorne read many famous historical books, including Hutchinson's *History of Massachusetts*, Caleb Snow's *History of Boston*, John Farmer and Jacob B. Moore's *Collections, Topographical, Historical, and Biographical*, and C. W. Upton's *Lectures on Witchcraft* in addition to the more classical forms of fictional literature.¹⁴ Having the records of which books Hawthorne read during the time when he first composed his earliest tales allows the reader to see the interactions between Hawthorne's understanding of these books and the composition of his short stories. As a result, and especially in the application of Greenblatt's theory of textual resonance, new understandings and interpretations of this story are revealed.

Despite differing interpretations and understandings of Hawthorne's frame of mind during this twelve-year period, his output as an author during this time is quite astounding. Hawthorne initially focused his attention on short stories, and before 1830 had written enough of them to hypothetically publish three different volumes, that Hawthorne titled *Seven Tales from my Native Land*, *Provincial Tales* and *The Story-*

¹⁴ For more detailed information on Hawthorne's expansive reading inventory, see Lea Bertani Vozar Newman, *A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall & Co., 1979). Newman provides detailed information about Hawthorne's composition, sources, and influences for each of his short stories.

Teller. While none of the collections of stories were ever published in their intended entirety, a number of them were published individually in many of the well-known magazines and periodicals of that period. Thus, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” (then known as “My Uncle Molineux,” first published in May 1831), “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” (also first published in May 1831) and “Young Goodman Brown” (published in April 1835) were first introduced to readers. Additionally, Hawthorne published his first full length novel, *Fanshawe*, in 1829, although he almost immediately recalled the published copies due in part to lack of success, and in part to his own changing perception of the novel as simply mediocre. Henry James credits Hawthorne with great courage in submitting his stories, now so critically acclaimed, to an America that was just beginning its own literary tradition and was therefore unable to realize the significance of these stories. James writes, “poor Hawthorne, beginning to write subtle short tales at Salem...he was one of, at most, some dozen Americans who had taken up literature as a profession. The profession in the United States was still very young, and of diminutive stature.”¹⁵

While it is true that the United States was still establishing a wholly American form of literature, the end of Hawthorne’s twelve-year period coincides with the long awaited publication of his first volume of short stories, *Twice Told Tales* (1837). Interestingly, for the purposes of this paper, the three stories of focus that were written possibly as much as a decade before the publication of *Twice Told Tales* were not included in this publication. Not until 1846 with the publication of *Mosses from an Old Manse* are “Young Goodman Brown” and “Roger Malvin’s Burial” again published, and

¹⁵ James, *Hawthorne*, 25.

not until 1852 in *Snow Image and Other Twice Told Tales* is “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” again published. Regardless, the publication of *Twice Told Tales* effectively ended Hawthorne’s obscurity (self-imposed or otherwise) as an author.

Twice Told Tales was by no means a significant literary success, but it did officially enter Hawthorne into the newly developing and broadening circle of American authors. It also caught the attention of the prominent Peabody family, most notably that of Sophia Peabody. A courtship between Sophia and Hawthorne soon ensued, and lasted for over three years before a marriage took place. During this extended period of courtship, Hawthorne received and lost an inspectorship position at the Boston Custom House and dabbled briefly in the social experiment known as Brook Farm. Hawthorne invested in this life of toil and community at Brook Farm in hopes of owning a significant portion of land and a home where he could start a family with Sophia, but the requirements of the community did not allow time for Hawthorne to write, and he left the community after ten months. Finally, in June 1842, Sophia and Hawthorne wed, and moved to Concord, Massachusetts to live at the now proverbial Old Manse.

The newlywed Hawthorne’s lived at the Old Manse for about three years. While Hawthorne continued to write and submit stories to magazines and publishing companies, he was not able to financially provide for his growing family. They lived in relative poverty, despite Hawthorne’s attempts to pay off debts by selling the fruits and vegetables from his garden, and Sophia’s attempt at making ends meet by selling her artwork. In March 1846, Hawthorne received a position at the Salem Custom House, and again returned to live in Salem. While this position, like that at the Boston Custom House and Brook Farm, impinged on Hawthorne’s writing career, it was actually a change in

political leaders, and not his own resignation, that removed him from this post.

Hawthorne, ever a Democrat, did not agree with the politics of the newly elected President Zachary Taylor, a Whig, and his supporters wasted no time in removing Hawthorne from the Salem Custom House.

It was during this tumultuous time, coupled with the death of Hawthorne's mother in July 1849, that Hawthorne once again found himself in his boyhood chamber in Salem. And in this chamber, he wrote *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the novel that finally brought him the success and credibility as an author that he had for so long desired. *The Scarlet Letter* was quickly followed by *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). The success of these three novels not only gave Hawthorne personal satisfaction as an author, but also a more financially stable life for his family, which now consisted of Sophia, Una (born March 3, 1844), Julian (born June 22, 1846) and Rose (born May 20, 1851). The publication of these novels also coincided with the different places that the Hawthorne family lived: first in the Berkshires, then in West Newton near Boston, and finally in Concord.

Still, Hawthorne's family was not to remain in Concord for long, as his lifelong friendship with the newly elected President Franklin Pierce proved fruitful. Hawthorne was selected to occupy the consulship position in Liverpool, and set sail to his new, albeit temporary, home in July of 1853. The reasons behind Hawthorne's abandonment of the country that was the backdrop to his stories and novels remains unclear, although one can glean from his letters of that period that he was interested in making a good amount of money from the position, and more significantly, that he was no longer inspired by his nation. It is true that Hawthorne's seven years in Europe are marked by a veritable lack of

writing from him, and it is not until the very end of his stay in Europe that he produced his final novel, *The Marble Faun* (1860). By 1863, Hawthorne had returned to his home in Concord and had partially completed *The Dolliver Romance*, although this novel remained unfinished. Hawthorne's health had begun to fail him, and he died while travelling with Franklin Pierce in 1864.

During his own lifetime, Hawthorne achieved the authorial success that he so craved, but it is his posthumous celebrity, still present some one hundred fifty years after his death, that truly speaks to the timeless nature and quality of Hawthorne's work. Henry James concluded his biography on Hawthorne with praise, writing "[Hawthorne] combined in a singular degree the spontaneity of the imagination with a haunting care for moral problems. Man's conscience was his theme, but he saw it in the light of creative fancy which added, out of its own substance, an interest, and, I may almost say, an importance."¹⁶ Hawthorne's continual and at times abundant popularity among readers and scholars alike comes not simply from the elegant structure and style of his stories, but also from the fact that Hawthorne focused his writings on those enduring and perpetual psychological and moral consciousness of the human condition.

¹⁶ James, *Hawthorne*, 145.

CHAPTER 3

AM I HERE, OR THERE?

Robin Molineux's journey in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" exhibits one of Hawthorne's finest and most complex journeys of character transformation. The impressive quality of this story is a result of Hawthorne's harmonious use of various cross-cultural antecedents, such as psychological and historical factors.¹ The following chapter will utilize the analytic framework outlined in Chapter 1 to uncover the dramatic shift in Robin's identity from that of a fixed symbol to a more multifaceted character. As a result, more intricacies of Robin's transformation are uncovered, thus revealing a more profound understanding of Robin's newly formed sense of self.

Hawthorne's fascination with American history, and more specifically New England history, cannot be overlooked in any analysis of his short stories. Before submitting "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" to the new historical/psychoanalytic approach as outlined in Chapter 1, a brief overview of the historical events and people who play a significant role in this story will be useful. Hawthorne deliberately begins with a foundational historical paragraph that requires explanation. First, this story is set in Boston in June of 1730. While the temperaments of the characters may be better suited for the 1760's, Hawthorne specifically writes that this "adventure...[takes place] not far from a hundred years ago."² Robert C. Grayson asserts that the date is specifically mid-

¹ James Duban, "Robins and Robinarchs in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 38, no. 3 (December 1983): 288.

² Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," in *The Complete Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* ed. Hanover House (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), 518. Original date of publication is 1831.

summer's eve, June 23, 1730, because that date marks the centennial and bicentennial of Winthrop bringing the original charter to Boston and the establishment of Boston as the capital of the colony.³ Regardless of the actual date, it is significant that Hawthorne provides his reader with the specific time period for this story.

Also included in the introductory paragraph is a summarization of the last six colonial governors and how each met his fateful end as governor. Here, Hawthorne sets up a clear dichotomy between the people (Americans) and their rulers, although he does not clearly side with either. Hawthorne writes, "the people looked with jealous scrutiny to the exercise of power which did not emanate from themselves, and they usually rewarded their rulers with slender gratitude."⁴ He does not uphold or praise the "people" for their "slender gratitude," nor does he openly place judgment upon the rulers and their power. Additionally, Hawthorne solidifies the historical framework of this story by making a specific reference to Thomas Hutchinson, the last colonial governor of Massachusetts Bay, and his *History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*. In doing so, Hawthorne not only gives the reader a specific time period, but also the name of a figure who conjures up feelings of tension and revolt. The contrasting points of view between Hutchinson and the Patriots further highlights the dichotomy presented in this opening paragraph.⁵

Aside from providing the reader with a specific date for the setting of this story and a clear reference to a well-known historical figure, many more details can be

³ Robert C. Grayson, "The New England Sources of 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,'" *American Literature* 54, no. 4 (December 1982): 547.

⁴ Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," 517.

⁵ Robert Grayson, "Thomas Hutchinson and Robin's Molineux Problem," *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1992): 179-80.

extrapolated from the introductory paragraphs when Greenblatt's theory of textual resonance, combined with Nietzsche's argument that all history is an interpretation, is thus applied. As previously noted, there are limitless ways to approach a text when applying a method of textual resonance, so the following is by no means an extensive or exhaustive list of possible readings. The focus here is mainly upon the introductory paragraphs, and how Hawthorne uses his expansive historical knowledge and interactions with texts to create a complicated yet profound interpretation of history.

While it is clear that Hawthorne used the most notable and scholarly historical sources available to him at the time to set the foundation of his story, he also clearly took liberties in writing his quasi-historical stories. As Nietzsche argues, there can be no historical account of events that are wholly truthful to the actual event. This is an argument that, while written after Hawthorne's lifetime, is nevertheless evidenced in his writing. For Hawthorne, historical texts and "facts" are the foundation for creating a fictional story, but cannot be relied upon as wholly factual as this is a faulty line of reasoning since all facts about historical events are veiled with an authorial bias. Efforts to remain objective regarding historical facts remain efforts because any given event is filtered through the eyes and mind of both the writer and the reader. Seymour Gross famously writes of Hawthorne's stories, "*history as history* had very little meaning for Hawthorne artistically...as an artist Hawthorne was not interested in history for history's sake."⁶ Samuel Chase Coale argues that Hawthorne used historical context as the

⁶ Seymour L. Gross, "Hawthorne's 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux': History as Moral Adventure," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 12, no. 2 (September 1957): 99.

“necessary clay and soil” that allowed him to “authenticate his own private vision.”⁷

Hawthorne does not set out to write a story about any one historical event; rather, he writes a story based on a combination of any number of historical events or ideas. In doing so, Hawthorne is able to transform a single artifact from history and use it in such a way as to arouse any number of historical associations in his readers.⁸

Hawthorne’s play on history has been noted by scholars for decades: Grayson argues that Hawthorne “does not record an authentic incident from New England’s history but an interpretation;” Duban argues for “Hawthorne’s artistic manipulation of historical contexts;” Newman states, “Hawthorne succeeds in disengaging the main focus from history while utilizing all the aspects of the past that he needs;” Leavis posits, “Hawthorne [is] a sociological novelist in effect, employing a poetic technique which communicates instead of stating his findings.”⁹ Furthering this line of argument is Michael Colacurcio, who agrees that Hawthorne deliberately writes his stories in such a way as to “recover the affective quality of human lives lived under conditions or assumptions different from those which prevailed in his own later and more liberal

⁷ Samuel Chase Coale, *In Hawthorne’s Shadow* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 207.

⁸ John P. McWilliams Jr., “‘Thorough-Going Democrat’ and ‘Modern Tory:’ Hawthorne and the Puritan Revolution of 1776,” *Studies in Romanticism* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1976): 554.

⁹ Robert C. Grayson, “The New England Sources of ‘My Kinsman, Major Molineux,’” 545; James Duban, “Robins and Robinarchs in ‘My Kinsman, Major Molineux,’” 272; Lea Bertani Vozar Newman, *A Reader’s Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 224; Q. D. Leavis, “Hawthorne as Poet,” *The Sewanee Review* 59, no. 2 (Spring 1951): 184.

age.”¹⁰ Hawthorne’s historical manipulation is therefore not simply a technique that he uses to bolster the content of his stories; rather, it is a well-thought out, studied, and astutely delivered method used to convey a deeper and transcendent theme within his stories. Because Hawthorne recognizes that history itself is naught but an interpretation of events, his further play on history adds yet another dimension to his stories.

One example of this added dimension is the last name that Hawthorne assigns to Robin, Molineux. James Duban connects Robin’s last name to two different historical Molineux who both share the same first name, William. The first Molineux is William Molyneux, the author of *The Case of Ireland’s Being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England* (1698), thus representing a politically honest and reasonable character. The second Molineux is William Molineux, a Boston trader known for being a leader of revolutionary mobs.¹¹ If these two historical Molineux’s inspired Hawthorne, it complicates Robin’s own identity because he is at once suspended between the rationality of the first Molyneux and the spontaneity of the second Molineux. Grayson also argues that the parallel between Molyneux and Robin is even more significant because Robin exemplifies what came to be known as the Molyneux problem. This “problem” deals with (mis)perception and the inability to recognize the seemingly obvious.¹² Thus, without even fully analyzing Robin, the reader can draw conclusions about his character based solely upon Hawthorne’s manipulation of historical characters and ideas.

¹⁰ Michael J. Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne’s Early Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984): 19.

¹¹ Duban, “Robins and Robinarchs,” 272.

¹² Grayson, “Thomas Hutchinson and Robin’s Molineux Problem,” 180-181.

Robin's first name also has historical significance, although this significance comes from fictional characters in history rather than actual people. Neal F. Doubleday has linked him to Robin Goodfellow from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Both characters are ironically described as shrewd, and make mistakes based on their innocence or to missing critical pieces of information. Doubleday continues, "Robin is ill met by moonlight...Hawthorne's allusions to the play are primarily intended to suggest that a seemingly enchanted world presents itself to Robin."¹³ Hawthorne's moonlight infused dream landscape, the heightened sense of the boundary between reality and unreality, and the common characteristics between Robin Goodfellow and Robin Molineux, all allusions to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directly connect Robin Goodfellow to Robin Molineux by placing the latter in the same type of fantastical situation as the former. Peter Shaw continues this line of argument by specifically relating Goodfellow's break with authority to Molineux's eventual break from authority, although Robin's defiance is slow to develop whereas Goodfellow is openly defiant.¹⁴ Shaw also connects Robin Molineux to Robin Hood in that Robin Hood defies authority, eventually overthrows the King figure and places himself in that role as a kind of "Lord of Misrule."¹⁵ This final allusion thus draws a more definite conclusion for the Robin Molineux character that Hawthorne does not explicitly provide for the reader. But, in making these specific allusions to fictional historic and folkloric characters, Hawthorne

¹³ Neal Frank Doubleday, *Hawthorne's Early Tales: A Critical Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972): 231-32.

¹⁴ Peter Shaw, "Sons, and the Ambiguities of Revolution in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,'" *The New England Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (December 1976): 565.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 569-70.

leaves this conclusion, and many others, open for interpretation. Not only does Hawthorne's manipulation of actual figures in history serve to characterize Robin Molineux, so too does his manipulation of fictional characters in history.

Nietzsche also argues that history cannot be understood as wholly linear. The application of Nietzsche's argument that history cannot and should not be understood as a perfectly sequential line of events is borne out in Hawthorne's stories. This is especially evident in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," in the way that Hawthorne structures his writing. While the story itself focuses on one event from one night, Hawthorne uses many disparate events from various time periods to create this one eventful night. As previously mentioned, Hawthorne takes the 1760's revolutionary spirit of the people and places it within the 1730's setting of his story, and he uses literary and historical allusions from various time periods as characterizing tools for his protagonist, Robin. In doing so, Hawthorne is able "to trace changes from...colonial to revolutionary, by focusing upon selected moments in historical time, and by binding those moments into a literary whole which invites comparison among them."¹⁶ The binding of these moments does not suggest that Hawthorne's stories conclude with any sense of unity or oneness, but instead that Hawthorne traces his own lines and makes his own connections among historical events that result in providing a unique commentary on the given subject matter. Roy Harvey Pearce succinctly summarizes this binding of moments as Hawthorne's ability to use history as both subject and object:

These...deal with historical themes in such a manner as to give us perspective upon our own involvement with those themes. They treat history as a continuum joining author, actor, and reader. Therefore, as they focus upon the quality of life

¹⁶ McWilliams, "'Thorough-Going Democrat' and 'Modern Tory,'" 554.

as it exists at any given point on the continuum, they focus on the mutual involvement of the three parties in that continuum.¹⁷

Instead of Hawthorne presenting history as simply a linear set of events, he uses his vast historical knowledge to transform any number of diverse historical events into his own interpretation of an historical event that invites the reader to interact with it.

Nietzsche's argument against a linear understanding of history is compounded by his argument against the progressive nature of history, which in turn coincides with Greenblatt's later assertion that an entire culture cannot be understood or defined through specific historical events. The end result of any historical moment is not necessarily more advanced in scope, nor does the result necessarily justify the actions. In the introduction to *A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Larry Reynolds notes that Hawthorne's stories have deep underlying meanings that can and should be understood using a number of different historical contexts. For example, many of Hawthorne's stories, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" included, use history as a commentary and response to the key concerns of Hawthorne's contemporaries.¹⁸ Hawthorne uses this story not only as a type of social commentary, but also as a means to resist the "easy nostalgia – by complicating the simple celebration of happy returns, posthumous or otherwise."¹⁹ He purposefully structures "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" in such a way that it can be read as a critique of the positive associations and memories of the Revolutionary War. Instead

¹⁷ Roy Harvey Pearce, "Hawthorne and the Sense of the Past or, the Immortality of Major Molineux," *ELH* 21, no. 4 (December 1954): 348.

¹⁸ Larry J. Reynolds, "Introduction," in *A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. Larry Reynolds (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4-5.

¹⁹ Paul Downes, "Democratic Terror in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux' and 'The Man of the Crowd,'" *Poe Studies/Dark Romanticism* 37 (January 2004): 31.

of celebrating the mob that overthrows Major Molineux at the end of the story, Hawthorne's story suggests that the mob violence is our very America of today.²⁰ Instead of glorifying the past, Hawthorne purposefully highlights the discomforting elements of reality, with specific emphasis on the negative qualities of both the British Loyalists and the American Patriots.²¹ For example, neither Robin (as will be discussed in greater depth presently) nor the townspeople with whom he encounters are written as wholly positive or negative characters, which suggests that Hawthorne does not fall into the easy nostalgia of many Americans, and may actually be critical of all parties involved in the Revolution. Colacurcio argues that Hawthorne writes about the Revolution "in terms of a minor outbreak of provincial unruliness, a mob scene," and that the "Revolution is no more remarkable, 'structurally,' than any other local resistance to local authority...nothing more than one or another form of utterly local unruliness."²² Hawthorne, while ostensibly presenting a story to Americans about the great American Revolution, is in actuality subverting this magnificent American memory with an ironic and riotous mob-like insurrection.

In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Hawthorne clearly presents history as more than just static events and people from long ago; he instead uses his expansive knowledge of history to create a complicated historical setting, characterize his protagonist, and provide a subtle but substantial social commentary. Further complicating this is Hawthorne's deep and impressive knowledge of the inner world of the human condition,

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Nancy Bunge, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study of Short Fiction* (New York, NY: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 5.

²² Michael J. Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 136, 149.

which is exemplified through his portrayal of Robin's journey through this New England town. When analyzed using the aforementioned Freudian psychoanalytic theories, Robin exhibits quite a significant psychological change during his relatively brief time in provincial Boston. The following analysis will explore not only the chronological journey that Robin takes but also how, from a psychoanalytic perspective, his journey transforms him from a static symbolic character to a dynamic liminal character.

Scholars have long debated Robin's initial symbolic characterization: he has been likened to an Englishman coming to America from across the ocean, a mock hero who is susceptible to the sinful natures of the townspeople with whom he encounters, an archetypal innocent who embodies America's hopeful attitude toward urbanization, and as a representative of young America.²³ Robin begins his journey as a very one dimensional, archetypal symbol of innocent, ignorant, rural young America. This is evident through Hawthorne's initial introduction of Robin, as seen through the lantern light of the ferryman, as "a youth of barely eighteen years, evidently country-bred, and now, as it should seem, upon his first visit to town."²⁴ Hawthorne's further description of Robin's clothing and belongings only solidifies the fact that Robin comes from the country: his clothes are homemade and worn, but well-taken care of, he carries a cudgel formed from a sapling (in itself a clear representation of country life), and a wallet hangs from shoulders made vigorous by rural living.

²³ John Russell, "Allegory and 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,'" *The New England Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (September 1967): 437; Alexander W. Allison, "The Literary Contexts of 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 23, no. 3 (December 1968): 306; James L. Machor, "Pastoralism and the American Urban Ideal: Hawthorne, Whitman, and the Literary Pattern," *American Literature* 54, no. 3 (October 1982): 343; Q. D. Leavis, "Hawthorne as Poet," 199.

²⁴ Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," 518.

Aside from his physical appearance, Robin's initial characterization as a static symbol is also strengthened through an analysis of his first interactions with the townspeople. The ferryman is the first person with whom Robin has any interaction, and it is made clear at once by the fact that the ferryman essentially swindles Robin out of a great deal of his money that Robin, like young rural America, is vigorous and sturdy but wholly unaware of how to approach and interact with the townspeople, who symbolize a the more sophisticated nations of the world. After handing over his money, Robin continues to expose his innocence/ignorance and lack of both depth of character and understanding of his new surroundings. Robin realizes, after disembarking from the ferry, that he does not know where Major Molineux's home is, nor "whither to direct his steps."²⁵ Robin, like young America on the verge of the revolution, has a clear objective for his journey away from the safety of his home, but the appropriate steps that he must take in order to achieve this objective are either unclear or nonexistent. Doubleday argues that this inability to read his surroundings exposes Robin's ignorance of the Revolutionary politics that are overtaking the provincial town.²⁶ Robin needs guidance, but is unable at this point in the story to seek this guidance appropriately or effectively. As such, Robin only has the ability to seek guidance from what Daniel Hoffman calls his "native motherwit," which is an ignorant overconfidence symbolic of a one-dimensional character who has never interacted with the world beyond his country home.²⁷

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Doubleday, *Hawthorne's Early Tales*, 233.

²⁷ Daniel G. Hoffman, "Yankee Bumpkin and the Scapegoat King," *The Sewanee Review* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1961): 55.

This native motherwit continues to hinder Robin on his journey and is emphasized by Hawthorne's ironic overuse of the word "shrewd" in identifying Robin to the different townspeople with whom he encounters. Upon overtaking a man who Robin calls "honored sir," and inquiring after the whereabouts of his kinsman, Robin is met with an angry rebuff and the threat of the stocks. Robin's low bow and prolonged hold of the elderly man's skirt further exposes his country bumpkin status: not only is he importunate, but he also asks the question loudly and with a sense of pride that he expects to be reciprocated. When not met with the courtesy that he expects, Robin uses his ironical shrewdness to swiftly assume that the elderly gentleman is of a lowly country status and therefore either unaware or jealous of his kinsman's popularity and success. Robin remains fully unaware of the fact that he himself is actually the embodiment of country ignorance.

Momentarily abashed, but wholly undeterred by the elderly gentleman's reaction, Robin continues on his pursuit of Major Molineux. Again, Robin's lack of preparedness in entering the town is evident as he "becomes entangled in a succession of crooked and narrow streets, which crossed each other, and meandered at no great distance from the waterside."²⁸ The fact that he has no idea where to find his kinsman, no place to stay, and that he has but a parchment three-penny in his wallet does not hinder Robin's quest. He clearly believes that his place in this new society will simply be bestowed upon him based on his relationship with the Major; creating a place for himself within the structure of town society is not an option for Robin at this point in the story because of his ignorant dependence on the goodwill of his kinsman.

²⁸ Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," 519.

Still overconfident in his kinsman's assistance and influence, Robin enters a tavern where he encounters an innkeeper. Robin's obtuseness is again evidenced by his bold entry into the tavern where he is taken aback by the variety of different persons in the tavern: mariners, handicraftsmen, sheepish countrymen, and a man whose features "were separately striking almost to grotesqueness...the forehead bulged out into a double prominence...the nose came forth in an irregular curve...and the eyes glowed beneath [the eyebrows] like a fire in a cave."²⁹ This man and his grotesque features, though only described at this point in the story, plays a significant role in the story, as will be discussed later. The innkeeper, all professional and full of manners, welcomes Robin to the tavern as he would welcome any stranger, but Robin reads this "superfluous civility" as the innkeeper's reaction to Robin's resemblance of his kinsman.³⁰ Again, Robin has drawn a false conclusion based solely upon his native motherwit, instead of recognizing that the innkeeper's gracious attitude is naught but good business acumen. Settling shrewdly upon this line of reasoning, Robin again loudly asks after the whereabouts of Major Molineux, which is again met with a hostile rebuke and a threat. Seymour L. Gross argues that this reception is "Robin's first taste of blind, unreasoning hatred," although again Robin is able to use his country shrewdness to, albeit wrongly, reason away the innkeeper's reaction.³¹ Grayson astutely comments, "were he [Robin] not so shrewdly and confidently counting on his great kinsman's aid, he might more reasonably

²⁹ Ibid., 520.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Gross, "History as Moral Adventure," 101.

extrapolate from his evening's adventures that some conspiracy is afoot against the Major."³²

But, Robin is still trapped in his static symbolic characterization, thus he cannot yet draw these conclusions. Again, Robin roams the streets of the town, this time thrusting his face into the faces of any elderly gentleman whom he encounters on the off chance that the gentleman may be his kinsman. A woman standing in the doorway of an inelegant and unfashionable home wearing a scarlet petticoat finally halts Robin's absurd and ignorant search for his kinsman. Like clockwork, Robin asks the prostitute where he may find his kinsman's home and is told that his kinsman is asleep upstairs in that very home. Using his ignorant native motherwit, Robin convinces himself that the woman's speaks the truth, and almost enters the dwelling, were it not for the night watchman who threatens Robin to go home or else face the stocks. And how does Robin react to the night watchman's threat? By asking for guidance to his kinsman's home! When met with no reply other than laughter, Robin returns to his previous business of desperately roaming the unknown streets in hopes of finding the Major.

At the point of utter desperation, Robin threatens a man with his oaken cudgel, and again repeats his question. But instead of being met with a hostile rebuke, Robin finally receives an answer to his question: "'Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by.'"³³ The bulky stranger who Robin accosted is none other than the grotesque-faced man from the tavern, now with his face painted black and red, "the effect was as if two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united themselves to

³² Grayson, "Thomas Hutchinson and Robin's Molineux Problem," 184.

³³ Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," 524.

form this infernal visage.”³⁴ While his appearance is nothing if not terrifying, his answer nevertheless triggers in Robin a switch from the obtuse character who has been the protagonist the story so far, to a more multi-dimensional character. Robin’s characterization as a static symbol, exemplified by his ironic shrewdness and ill-conceived rationality begins, from this point forward, to transform. This is evidenced by an interior change within Robin that forms as a result of his interactions and experiences throughout the rest of his journey.

As the evening turns into moonlit night, Robin begins to teeter on the threshold between conscious and unconscious, a “threshold of metamorphosis.”³⁵ From this point in the story, the reality of the world as Robin understood it is dramatically altered; the reliance upon his shrewdness is diminished and replaced with ambiguity and questions of reality. Robin’s self-assured place in the structure of his rational conscious and within society itself is no longer secure. Yet, this change does not come over Robin at once, but is gradual, as evidenced by Robin’s internal oscillation from a symbolic one-dimensional character to a liminal multi-dimensional character. It is clear that Robin stands at this threshold because he still does not exhibit any fear of “the terrifying incarnation of the diabolic,” and instead betrays his standard “dismay and astonishment” at the grotesque-faced man’s appearance.³⁶ Yet, his decision to follow the demonic figure’s advice can be

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hoffman, “Yankee Bumpkin and the Scapegoat King,” 49.

³⁶ William Bysshe Stein, “Teaching Hawthorne’s ‘My Kinsman, Major Molineux,’” *College English* 20, no. 2 (November 1958): 85.

judged as a starting point of his psychological growth toward independence.³⁷ In order to achieve this psychological independence, Robin must connect with his unconscious mind by ceasing to “rely solely on his shrewd interpretation of the world reported to him by his senses and begin to use his imagination.”³⁸ Robin’s internal growth in self-awareness and self-identity begins with the moonlit dream sequence where Robin is forced by his own unconscious to come to terms with his newly discovered liminal sense of self.

To pass the hour-long wait, Robin first relies upon his shrewd rationale to explain away the questionable character of the two-faced man who had just spoken to him. Presently, his shrewd sensibility is overcome by the moonlight that creates “like the imaginative power, a beautiful strangeness in familiar objects.”³⁹ Terence Martin asserts that this moonlit scene pulls Robin into a “middle ground,” where reality and unreality are combined.⁴⁰ The town that seemed so ordinary, albeit slightly confusing, to him just a few hours before is now revealing itself to be an uncanny portal to the unconscious, to a place that is at once beautiful and horrific, known and unknown. Hawthorne transforms Robin’s view of the town through the use of a dream sequence that expands Robin’s one-dimensionality by compounding his dream-content with a newly found sense of the uncanny.

³⁷ Newman, “A Reader’s Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne,” 228-9.

³⁸ Grayson, “Thomas Hutchinson and Robin’s Molineux Problem,” 188.

³⁹ Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” 524.

⁴⁰ Terence Martin, “The Method of Hawthorne’s Tales,” in *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Collection of Criticism* ed. J. Donald Crowley (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1975), 20.

As Robin is almost lulled to sleep by the sounds of his surroundings, he hastens to keep himself awake by peering into the inside of a nearby church. But, the view of the deserted church with the “awful radiance [of the moon] hovering around the pulpit and one solitary ray [resting] upon the open page of the great Bible” incites within Robin an extreme sense of isolation and loneliness.⁴¹ This isolation is heightened as Robin thinks/dreams about his family literally closing the door of his childhood home to him. His country-formed ignorant overconfidence is thus shattered as Hawthorne symbolically removes Robin from the only societal structure that he has ever fully occupied, which forces him to begin to come to terms with his new place, or lack thereof, in society.⁴² The moonlit Church interior that lulled Robin into his dream represents the collision of Robin’s old reality and his newly formed reality. The Church represents not only the tangible world that Robin is used to, but also the structural framework of his childhood. When Robin sees the Church, he is immediately reminded of his home, his family, and their religious traditions:

He saw the good man in the midst, holding the Scriptures in the golden light that fell from the western clouds; he beheld him close the book and all rise up to pray. He heard the old thanksgivings for daily mercies, the old supplications for their continuance, to which he had so often listened in weariness, but which were now among his dear remembrances.⁴³

In this dream sequence, Robin is clearly nostalgic for his familiar setting, and grows increasingly more regretful about the choice that he made and the fact that he cannot rescind this choice. The moonlight hovering above the Bible on the pulpit represents

⁴¹ Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” 525.

⁴² Gross, “History as Moral Adventure,” 103.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 525.

Robin's new sense of self-identity and awareness. Whereas in the dream, Robin recalls the "golden light" falling upon the pages of the Scriptures, his new reality uses moonlight to illuminate the pages of the Bible. The pages are illuminated in both settings, but the moonlight and its allusions to a world of enchantment are in opposition to Robin's old world of tangible reality. The immensity of this dream and its effect upon Robin provide the necessary mechanism for his transformation from obtuse to liminal.

Grayson further posits that Robin's use of his own imagination, instead of his native motherwit alone, creates new insight for Robin and his present situation.⁴⁴ By presenting this realization as a dream sequence, Hawthorne is able to tap into Robin's inner conflict between his conscious (rationality) and unconscious (imagination/dream world) to show that, despite his initial obtuseness, Robin is actually becoming aware of his paradoxical desire to return to his structured position in the comforting community that he abandoned while at the same time realizing that his current reality does not allow for said return.⁴⁵ The most significant line in the story follows this dream sequence: "'Am I here, or there?' cried Robin, starting; for all at once, when his thoughts had become visible and audible in a dream, the long, wide, solitary street shone out before him."⁴⁶ The feeling of the uncanny is striking at the moment in the story: not only does Robin recognize the change within himself from one-dimensional to multi-dimensional, he also recognizes the complexities that arise from this change. He awakens to the truth, a new

⁴⁴ Grayson, "Thomas Hutchinson and Robin's Molineux Problem," 189.

⁴⁵ Bunge, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study of the Short Fiction*, 8.

⁴⁶ Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," 525.

truth that entirely subverts his previous truth, a truth that forces him to question his very place in society.⁴⁷

Robin's next interaction also shows the change that he has gone through. While it is true that once Robin fully awakens from his imaginative dream world, he immediately asks about the arrival of his kinsman with the first person whom he sees, thus exhibiting his old, static ways, the stranger's response to his tired question is dramatically different. This gentleman, not elderly like the first man, nor a flatterer like the second, nor pompously dressed in the latest European fashions like the men Robin sees on the main streets of the town, is described as "open, intelligent, cheerful, and [having an] altogether prepossessing countenance."⁴⁸ Robin momentarily retreats back into his one-dimensional characterization in order to dramatize his journey thus far; the gentleman, seemingly aware of the ensuing plan against the Major, stays with Robin and, as if he were aware that Robin stands on the threshold between rational conscious and liminal unconscious attempts to guide Robin back toward the imaginative, deeper thoughts that he experienced during the dream sequence. The gentleman first reminds Robin that he no longer belongs in the stillness of his native woods, then physically guides Robin to remain seated on the steps of the church, and asks "'may not a man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?'"⁴⁹ The depth of this question forces Robin to step away from his one-dimensional comfort zone, thus exciting his curiosity. By piquing

⁴⁷ Hoffman, "Yankee Bumpkin and the Scapegoat King," 49. Hoffman uses the phrase "waking in truth" to symbolize Robin's newfound understanding of self.

⁴⁸ Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," 526.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 527.

Robin's curiosity and imagination, this stranger turned friend has mentally prepared Robin for the ensuing mob scene.

When Robin first hears the noise of the crowd, he believes them to be joyous and excited, and is only too soon confronted with the actual cause of the ruckus. Robin soon finds the mass of people directly in front of him and feels the eyes of the double-faced man upon him. By drawing Robin's gaze upon him right before presenting Robin's kinsman in his "tar-and-feathery dignity" to Robin, the man of two complexions forces Robin to recognize his own participation in the mob scene.⁵⁰ Anderson argues that Hawthorne uses crowds and mobs to link the rational and unconscious by "means of darkness, dreams, or distance, a crowd's individuals are blurred into a mass of kaleidoscopic forms that are neither real nor unreal, but phantasmagorical."⁵¹ While it is true that this mob scene is yet another way that Hawthorne links Robin's conscious with his unconscious, the individuals in the scene are quite clearly shown to Robin: he sees the two-faced man, he recognizes the various persons with whom he had encountered that night, and his kinsman is purposefully placed at the center of the mob so as to be clearly seen by all.

How does Robin react to this horrific mob scene? Some scholars argue that Robin's newly active imagination "enables him to retain his sanity in the societal earthquake that shakes his world to its foundations," and that Robin's participation in the ritual, however passive it may be at this point, is evidence that Robin has gone through a

⁵⁰ Ibid., 528.

⁵¹ D. K. Anderson Jr., "Hawthorne's Crowds," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 7, no. 1 (June 1952): 47.

psychological transformation.⁵² While these are valid points, it is clear that Robin is not able to completely retain his sanity, as evidenced by his most poignant reaction during the mob scene: his shout of laughter, louder than all others. This reaction that Hawthorne attributes to a contagion spreading itself about the masses, has been a point of contention for scholars for decades. Some argue that Robin is fully aware of his laugh and that the laughter signifies the purging of his former self and his newly formed alignment with the townspeople, that the emotions of the people force Robin to share the same reaction as the other participants, and that his laughter signifies Robin's own declaration of independence from his former life.⁵³ Others argue that Robin, still aware of his own laughter, only laughs in an attempt to appear to side with the mob in order to save himself from the dangerous mob, or that he is laughing at the absurdity of the crowd itself.⁵⁴ Robin is still teetering on the threshold between his formal rational self and his newly formed liminal self and is not fully aware of the consequences of his laughter. This uncontrollable outpouring of emotional unconscious is so unlike his former structured self that Robin himself cannot yet fully comprehend the significance of this moment.

⁵² Grayson, "Thomas Hutchinson and Robin's Molineux Problem," 189-90; T. Walter Herbert Jr., "Doing Cultural Work: 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux' and the Constuction of the Self-Made Man," *Studies in the Novel* 23, no. 1 (1991): 24.

⁵³ Grayson, "Thomas Hutchinson and Robin's Molineux Problem," 191; Leavis, "Hawthorne as Poet," 204; Richard P. Adams, "Hawthorne's Provincial Tales," *The New England Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (March 1957): 47.

⁵⁴ Bartlett C. Jones, "The Ambiguity of Shrewdness in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,'" *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 3, no. 2 (Fall 1962): 45; Jerry A. Herndon, "Hawthorne's Dream Imagery," *American Literature* 46, no. 4 (1975): 544.

Nevertheless, this emotional moment *is* significant for Robin because it “signifies that passage from dream to nightmare to waking reality.”⁵⁵ Robin is slowly losing his grasp on his former self as he transitions into his new identity. He has ignited his imaginative unconscious through both the dream sequence at the church and the nightmarish mob sequence on the street. As such, his former structured and rationalized self becomes less tangible for him. This is evident from Robin’s reaction as his new friend startles him from his dream-like trance. He no longer prides himself on his native motherwit as he asks for directions back to the ferry and dryly observes that his kinsman will no longer have any desire to see him. Yet, Hawthorne does not conclude the story at this point; he instead concludes the story with an ambiguous statement from Robin’s newfound friend. Will Robin stay in the town, or will he return to his country home?

The ambiguous ending lends itself to a variety of interpretations. T. Walter Herbert Jr. argues that through his participation in the mob, Robin fully repudiates his kinsman and instead uses his new friend/mentor to help initiate him into town life.⁵⁶ In a similar vein, Max Autrey argues that Robin’s mentor is himself aware that Robin cannot return to his country life and thus purposefully delays his departure so Robin can have more time to acclimate to his new society.⁵⁷ Richard Adams also posits that Robin will remain in his new town because the mob scene, a type of initiation ceremony, has marked and confirmed “the young man’s establishment of a new, mature set of relations with his

⁵⁵ Martin, “The Method of Hawthorne’s Tales,” 20.

⁵⁶ Herbert Jr. “Doing Cultural Work,” 23.

⁵⁷ Max L. Autrey, “‘My Kinsman, Major Molineux:’ Hawthorne’s Allegory of the Urban Movement,” *College Literature* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 20.

family and with society.”⁵⁸ Hawthorne specifically leaves Robin in an ambiguous state at the end of the story because placing him in a more structured state would negate Robin’s newly enlightened and liminal understandings. This ambiguous state also makes sense because, as John Russell asserts, Robin is a composite character, so to draw any solid conclusions as to Robin’s eventual decision is done in vain.⁵⁹ Robin has finally tapped into his unconscious, so neither he nor the reader can rightly determine his final decision, hence the appropriateness of Hawthorne’s ambiguous ending.

Especially at this moment in the story is Greenblatt’s theory on disorder becoming the new norm evident. While it is true that Robin has exhibited a significant change from the beginning of the story to this point, his new identity is entangled with the chaos and disorder of his night, culminating with the mob procession that has just passed by. Robin’s new identity is formed from his chaotic interactions over this night, so it can be concluded that his new identity will also take a similar disorderly form. Whereas at the beginning of the story, Robin had a clear objective for his journey to the town, his objective, like the ending of the story itself, is now ambiguous. He is also unable to recognize his position within the societal framework. His unconscious dream-content has revealed to Robin his status as an unwelcome guest at his country home, and his nightmarish experience of the mob sequence has displaced him from his assumed position with his kinsman. Thus Robin finds himself in a paradoxically enlightened while at the same time liminal state.

⁵⁸ Adams, “Hawthorne’s Provincial Tales,” 47.

⁵⁹ Russell, “Allegory and ‘My Kinsman, Major Molineux,’” 439.

Thus, the conclusion of the story returns to its new historical foundation. Robin Molineux in name alone begins his journey wrapped in a cloak of historical allusions and manipulations. As he undergoes a psychoanalytic analysis, it becomes clear that Robin's journey is not as simple and singular as he had initially understood it to be. One way to understand this journey from static symbolism to liminality is to consider the dream sequence, the mob scene and the ambiguous conclusion as pivotal points of transition for Robin. At these scenes, Robin's self-reliance upon his motherwit is turned upside-down as the uncanny-ness of the unconscious is thus exposed through Robin's entry into a dreamlike state of being. But, this dream-like world, Hawthorne's purposeful historical setting of this story, still plays an integral role, as Roy Harvey Pearce posits:

The imaginative writer makes whole worlds. Analysable protagonist-patients are only part of them – significantly and integrally part of them, but only part of them. And they have their fullest (which is to say, their ultimate) meaning as they wend their unconscious way through the world which they, as it were, have been created into.⁶⁰

Robin's final liminal state, removed from his country-home society but also not part of the provincial town, is ambiguous. But, it is precisely this ambiguity, this lack of a structured sense of place, that thrusts Robin from his static symbolism into the unknown yet now explorable depths of his newly realized identity.

⁶⁰ Roy Harvey Pearce, "Robin Molineux on the Analyst's Couch: A Note on the Limits of Psychoanalytic Criticism," *Criticism* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1959): 87.

CHAPTER 4

BUT WHERE IS FAITH?

“Young Goodman Brown” is one of Hawthorne’s most complicated and thought-provoking short stories. In his creation of the character Goodman Brown, Hawthorne masterfully synthesizes the historical and the psychoanalytic, the rational and the irrational, the conscious and the unconscious. This chapter will again use the framework from Chapter 1 as a way to more thoroughly understand the change in Brown from a one-dimensional, static and relatively obtuse symbol to a self-aware, perversely enlightened, and liminal character. A combination of the new historical framework and the psychoanalytic framework illuminates essential details about Brown’s transition from static to liminal.

As in “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” the actual historical setting of “Young Goodman Brown” is imperative to understanding the further implications of the story itself. The first sentence of the story gives the reader the exact location where the story takes place, Salem Village. While Hawthorne provides no exact calendar date, the fact that the story takes place in Salem Village, recognized mainly for being the center of the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, suggests that the story most likely takes place around the end of the 17th century or beginning of the 18th century. In these trials, women, and at times even men were accused of witchcraft based almost solely on specter or phantasmagorical evidence in lieu of tangible evidence. In David Levin’s meticulously researched article about specter evidence in “Young Goodman Brown,” he posits that Hawthorne purposefully chose Salem Village (and not his hometown of Salem) as the setting for this story because Salem Village was “the cantankerous hamlet...in which the

afflictions, the accusations, and the diabolical Sabbaths centered in 1692.”¹ This small village, located just north of the bustling town of Salem, perfectly captures Hawthorne’s fascination with the witchcraft delusion of 1692, and subsequently contextualizes the physical location that Hawthorne uses as the basis for his exploration of the human condition in this story. While the reference to Salem Village is subtle, Hawthorne could confidently assume that the original New England audience for this story (it was first published in the *New-England Magazine* in April 1835) were more than likely aware of Salem Village and its associations with witchcraft.² Even without this background knowledge, the various reference to witches and witchcraft throughout the story paint Salem Village and its surrounding forests as an area greatly impacted by the witchcraft delusion.

Before beginning the psychoanalysis of Goodman Brown, it is again useful to consider and apply to the story a combination of Greenblatt’s theory of textual resonance with Nietzsche’s position that all history is an interpretation. Most scholars accept that “Young Goodman Brown,” like “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” was initially written as one of Hawthorne’s *Provincial Tales*; therefore, there are similarities in Hawthorne’s manipulation of history and interpretation of historical events and people. The following reading of “Young Goodman Brown” focuses almost entirely on the character of Goodman Brown, and how Hawthorne’s own understanding of the history surrounding this character and story work to both complicate and illuminate the intricacies of this character.

¹ David Levin, “Shadows of Doubt: Specter Evidence in Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown,’” *American Literature* 34, no. 3 (November 1992): 345-6.

² Newman, *A Reader’s Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 333.

It is clear that Hawthorne was influenced by a number of well-known, scholarly sources of history, in addition to his own relationship to the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 through his great-grandfather, John Hathorne. Hawthorne uses the physical location of Salem Village and its associations with the witch trials as the basis of his story, although he does not simply state the actual “facts” available to him from this time. Instead, as Darrel Abel argues, Hawthorne uses his “brilliant historical imagination” to “dream his way back into the Puritan reality.”³ Abel contends that Hawthorne is convinced that any version of facts or truth is subjectively relative and changes with any given perspective.⁴ Following this line of argument, Hawthorne utilizes what he knows, his own perception or interpretation of history, in such a way that not only he, but also his readers are driven toward an infinite number of literary interpretations within this single text. This argument almost perfectly aligns with Greenblatt’s theory of textual resonance, although the focus is here upon the reader and not upon a specific text.

Still, Hawthorne does use and manipulate Puritan documents. As Robert Cochran argues, “in Hawthorne’s tales, the Puritan New England setting in time and place is illustrative, not restrictive.”⁵ It is clear that Hawthorne uses his own idea of Puritan New England as the foundation of his stories. As Abel argues, “his [Hawthorne’s] eye was discerning in that it could find different truths in different arrangements and

³ Darrel Abel, “Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne’s Metonymic Symbols,” *The New England Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (June 1969): 173.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁵ Robert W. Cochran, “Hawthorne’s Choice: The Veil if the Jaundiced Eye,” *College English* 23, no. 5 (February 1962): 343.

perspectives.”⁶ Hawthorne’s play on history was purposeful and used in such a way as to convey a vast assortment of meanings and interpretations. The sources that Hawthorne used served as a way for him to construct, not recreate, his own readings of them as a nineteenth-century New Englander, thus exploring the “nexus of past and present in New Englanders’ attitudes towards these central life experiences.”⁷ While there are countless writers and documents that most likely influenced Hawthorne in writing “Young Goodman Brown,” the most significant of these writers is Cotton Mather, and specifically his book, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*.⁸

Cotton Mather, a Puritan minister from Boston who lived through, participated in, and commented upon the Salem witch trials, is clearly a source who influenced Hawthorne, an avid albeit skeptical historian with a personal connection to the witch trials. John Ronan argues that, in Hawthorne’s imagination, Cotton Mather and the Salem witchcraft crisis are inseparable from one another.⁹ Ostensibly, this is true. It has been noted by a number of scholars that Hawthorne drew directly from *The Wonders of the Invisible World* in specifically borrowing a detail about Martha Carrier as being a rampant hag “promised by the devil to be queen of hell” in his description of one of the

⁶ Abel, “Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne’s Metonymic Symbols,” 178.

⁷ James C. Keil, “Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown:’ Early Nineteenth-Century and Puritan Constructions of Gender, *The New England Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (March 1996): 34-35.

⁸ For a more comprehensive list of Hawthorne’s literary influences for “Young Goodman Brown,” see Lea Bertani Vozar Newman, *A Reader’s Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 333-337.

⁹ John Ronan, “‘Young Goodman Brown’ and the Mathers,” *The New England Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (June 2012): 261.

participants in the congregation in the woods.¹⁰ E. Arthur Robinson also points out that Mather's *The Wonders of the Invisible World* also discusses the devil appearing and luring people into "forest rendezvous where church sacraments were imitated and mocked," clearly an idea that Hawthorne mirrored in "Young Goodman Brown."¹¹ More generally, Arlin Turner reads "Young Goodman Brown" as a tale that is entirely focused on witchcraft and that Hawthorne's account conforms to the accounts that Mather recorded in *Wonders* in that there is a meeting in the forest that appears very similar to a church service and that the people in attendance are respectable townspeople.¹² The implications and validity of this particular reading will be discussed more in depth in the psychoanalytic portion of this chapter.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the name that Hawthorne chose for his protagonist is again significant and has ties to historical figures. Cochran asserts that Hawthorne uses the term "Goodman" as a way to relate Goodman Brown to the rest of his surrounding population, and possibly even to all strata and generations of Salem society.¹³ In Puritan New England, attaching the term "Goodman" to a name was not only a sign of respect for a person, but was also indicative of the righteousness and worthiness of that person. Additionally, it indicated that the person was considered to be in equal standing among

¹⁰ Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," in *The Complete Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* ed. Hanover House (New York, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959): 254.

¹¹ E. Arthur Robinson, "The Vision of Goodman Brown: A Source and Interpretation," *American Literature* 35, no. 2 (May 1963): 218.

¹² Arlin Turner, "Hawthorne's Literary Borrowings," *PMLA* 51, no. 2 (June 1936): 545-6.

¹³ Cochran, "Hawthorne's Choice: The Veil or the Jaundiced Eye," 343.

those other righteous members of the community. By linking Brown as a member of his own society, Hawthorne highlights Brown's participation, however active or inactive it may be, within and among members of a larger society. Robinson argues that Hawthorne strategically attaches the title "goodman" to the young Brown, who is more an unregenerate figure than a figure who encapsulates the moral implications that come with the name itself. He then turns to the Oxford English Dictionary to argue that, instead of attaching the colonial definition of goodman as a mere colloquialism, Hawthorne may have meant goodman to mean husband, since the relationship between Brown and his wife is quite significant throughout the story.¹⁴

Less etymologically based is Michael Colacurcio's argument that Goodman Brown represents Cotton Mather himself, citing a parallel between the description of Brown's father in the story with Cotton's father, Increase Mather.¹⁵ John Ronan wholly disagrees with Colacurcio's assertion that Goodman Brown is a representation of Cotton Mather. He argues, "Goodman Brown is not at all like Cotton Mather, who was a renowned clergyman, a powerful politician, the author of more than four hundred published works, and arguably the most learned man in New England at the end of the seventeenth century."¹⁶ Additionally, Cotton and Increase Mather are both inextricably linked to the perpetuation of the Salem witchcraft delusion of 1692 through Increase's book, *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences* (1692) and Cotton's sermons

¹⁴ Robinson, "The Vision of Goodman Brown," 219-20.

¹⁵ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 311-12.

¹⁶ Ronan, "'Young Goodman Brown and the Mathers,'" 255.

published in *The Wonders of the Invisible World*.¹⁷ Goodman Brown is a simple husbandman who lives out his days in relative misery and gloom. While he is clearly interested to some degree in the witchcraft delusion (hence, his journey into the woods), he refuses entry into the communion of his race, ostensibly refusing to perpetuate the witchcraft delusion further. While the Mather's provide an interesting framework for the story, the connection between the character of Goodman Brown and Cotton Mather is unfounded.

In addition to Mather's obvious influence, Herbert A. Leibowitz argues that Hawthorne was also greatly influenced by Edmund Spenser's epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*. As previously mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3, Hawthorne was very well read and, despite the historical nature of many of his stories, various works of fiction whose emphasis was not necessarily historically based also influenced these stories. Leibowitz traces Goodman Brown's journey and connects it to Spenser's Redcross Knight in that both characters discover that their "own youthful bravado is insufficient to resist the evil impulses which attack and lure [them] away from the completion of [their] quests."¹⁸ Both characters also must traverse the complicated boundaries between reality and

¹⁷ Ibid., 256-7. Ronan asserts that Increase and Cotton deliberately aggravated the witch crisis through their introduction of Restoration demonology (Increase) and the launching of a religious revival (Cotton). He suggests that Hawthorne used the Mather's as a way to search for answers about Salem, but found himself more interested in the hypocritical relationship between the Christianity that they promoted and the witchcraft that they denounced. For more details regarding this argument, see pages 267-276 in "'Young Goodman Brown' and the Mather's."

¹⁸ Herbert A. Leibowitz, "Hawthorne and Spenser: Two Sources," *American Literature* 30, no. 4 (January 1959): 459.

imagination, as well as recognizing the unfortunate realities of the human predicament.¹⁹

This connection breaks down somewhat at the end of the tale because Redcross Knight is triumphant and conquers evil, while Goodman Brown's own encounters with evil are anything but victorious. Again, a more detailed analysis of the specifics of Goodman Brown's journey and its effects upon his understanding of himself and the world around him will be discussed in the psychoanalytic portion of this chapter.

Also evident in "Young Goodman Brown" is the Nietzschean understanding of history as non-linear and not necessarily progressive in nature. While the setting for the story is fairly clear, the attitudes that Hawthorne portrays within the story are a complicated combination of Hawthorne's individual assessment of seventeenth and nineteenth-century values and the historical events and points of view that he meticulously researched. Hawthorne again refuses to blindly accept the different accounts of history available to him and instead, "stands in this story...as an analyst and a critic of the society that demands so much of a man that he can achieve what is demanded only through hypocrisy."²⁰ Leo B. Levy sees this combination of analyst and critic as Hawthorne's way of reacting against the cruelty, hypocrisy and bigotry of his own ancestors, although his reaction toward and judgment of these ancestors is not so one-dimensional that it paints Hawthorne as a bigot himself.²¹ Hawthorne reaches this tenuous balance between condemnation and approval of his own New England history by

¹⁹ Ibid., 461.

²⁰ Paul W. Miller, "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': Cynicism or Meliorism?" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 14, no. 3 (December 1959): 262.

²¹ Leo B. Levy, "The Problem of Faith in 'Young Goodman Brown,'" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 74, no. 3 (July 1975): 386.

grounding his stories in relatively solid historical time and place while simultaneously transforming them using a dualistic manipulation of morality.²² By combining this duality between good and evil with a more solid historical framework, Hawthorne at once exposes his understanding of New England history as both significant and foundational while at the same time harsh and unpredictable. Once more, it is clear that Hawthorne flatly refuses to simply agree with the commonly accepted versions of history that gloss over the harsh realities (as he perceives them to have existed) of his nation's history; he purposely tailors his writing to further explore and expose the inherent contradictions within these customarily assumed records of history. His fiction acknowledges the difficulties associated with the fanatical Puritans who founded New England. As such, Hawthorne refuses to write out ignorant fantasies about them.²³

For example, while the setting of "Young Goodman Brown" is Salem Village, a tangible location, and a few of the characters have names that figure significantly in the records of Salem Village, Goodman Brown and his interactions over the course of the night's journey work to expose a markedly more problematic understanding of history. As Colacurcio argues, "Young Goodman Brown" is an example of Hawthorne's psychohistorical fiction that requires both a solid historical background and an intensive psychological analysis.²⁴ In order to better understand this more complicated interpretation of history, it is again necessary to delve into the inner depths of the human

²² Samuel Chase Coale, *In Hawthorne's Shadow: American Romance from Melville to Mailer*, 9.

²³ Bunge, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study of Short Fiction* 11.

²⁴ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 306.

condition, into the “secrecy of men’s bosoms that interested [Hawthorne] so much.”²⁵ To do so, a psychoanalytic approach as outlined in Chapter 1 must be applied to Goodman Brown and his various interactions throughout his nighttime journey into the woods. This is necessary because “Hawthorne’s historical representations enjoy a significantly great range of psychological complexity” that can only be uncovered through the psychoanalysis of his protagonist.²⁶ This analysis will be performed by following Goodman Brown’s chronological journey as a means of exploring his psychological transformation from a rather obtuse and static character to a more perceptive and liminal character.

Hawthorne does not provide the reader with a paragraph describing Brown’s outward appearance as he does for Robin Molineux. Still, within the first few paragraphs, the reader is able to draw a few conclusions about Brown. First, it is clear from the title and Hawthorne’s repetition of the word “young” three times in the introductory section of the story as a descriptor for Brown that Brown is most likely still developing and therefore relatively inexperienced. Second, Brown is “but three months married” to the pretty and “aptly named” Faith.²⁷ In specifically referencing the aptness of Faith’s name, Hawthorne clarifies that Faith is not only young and inexperienced, but is also, from Brown’s perspective, the embodiment of innocence. Lastly, it is clear that Brown is leaving for a trip of some sort, and that he feels badly for leaving Faith because he

²⁵ Woodberry, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 146.

²⁶ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 18.

²⁷ Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” 247.

considers her a “blessed angel on earth” whom he will follow to heaven.²⁸ The opening paragraphs do not clarify the reason for the trip, nor the desired outcome, although this becomes clearer as the story continues.

Before delving into Brown’s journey, it is essential to explicate Brown’s initial symbolic characterization. There are many scholarly opinions on what Brown symbolizes at the beginning of the story: Levy posits that Brown is initially naïve and immature and therefore unable to understand the possible implications of his upcoming trip; Bensick sees Brown as a very silly young man; Cochran argues that Brown represents all those who are innocent and undeveloped; Leavis advances the notion that Brown is a symbol for a seventeenth-century Everyman; Colacurcio begins his analysis of “Young Goodman Brown” by simply stating, “Goodman Brown is a more than tolerably naïve young man.”²⁹ Brown’s naiveté is often related to his youth, and the innate desire or even inevitability of youth that desires and craves leaving the security of home to experience the wilds of the unknown.³⁰

While Brown’s naiveté is quite clear at this moment in the story, many scholars are correct to emphasize that this naiveté cannot and should not be directly likened to Brown’s innocence. In his article on the role of ambivalence in Hawthorne’s tales, Walter J. Paulits likens Brown’s sense of guilt for leaving his wife as an emotive ambivalence

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Levy, “The Problem of Faith in ‘Young Goodman Brown,’” 376; Carol M. Bensick, “Hawthorne’s Tragicomic Mode of Moral Allegory,” *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 43, no. 1/2 (1989): 48; Cochran, “Hawthorne’s Choice: The Veil or the Jaundiced Eye,” 344; Leavis, “Hawthorne as Poet,” 195; Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 287.

³⁰ Cochran, “Hawthorne’s Choice: The Veil or the Jaundiced Eye,” 343; Martin, “The Method of Hawthorne’s Tales,” 19.

that makes Brown “want two things strongly enough to be unwilling to give either up.”³¹ In a similar fashion, D. M. McKeithan argues that Brown is aware that his journey is a tenuous one, but unaware of the possible consequences of said journey.³² Paul J. Hurley takes this argument one step further by asserting that Brown is not only aware of the dubious nature of his journey, but also that his purpose is wholly evil because he believes that faith (the wife and the belief) “can be adopted and discarded at will.”³³ While it is true that Brown is not completely ignorant of the possible outcome(s) from his journey into the night, Brown is initially characterized as a one-dimensional stock character, an everyman Puritan of the seventeenth-century. He is also naïve because he believes that he can readily betray his Faith for one night and return to it unaltered. Because he is not yet fully aware of the vast world outside of Salem Village, Brown cannot possibly have the foresight necessary to grasp the gravity of his situation. This understanding will only come to him as he journeys through the darkened forest.

While Brown feels wretched for abandoning his Faith, he nevertheless continues on with his journey. In similar fashion to Robin Molineux, Brown overconfidently yet inaccurately justifies to himself that his abandonment of Faith is temporary and that all will return to normal after this journey. Reaching this over-simplistic conclusion, this “excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown [feels] himself justified in making

³¹ Walter J. Paulits, “Ambivalence in ‘Young Goodman Brown,’” *American Literature* 41, no. 4 (January 1970): 578.

³² D. M. McKeithan, “Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown:’ An Interpretation,” *Modern Language Notes* 67, no. 2 (February 1952): 94.

³³ Paul J. Hurley, “Young Goodman Brown’s ‘Heart of Darkness,’” *American Literature* 37, no. 3 (January 1966): 412.

more haste on his present evil purpose.”³⁴ Thus exposes Brown’s naiveté: he believes that he is in complete control of his future, and that the future may indeed be most excellent for him, when in fact he is walking away from his grounding Faith. This line in the story at once proves not only Brown’s faulty overconfidence, but also his awareness of the immoral and sinful nature of his journey. Brown’s overconfidence also comes from his own belief that he has “joined the ranks of the safe and socially sanctioned” through his position as Faith’s simple husbandman in Salem Village. Thus reassured in his stable position within his town, Brown feels that he can now “afford to see how the other moral half lives.”³⁵ By marrying Faith, Brown believes that he has established for himself a secure place within the structure of his Salem Village society.

After Brown last looks upon his beloved Faith, he exits Salem Village and enters into the woods, a setting that Hawthorne specifically styles as preternatural, foreboding and disorienting.³⁶ Hawthorne expertly describes the eerie sense of gloom and solitude that Brown experiences while walking, writing, “there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveler knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead.”³⁷ While Brown feels wholly isolated at this point, Hawthorne’s description of the woods suggests that he may not be alone, as there remains the possibility that the forest itself has a hidden, mysterious layer that Brown has not yet

³⁴ Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” 247.

³⁵ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 292.

³⁶ Richard C. Carpenter, “Hawthorne’s Polar Explorations: ‘Young Goodman Brown’ and ‘My Kinsman, Major Molineux,’” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24, no. 1 (June 1969): 49.

³⁷ Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” 248.

penetrated. Fearfully yet staunchly, Brown continues to journey deeper into the forest until he has his first encounter with a traveler who suddenly, though not wholly unexpectedly, appears at the foot of a tree. The traveler appears to resemble Brown, and also appears to hold a great black snake as a type of walking stick. Yet, the key word in these initial introductions is “appear,” while the possibility of these resemblances is attributed to “an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light” of the forest at night, it is not necessarily presented as an explanation of these resemblances.³⁸ Already, the line between what Brown actually sees, and what he believes to have seen, is blurred. The uncanny, and specifically double quality of Brown’s fellow traveller is already evident at this point in the story: is the traveller only the image of Brown’s father, is he actually Brown’s father, or is he a type of spiritual father? Is his walking stick the image of a black snake, actually a black snake, or is it a symbolic stand-in for the evil intent of Brown’s journey? This shift in reality is not yet clear to Brown himself as evidenced by his simplistic line of reasoning.

Because Brown does not realize that the reality he existed in before entering the forest is no longer the reality in play, he still believes that he retains some type of control over the situation. This is evident as he unsuccessfully attempts to stop his journey into the woods and return to his town, but is easily convinced by his fellow traveler to continue on his journey. The question stands to be asked: why is Brown so easily manipulated by this other traveler? Again, scholars have many opinions about this question. Darrell Abel argues that it is simply Brown’s vulnerability resulting from his youth; Norman Hostetler posits that while Brown does express some doubt, he

³⁸ Ibid.

nevertheless ends up accepting the ambiguity of his situation as the truth; Walter Paulits asserts that Brown suffers from an ambivalence about his situation that results in his yielding to the luring of his fellow-traveler.³⁹ While it is true that Brown needs no significant coaxing on the part of his fellow traveler, it is difficult to argue that this early on in his journey Brown has already begun his shift from a one-dimensional character to a more liminal and ambiguous character. Brown's responses to his companion clearly signify this. Even as he unconsciously continues to walk deeper into the woods, Brown still relies upon his aforementioned understanding of reality and his place within it. As his fellow traveler divulges to Brown that he is well acquainted with Brown's family, Brown unwaveringly exclaims, "my father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians," and "we are people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness."⁴⁰ Brown's insistence upon his forebear's innocence is evidence that he has never before questioned their righteousness or been confronted by the possibility that their righteousness (as he understands it) is tainted.

Brown at this point in the story exhibits a childlike reverence toward the people in his family, and specifically toward the roles that each person in his family plays.⁴¹ Brown is utterly astonished when his companion tells him that his revered deacons, selectmen, and Governor are all involved in less than desirable activities. Yet, Brown reassures

³⁹ Abel, "Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne's Metonymic Symbols," 169; Norman H. Hostetler, "Narrative Structure and Theme in 'Young Goodman Brown,'" *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 222; Paulits, "Ambivalence in 'Young Goodman Brown,'" 580.

⁴⁰ Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," 248-9.

⁴¹ Robinson, "The Vision of Goodman Brown," 221.

himself that his role as a simple husbandman is so wholly different from the ways of the Governor and his council that it excludes him from being involved in those unfavorable circumstances. Brown uses Faith as a source of reliability and structure as well as a source of self-identification. Brown is still unaware of his own hypocrisy; even as he boasts about his lack of involvement, he himself is physically moving still closer to the very location and activities that he claims to distance himself from.

As Brown continues to profess his innocence while still continuing on his journey, he soon sees a figure of an old woman hobbling through the woods, and at once recognizes her as Goody Cloyse, the woman who taught him his catechism as a boy. Brown, still concerned with retaining his position within society, journeys off of the path he was following and into the woods because he does not want Goody Cloyse to see him with his traveling companion. Although Brown himself does not directly interact with Goody Cloyse, this first encounter is nevertheless significant. First, it is Goody Cloyse who identifies Brown's fellow traveler as the devil taking the form of Brown's grandfather. Second, Goody Cloyse alludes to the fact that she is somehow involved in witchcraft as she explains to the devil that her broomstick that was anointed by a mystical recipe has disappeared. Upon hearing this conversation, Brown casts his first glance upward, clearly symbolic of his reliance upon the religious structure and continuity of his Salem Village. Brown looks up because he is searching for Salem Village, and because he realizes, however fleetingly, that his journey into the woods has placed a significant distance between himself and his town.

Also significant in this encounter is the sense of the uncanny that it elicits. Hawthorne brilliantly utilizes the power of blurring the boundaries between reality and

fantasy in his description of Goodly Cloyse and the devil. She is described as a “female figure” and the devil is naught but the “shape of old Goodman Brown.”⁴² Also, as the devil casts down his staff, already described as somehow eerily lifelike, “perhaps, it assumed life.”⁴³ Adding to this uncanny dimension is the fact that this encounter takes place at nightfall. The darkness of the woods casts an eerie shadow upon these figures that magnifies the question of reality versus illusory. Aside from Brown, the characters and their possessions in this story are described in such a way that their actual existence within a reasonable dimension is questionable at best. It is necessary to note that at this point in the story, Brown still accepts whatever he sees or believes he sees, to be reality. Nevertheless, the appearance of Goody Cloyse begins to break down the strict boundaries that Brown so overconfidently believes in. This is evident in Brown’s statement upon resuming his walk with the devil: “‘That old woman taught me my catechism,’ said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.”⁴⁴ Does Brown state this simply out of shock and disbelief? Or, is Brown beginning to realize that the solid foundation he believed to exist upon and within is darker and more complicated than he ever before recognized? Having Brown’s first encounter be with a woman who he has revered since childhood begins to break down his childlike, unquestioned naiveté. Brown’s statement is simple indeed, but alludes to his journey toward a more expansive understanding of himself and his place within society.

⁴² Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” 250.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Brown continues to walk with the devil for some time before stubbornly refusing to continue. Again, Brown's line of reasoning has its basis in his one-dimensional understanding of his place within the structure of society. Just as he could not be likened to the Governor or other men of high ranking status because he was but a simple husbandman, he now argues that his journey is nothing like that of Goody Cloyse because she is a wretched woman and he still has his wife to keep him grounded in society. Brown repeatedly relies upon his role as husband of Faith to create a distinct boundary for himself. Clearly, Brown considers Faith to be his pillar of goodness, untouchable and innocent. By painting Faith in this manner, Brown believes that he "has" a tangible source of faith available to him in Salem Village that he can rely upon and return to. Obtusely, Brown again congratulates himself for his refusal to continue walking with the devil, completely unaware of how far into the dark wood he has traveled already.⁴⁵

Ironically, just as Brown applauds himself and how clear his conscience will be when he sees the minister or Deacon Gookin, he hears horses hooves and voices that appear to be that of the minister and Deacon Gookin. Similar to his non-interaction with Goody Cloyse, Brown again does not actually speak with these men, and only hears them conversing while he hides in the forest. That they are on the same journey as Goody Cloyse is evident as they, too, continue to travel deeper into the "heathen wilderness," anxiously anticipating the upcoming communion.⁴⁶ In believing that these two revered figures are not only participants but also leaders of this sinister communion spectacle (the

⁴⁵ Hurley, "Young Goodman Brown's 'Heart of Darkness,'" 413.

⁴⁶ Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," 251.

minister says ““nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground””), Brown openly begins to question the same proud stubbornness that he was just applauding himself for. In his heart, there is a heavy sickness, and “he looked up into the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him.”⁴⁷ Though he again affirms that he will stand against the devil, he is clearly not as steady in his composure as he was at the beginning of the story.

Slowly and subtly, the devil has infected Brown with an apprehension of evil in his family, friends, moral and spiritual advisors and in the worthies of the community.⁴⁸ No member of his community can escape (or even tries to do so) from the evil that is an inherent part of the human condition. This infection results in Brown’s oscillation between the static symbolic stock character from the beginning of the story to a more knowledgeable and liminal character. Like Robin Molineux, Brown does not at once change from his static symbolic state, but instead shifts back and forth between the two as his experiences from this journey continue. As James Keil posits, the lonesome forest has now becomes heavily peopled, and these people work to transform Brown’s entire belief system and moral certainty.⁴⁹ The possible concealed figures that contributed to Brown’s eerie sense of isolation at the beginning of the story have slowly revealed themselves, and with them, the sense of evil that Brown was unaware of at the beginning of this story.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Reginald Cook, “The Forest of Goodman Brown’s Night: A Reading of Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown,’” *The New England Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (September 1970): 475.

⁴⁹ Keil, “Early Nineteenth-Century Puritans and Constructions of Gender,” 50.

A sense of the uncanny escalates as Brown gazes upon the blue arch of the sky. As a dark cloud somehow blows across the still night, Brown oscillates between distinctly hearing the voices of his townspeople, and then questioning whether or not these sounds were simply the murmur of the woods. Symbolically, Brown is trapped between his old understanding of himself as very familiar, direct and structured and his new understanding of himself that he cannot yet distinctly decipher. Brown then hears the voice of a young woman and beholds a pink ribbon that flutters down to the branches of the tree. The blurred boundaries between reality and illusion are evident at this moment because, while Brown “beholds” the ribbon, this ribbon is only described as “something.” The question of whether or not this “something” is Faith’s pink ribbon remains to be clarified. Brown evidently believes this to be the same pink ribbon that Faith was wearing at the beginning of the story, and cries out, ““My faith is gone...there is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil for to thee is this world given.””⁵⁰ Most noteworthy at this moment is the relative ease and speed that brings about Brown’s doubt over his Faith. The pink ribbon, if it is just that, is in no way a sure sign of Faith’s involvement in the night’s ceremony, yet Brown swiftly surrenders to the devil. Scholars have long debated the significance of Faith’s ribbons. Darrel Abel argues that the pink ribbons have “the function of orienting the visible with the invisible world.”⁵¹ Paul Hurley posits that pink ribbons represent the ritualistic trappings of religion, the same trappings that Brown used to structure his former sense of self-identity. Hurley continues, “Goodman Brown...has placed his faith and his hopes of salvation in the formal observances of religious worship

⁵⁰ Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” 252.

⁵¹ Abel, “Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne’s Metonymic Symbols,” 170.

rather than in the purity of his own heart and soul.”⁵² In believing that he has both heard and seen evidence that Faith and her ribbons are part of the terrible communion, Brown’s steady sense of self-identity is shattered. No longer can Brown use Faith’s innocence and goodliness as a means of securing his own self-awareness.

In this singular moment, Brown has officially reached the turning point of his journey. Again, as with Robin Molineux, Hawthorne uses a loud and maddened laughter to signify this. The laughter is again an irrepressible cascade of Brown’s emotional unconscious that has begun to take over Brown’s former rational consciousness. Cook likens the forest of the night to the blackness of Brown’s subconscious and argues, “Brown tries to outlaugh what he thinks is the scornful derision of the wilderness.”⁵³ Similarly, Carpenter argues that Brown’s hysterical laughter works to draw Brown away from “his accustomed track in order to become psychologically prepared for the totally new experience which awaits him.”⁵⁴ Victor Jones believes that Brown’s laughter signifies his ironic recognition of the fallen [evil] condition of all men.⁵⁵ It is clear that a psychological transformation has occurred within Brown, although I argue that it is too early in the story to assert that Brown has wholly given into believing in the fallen condition of all of mankind. His horrific flight through the woods suggests not so much that he accepts the inherent evil of mankind, but more so that he realizes that he can no longer identify for himself an identity within his society. This is evident by his temporary

⁵² Hurley, “Young Goodman Brown’s ‘Heart of Darkness,’” 416.

⁵³ Cook, “The Forest of Goodman Brown’s Night,” 476.

⁵⁴ Carpenter, “Hawthorne’s Polar Explorations,” 49.

⁵⁵ Victor H. Jones, “Laughter in Hawthorne’s Fiction,” *College Literature* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 59.

transformation, brought about by Faith's voice and pink ribbon, into a fiend who fears no one. But Brown's desire to again find and secure his position within society outweighs his fiendish self, as he finds himself drawn deeper into the woods, toward the familiar tune of the choir from the village meetinghouse. He even cries out, trying to join the voices, in an attempt to grasp at his more known rational self.

As Brown's belief in his own sense of reality continues to oscillate, he continues to move onward toward the heart of the dark wilderness and its frightful sounds.⁵⁶ Once he espies a rock that resembles either a pulpit or an altar, Brown also sees the congregation that he just cried out in unison with. Like the voices from earlier that alternated from distinct to indistinct, the "numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once."⁵⁷ Brown thinks that he recognizes those people from his village who he believed to be the most pious intermingling with people of "dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes."⁵⁸ This intermingling is still unfathomable to Brown, who is unable to reconcile the fact that these different groups of people within his old social structure have left their structured space and joined with one another. Brown's reliance on his old self is evident too in his questioning after the whereabouts of Faith. Despite hearing and seeing evidence of her presence earlier in his journey in the forest, Brown still attempts to use his Faith as his solid foundation.

⁵⁶ Leavis, "Hawthorne as Poet," 196.

⁵⁷ Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," 253.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

At the commencement of the meeting, Brown shifts from a mere onlooker to an active participant in the ceremony.⁵⁹ He steps forth from the shadows where he has spent the majority of his night in order to be received by the congregation. But why does Brown emerge from the shadows at all, considering the revulsion that he feels as he does so? At this point in the story, Brown is surely aware that some part of his old concept of reality has been altered, yet he still has the desire have a place within a community, however wicked and loathsome this new community is. Still, Brown is almost immediately forced to question this desire for a structured sense of place and self as the dark figure leading the ceremony gives his sermon. This speech triggers within Brown a desire to ultimately deny the baptism into the communion of his race for two main reasons. One is that Brown recognizes the evil and wretchedness of the surrounding community and therefore wants nothing to do with it. The second is that the dark figure's speech reveals the contradictory and fictitious nature of the community that Brown was so staunchly reliant upon. Greenblatt's notion of chaos becoming the new form of unity is directly evident in this speech. The speech illuminates the contradictory nature of Brown's reverence for his elders, his community, and most importantly, his wife, thus revealing to Brown the actual chaotic and unharmonious nature of his life.

In one final attempt to save both himself and his Faith, Brown begs his wife to “look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one.”⁶⁰ While Brown does look up to the heavens, he does not know whether or not Faith does the same. The entire ceremony and its wickedness disappears leaving Brown in the middle of the forest on a calm night. The

⁵⁹ Richard H. Fogle, “Ambiguity and Clarity in Hawthorne's ‘Young Goodman Brown,’” *The New England Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (December 1945): 462.

⁶⁰ Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” 255.

question is then asked: “Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?” which is promptly answered “be it so if you will; but alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown.”⁶¹ Here is evident Hawthorne’s refusal to provide a simplistic answer for his readers. As previously discussed, this story is purposefully written to study the boundaries between reality and illusion in such a way that one cannot tell the difference between that which is a tangible reality and that which is not.⁶² This question and response are the source of much heated debate among Hawthorne scholars. Both Pebworth and Cook argue that the combination of dream and actuality indicate a specific type of reality where it is difficult to distinguish the tangible/actual from the illusory.⁶³ Abel argues that all of the characters in the story are products of Brown’s mindscape who work to obscure and obliterate one another; Leibowitz posits that Brown consistently mistakes illusion for reality; Levin argues that almost all of the action that occurs in the story is a spectral adventure and does not exist within the bounds of reality.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Taylor Stoehr, “‘Young Goodman Brown’ and Hawthorne’s Theory of Mimesis,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 23, no. 4 (March 1969): 395.

⁶³ Ted-Larry Pebworth, “‘The Soul’s Instinctive Perception:’ Dream, Actuality, and Reality in Four Tales from Hawthorne’s ‘Mosses from an Old Manse,’” *The South Central Bulletin*, 23, no. 4 (Winter 1963): 19; Cook, “The Forest of Goodman Brown’s Night,” 474.

⁶⁴ Abel, “Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne’s Metonymic Symbols,” 170-1; Liebowitz, “Hawthorne and Spenser: Two Sources,” 461; Levin, “Shadows of Doubt: Specter Evidence in Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown,’” 347.

Paul Hurley agrees that Brown dreams all of the events of the night, and cites the coolness of the rock and twig as evidence to signal Brown's return to a more conscious state of being.⁶⁵

Whether or not Brown dreamed the entire experience or actually experienced it is ultimately of little consequence. Brown does not return from his night in a more rational state of being because, dream or reality, Brown could never escape from the effects from that night. Brown's dream-like experience has forced his conscious sense of reality to lose control over his unconscious sense of self. In doing so, Brown's more authentic self, that of the unconscious, is thus exposed. Certainly, as will soon be discussed, the repercussions from his experiences over the course of that one night all result from Brown believing that what he saw or dreamt is an accurate representation of reality. Similar to the ending of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Hawthorne ends the dream sequence in "Young Goodman Brown" with an ambiguous statement that reflects Brown's newly formed understanding of himself.

Although the dream sequence is over, Hawthorne still provides the readers with a brief and somewhat depressing narrative about the rest of Brown's life. Again, there are many points of contention that arise from the ending of this story. Michael Colacurcio staunchly believes that Brown deserves what happens to him in the end because his actions are diametrically opposed to the Puritan doctrine that he supposedly believes in.⁶⁶ Hostetler argues that the ending of the story is ironic for Brown because he ultimately destroys himself despite his commitment against the devil's evil-doings; McKeithan

⁶⁵ Hurley, "Young Goodman Brown's 'Heart of Darkness,'" 418.

⁶⁶ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 288.

likens the sinful and hypocritical conclusion to Brown's own sinful and hypocritical nature; similarly, Hurley posits that Brown sees evil around him because he wants to see it; Levy argues that Brown's depressing end comes as a result of the lifelong repression of evil within himself.⁶⁷ These interpretations all blame Brown for his actions, but ignore Brown's newfound sense of liminality. He is no longer a static character but is instead a multi-dimensional character traversing a new landscape of the self that is inherently contradictory.

The lasting effects of Brown's experience upon the rest of his life are less ambiguous than the conclusion of the dream sequence. Less ambiguous as they may be, they are still complicated. Clearly, Brown has become disenchanted with his community and his wife, yet he still remains a part of that community despite his revulsion of it. He remains married to Faith, has children and grandchildren, and continues to attend church on Sabbath day with the rest of the congregation. But, psychologically he is no longer the staunch believer and supporter of his town of Salem Village. Instead, he is in a type of no-man's land, isolated from his community, while the fixed poles of his belief disappear into a chaos that he cannot comprehend.⁶⁸ His experience in the forest has violated the integrity of both his mind and his character.⁶⁹ Because he does not see a place for himself within this newly illuminated sense of community, Brown refuses to connect with people

⁶⁷ Hostetler, "Narrative Structure and Theme in 'Young Goodman Brown,'" 226; McKeithan, "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': An Interpretation," 96; Hurley, "Young Goodman Brown's 'Heart of Darkness,'" 418; Levy, "The Problem of Faith in 'Young Goodman Brown,'" 379.

⁶⁸ Liebowitz, "Hawthorne and Spenser: Two Sources," 464; Fogle, "Ambiguity and Clarity in Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown,'" 454.

⁶⁹ Liebowitz, "Hawthorne and Spenser: Two Sources," 460.

honestly or directly, which results in his paradoxical involvement within his town.⁷⁰ The effects of his uncanny, dreamlike experience in the woods has changed Brown from a blind and obtuse promoter of his community to a character who outwardly remains a participant, but inwardly shrinks away from his fellow townspeople. In losing his sense of conscious reality through the his dream-like experience, Brown has also lost his former, confident place within society. Brown's exposure to the blurred lines between reality and illusion result in his questioning of society and his place within it, and thus produce within him a more psychologically liminal understanding of himself. Despite the depressing tone of the final paragraphs, Brown himself has become enlightened, albeit to the previously unknown hypocritical, sinful, and evil nature of himself and his community. As Darrel Abel concisely and accurately argues, "he [Brown] returned to the same facts as those that he had left, he could not return to the same certainties."⁷¹

The conclusion of this story also promotes Foucault's idea of the significance of effective historians over traditional historians. Some scholars argue that Brown is trapped in a historical moment between Puritanism and Enlightenment, or that Brown represents the weaker members of puritanical society who are destroyed by their own disillusionment with their fellow citizens.⁷² But these arguments both place a label upon Brown, when in fact his psychological sense of self exists outside of any realm. In concluding the story with Brown as a liminal character existing neither wholly within his community nor wholly outside of it, it is clear that Hawthorne is much more the effective

⁷⁰ Bunge, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study of the Short Fiction*, 13.

⁷¹ Abel, "Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne's Metonymic Symbols," 177.

⁷² Ronan, "'Young Goodman Brown' and the Mathers," 280; Miller, "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': Cynicism or Meliorism?" 262.

historian than the traditional. He does not search for unity at the end of the story, and in fact illuminates the liminality of Brown's new psychological understanding of himself.

"Young Goodman Brown" is a story that dramatizes the growth of Brown's understanding of himself from a moral state of being fiercely overconfident yet wholly uninformed to a liminal state filled with questions and contradictions. Similar to Robin Molineux, Goodman Brown begins his journey into the woods surrounded by various historical references. The time period, the location, and Brown's name are all evidence of Hawthorne's play on history. As the story continues, the psychological journey that Brown unknowingly embarks upon forces him to question his previously conceived notions and leaves him in a state of liminality. Brown's encounters with the devil, Goody Cloyse, Deacon Gookin and the minister and then the congregation at the communion sequence are all forms of psychological tests that work to undermine Brown's initial obtuseness and naiveté. The question of whether or not Brown dreamt the entire sequence is not essential for him to recognize the change within his sense of self: he believes that the experience was real, and that is enough for the psychological change to occur within him. The ambiguity that results from this question, though, is essential to understanding Brown's shift. As Samuel Chase Coale writes, Hawthorne's characters are able to "occup[y] a middle position between the actual world of experience and the more mysterious realm of the imagination."⁷³ The liminal state that Brown finds himself in at the end of the story, where he physically exists within his community but is psychologically unattached from it is precisely this middle position that Coale writes about. The ambiguity of the congregation sequence compounded with the ending of the

⁷³ Coale, Samuel Chase, *Mesmerism and Hawthorne: Mediums of American Romance* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 2.

story itself both reflect the liminal nature of Brown's own understanding of himself and his now enlightened yet disenchanted outlook of himself and his place in society.

CHAPTER 5

WHERE AM I? WHITHER AM I WANDERING?

“Roger Malvin’s Burial” is one of Hawthorne’s most contentious tales because its focus is almost entirely upon the long-term effects of a character who experiences a moral crisis. Whereas “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” and “Young Goodman Brown” focus more specifically upon Robin and Brown’s journey towards some type of enlightenment (perverse or otherwise), “Roger Malvin’s Burial” begins with a traumatic event, and follows the protagonist, Reuben Bourne, as he attempts to navigate through his compulsive guilt and the liminal state that that guilt creates. This chapter will begin with a new historical reading of the introductory paragraph and the protagonist, and will then explore the complicated boundaries and shifting powers of Reuben’s conscious and unconscious self. In opposition to Robin Molineux and Goodman Brown, Reuben’s former sense of static/overconfident self is less evident in this story because this story begins with the climactic, character altering scene. Because of this, the focus is not upon Reuben’s personal journey from static to liminal, but instead upon his own (mis)understanding of his unconscious self.

Hawthorne begins “Roger Malvin’s Burial” with a foundational historical paragraph that sets the general time and location of his story. While the new historical/psychoanalytic analysis illuminates significantly deeper meanings of this story, the historical framework that Hawthorne initially provides must first be considered. Hawthorne specifically references Lovell’s Fight, an outbreak of violence between Captain John Lovewell (the spelling of his name was altered over the century) and the Indians of Pigwacket, who lived near present-day Maine. While the details surrounding

this fight have most certainly been altered for various reasons, as will soon be discussed, a brief summary of events is as follows: In mid-May, 1725, Lovewell and his small company took part in a violent fight with the Indians of Pigwacket and there were many casualties on both sides. After the fight, only two survivors from Lovewell's company ultimately survived the long journey through the woods back to their frontier village homes in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The rest of the company died during the fight, or during their attempt to return home.¹ Being that this story is one of Hawthorne's earliest published works (1831), its conception was likely heavily influenced by the centennial commemoration of Lovell's fight, celebrated in 1825 near Hawthorne's alma mater, Bowdoin College. Additionally, the reference to this fight would have resonated with Hawthorne's New England readers.

Much of Hawthorne's historical interpretation is evident in the introductory paragraph. Most scholars interested in the historical realm of this story point to John Farmer and Jacob B. Moore's *Collections, Topographical, Historical, and Biographical* (1822-1824) as the main source that Hawthorne used for this story. Included within these three volumes that Hawthorne checked out from the Salem Athenaeum in 1827 are *Historical Memoirs of the Late Fight at Piggwacket* by Thomas Symmes, *The History of New Hampshire* by Jeremy Belknap, and an article entitled "Indian Troubles at Dunstable," by an author who only identified himself as J. B. H.² Orians argues that the Symmes account is by far the most influential of the aforementioned historical sources because it includes specific details that Hawthorne draws upon, such as the names of

¹ David S. Lovejoy, "Lovewell's Fight and Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *The New England Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December 1954): 527-8.

² Doubleday, *Hawthorne's Early Tales: A Critical Study*, 193.

those in the company and the difficult abandonment of the mortally wounded by those who were not so fatally hurt.³ Lovejoy asserts that it is the J. B. H. account between Farwell and Davis that most influenced Hawthorne. He cites this account's description of three days of walking, the tying of a handkerchief to a bush in order to more easily find Farwell (the man being left behind), and of Farwell's asking of Davis to reposition him before leaving as clear indicators of this account's influence upon Hawthorne.⁴ It is quite clear that Hawthorne used both of these accounts in writing his own story, but it is also evident that, in typical Hawthorean fashion, "he sought not to run competition with historical detail."⁵

The way that Hawthorne wrote this introductory paragraph does more than simply introduce the historical framework of the story. More evident in this paragraph than the introductory paragraph in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is Hawthorne's ironic and even sarcastic treatment of this historical event. It is clear that Hawthorne is warning his readers about the mistreatment and over-glorification of this historical incident in asserting that the event is "naturally susceptible of the moonlight of romance."⁶ Through this warning, Nietzsche's position that history is not progressive is extremely apparent. Hawthorne calls attention to the highly romanticized versions of Lovell's Fight in

³ G. Harrison Orians, "The Source of Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *American Literature* 10, no. 3 (November 1938): 316.

⁴ Lovejoy, "Lovewell's Fight and Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 530-31.

⁵ Orians, "The Source of Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 316.

⁶ Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," in *The Complete Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* ed. Hanover House (New York, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959): 376.

circulation in the early nineteenth century. While the tales of Lovell's Fight circulating during Hawthorne's time represent Lovewell and his company as brave heroes who suffered a cruel death by the savage Indians, the fight was in actuality a scalping raid that promised great profit for those involved.⁷ Hawthorne is aware and wants his readers to be aware that the mission of Lovewell's company was not necessarily to defend the frontier, but instead it was a "bloodthirsty, scalp-hunting raid against the Indians."⁸ This paragraph is ironic; Hawthorne begins his praise of those involved in Lovell's Fight by reminding the reader that imagination has caused certain incidents from the fight to be ignored, which subtly implies that certain incidents have most certainly been exaggerated. Additionally, Hawthorne writes that the following account is about one of the brave and chivalrous men from the fight. This is also ironic because, as will be evident through the psychological analysis of Reuben, the story of his fate is by no means a favorable one. By writing this paragraph ironically, Hawthorne is casting himself as a revisionist historian who works to exploit the cruelty of the Puritans as well as the myths surrounding frontier heroism and ancestral glory.⁹ In exposing the falsification of history through the ironic tone of this opening paragraph, Hawthorne is cautioning his audience

⁷ For a more detailed account of Hawthorne's romanticized contemporary sources, see: Joseph Kau, "Individuation and the Poetics of Justice: Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 33 (1988): 176-78.

⁸ Ibid., 176-7.

⁹ James McIntosh "Nature and Frontier in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *American Literature* 60, no. 2 (May 1988): 191; E. Arthur Robinson, "'Roger Malvin's Burial': Hawthorne and the American Environment," *Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal* (1977): 155.

against falling victim to the chivalric myth of New England history.¹⁰ Hawthorne refuses to blindly accept history as it is presented and instead interprets this history as a means of exploiting commonly heard misconceptions as well as exploring the psychological depths of the human condition, as will soon be discussed.

In similar fashion to “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” and “Young Goodman Brown,” the Nietzschean position that all history is interpretation is also evident in “Roger Malvin’s Burial.” History assisted Hawthorne’s imaginative elements of these stories by “affording that firmness and distinctness of outline which was most needed in his work.”¹¹ By using specific historical events and their related dates and actors, Hawthorne is able to ground the fantastical elements of his stories. Patsy Daniels sees Hawthorne’s ability to link his imaginative stories to real-world events as evidence of Hawthorne’s ability as a storyteller.¹² Both Orians and Donohue take this a step further, arguing that Hawthorne is able to transform a minor historical incident into an entirely different story by using, absorbing and fructifying the historical “facts” in such a way that the story itself bears little resemblance to the original historical event.¹³ This transformation, as will soon be discussed, is particularly relevant in the case of “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” since the introductory historical paragraph is of minor consequence in

¹⁰ Robert J. Daly, “History and Chivalric Myth in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 109, no. 2 (1973): 114.

¹¹ Woodberry, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 137.

¹² Patsy J. Daniels, “Hawthorne and his Audience: History, Dream, and Moral Values,” *LATCH* 2 (2009): 115.

¹³ Orians, “The Source of Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 318; Agnes McNeill Donohue, “‘From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns:’ A Reading of ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 18, no. 1 (June 1963): 7.

relation to the rest of the story. Still, it is necessary to include because the fictitious nature of the story itself requires the grounding elements of this paragraph.

In addition to using non-fiction historical writing, a number of fictional pieces can be identified as sources for this story. A more meaningful understanding of Hawthorne's text can be found applying Greenblatt's theory of textual resonance as a means of exploring the relationship between these sources and Hawthorne's story. Included in Farmer and Moore's *Collections* was a ballad called "Lovewell's Fight," by Thomas C. Upham. This ballad, specifically verses twenty-four to twenty-eight, focuses on the difficult decision made when one soldier abandons another, mortally wounded, soldier.¹⁴ Clearly, Hawthorne took a keen interest in the focus of this section of the ballad, and used it to further explore the inner turmoil caused by knowingly abandoning someone to die alone in the wilderness. Additionally, it is safe to assume that Hawthorne was also influenced by Longfellow's poem "The Battle of Lovell's Pond" and his "Ode Written for the Commemoration at Fryeberg, Maine of Lovell's Fight."¹⁵ Both Longfellow's poem and his ode glorify the battle and classify its soldiers as heroes, so they are most likely included as part of the ironical treatment of history in the first paragraph.

A few other, less known sources that contribute to the meaning of this story is the twenty-sixth chapter of Tobias Smollett's novel *Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1753), where an older man is injured in battle and sends a younger man to deliver a message for his wife and daughter. This chapter ends with the younger man eventually marrying the

¹⁴ Orians, "The Source of Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 317.

¹⁵ Ibid., 314. See Orians' footnotes for additional fictional sources for "Roger Malvin's Burial."

daughter, evidently paralleling Reuben and Dorcas' marriage.¹⁶ Understanding the story through this perspective does not focus so much on the irony of the historical event, nor Reuben's inner confusion, but instead on the influences of and the relationship between Reuben and Dorcas. Focusing on an entirely different aspect of the story is Juhasz and his assertion that a poem by Philip Freneau entitled "The Indian Burying Ground" (1787) influenced Hawthorne in writing this story because it emphasizes the importance of providing a proper burial for the dead in the culture of indigenous peoples. Citing a parallel between the setting of both this poem and the story, Juhasz argues that Malvin (not Reuben) embodies a new American construct that blends colonial and Native American traditions.¹⁷ Malvin forces Reuben to leave him in a sitting position, which is indicative of many native cultures, but still asks him to come back and give him a "proper" (colonial) burial.

One additional source whose similarities to this story cannot be overlooked is the Bible. Not only is Reuben likely to be named after the biblical Reuben, but also there are multiple biblical stories that resonate with Hawthorne's. W. R. Thompson argues that the situations of the two Reubens (biblical Reuben from Isaiah and Hawthorne's Reuben) are parallel because "both men are forced by circumstance to abandon a loved one...both intend to return when occasion permits," and both connect their sins to an inability to

¹⁶ Olga Costopoulos-Alman, "A Previously Unnoted Source for Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *Notes and Queries* 34 (1987): 40.

¹⁷ Paul S. Juhasz, "The House of Atreus on the American Frontier: Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial' and the Search for an American Mythos," *CEA Critic* 68, no. 3 (2006): 51-2.

“face up to the consequences of [their] failure.”¹⁸ In Genesis, Reuben, the eldest of Israel’s sons, hides Joseph in a cistern so that his brothers will not kill him; upon returning to retrieve Joseph, Reuben finds that he has been sold into slavery.¹⁹ While the stories do not completely parallel each other, Reuben’s questionable motivation in putting Joseph in a cistern (was it self-serving or genuine?), compounded with his inability to follow through with his “vow” are both evident in Reuben Bourne’s story. Thompson continues in his argument by likening Reuben to Israel itself because both search for redemption and deliverance.²⁰ While these parallels are certainly evident, other scholars tie this story to different biblical episodes: Daniels sees a parallel between Abraham and Reuben because both are called to leave their homes, sacrifice a son, and father a nation; Donohue posits that Reuben suffers more than Abraham because God does not ultimately speak to him, nor directly request a sacrifice; Byers argues that the Laban-Jacob-Rachel story better parallels Hawthorne’s, citing the instability of both of the Reuben characters, and the stone pillar, oak tree, and unmoved bones of Hawthorne’s setting as evidence of this parallel.²¹ Entirely disagreeing with the aforementioned scholars is Frederick Crews, who after an in depth psychological reading of the story, suggests that Hawthorne’s biblical readings must be interpreted ironically since Reuben’s crime and sense of

¹⁸ W. R. Thompson, “The Biblical Sources of Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *PMLA* 77, no. 1 (March 1962): 92-3.

¹⁹ Gen. 37: 12-30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

²¹ Daniels, “Hawthorne and His Audience: History, Dream, and Moral Values,” 119; Donohue, ““From Whose Bourne No Traveller Returns,”” 16; John R. Byers, “The Geography and Framework of Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 21 (1976): 16.

sin/guilt is entirely self-affirmed, and not divinely orchestrated.²² While these interpretations all have validity, it is more important to consider that Hawthorne, who may have drawn from biblical sources, put these sources under the same Hawthornean imaginative manipulation as the historically based sources. Crews argues this point succinctly: “a sounder procedure [for interpreting biblical allusions is to] relate the Biblical allusions to what Hawthorne has created, not vice-versa.”²³

A final consideration to be made before embarking upon the psychoanalytic portion of this section is the significance of Reuben’s name. Both Robin Molineux and Goodman Brown’s names had significance either historically, etymologically, or both. Reuben Bourne is no exception. Robert Daly cites the appendix of volume two of Thomas Hutchinson’s *History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts Bay*, where he notes the heroic nature of one of the founders of the colony, Richard Bourne. Instead of seeing a parallel between Richard Bourne and Rueben Bourne, Daly argues that this connection is significant because it further illuminates Reuben’s tragedy in not understanding his role as one of the early founders of the New England territory.²⁴ Citing Johnson’s *English Dictionary* (1775) as a possible source for Hawthorne, Hochberg highlights the Hebrew derivation of the name Reuben as meaning, “behold, a son.” Hochberg continues, arguing “whether we believe...Crews...or Thompson...the very name intensifies the tragic denouement when Reuben discovers, or confirms, that he has

²² Frederick C. Crews, “The Logic of Compulsion in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *Modern Language Association* 79, no. 4 (September 1964): 463.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Daly, “History and Chivalric Myth in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 106-7.

shot Cyrus, and not a deer.”²⁵ Significant indeed is the choice for Reuben’s name, given the conclusion of the story, because it is Reuben’s relationship with and action toward Cyrus that cause such a dramatic change in Reuben, as will be discussed later. Finally, Reuben’s last name, Bourne, elicits journey imagery, both in understanding the word to mean “stream,” or to mean “destination.” Both are clearly indicative of Reuben’s cyclical journey over the course of this story.²⁶

Hawthorne’s extensive and prolific stories do not all follow a similar framework as seen in “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” and “Young Goodman Brown,” where the characterization of the protagonist begins as relatively obtuse or static and, as a result of a journey with various interactions, changes to a more liminal state. While there is some evidence of this significant change within the protagonist in “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” the majority of this story is an exploration of Reuben’s liminal state: what it looks like and its overarching effects upon Reuben. As such, the following psychoanalytic portion of this chapter will focus not so much on the evidence of change within Reuben, but more upon Reuben’s complicated and ultimately unsolvable inner turmoil.

The second part of this story begins with a description of the setting, which evokes at once the inherent dichotomy that exists when man enters an unexplored wilderness. Hawthorne writes, “the early sunbeams hovered cheerfully upon the tree-tops, beneath which two weary and wounded men had stretched their limbs the night

²⁵ Shifra Hochberg, “Etymology and the Significance of the Names in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *Studies in Short Fiction* 26, no. 3 (1989): 319.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 320.

before.”²⁷ The cheerful and seemingly innocent sunbeams and their interaction with the tree-tops are in clear contrast to the weary nature of the two men underneath said tree-tops; the negative representation of the two men have no effect upon their countenance of the surrounding wilderness. The two men have chosen a “mass of granite...not unlike a gigantic gravestone, upon which the veins seemed to form an inscription in forgotten characters” as their resting place for the night.²⁸ This rock plays a significant dramatic role in the story; “it looms above all the important events of the story, and when the action of the plot wanders from beneath its shadow, the dramatic intensity is lost.”²⁹ Additionally, the rock is covered with veins that “seem to” form some type of an inscription. Kau argues that this inscription works to generate a mystery in the story, and is an unconscious message for Reuben that he must intuitively understand because he cannot understand it using his conscious mind.³⁰ This phrase, “seem to,” points to a sense of the uncanny, thus signaling that the wilderness of this story, like the forest of “Young Goodman Brown,” will use its ambiguous nature to elicit within Reuben a heightened awareness of the semi-permeable threshold between imagination and reality. This uncanniness, however, is introduced at the very beginning of the story because Hawthorne uses it as a means of exploration of Reuben’s liminal sense of self.

The setting of this story also focuses on the oak tree that Reuben and Roger Malvin lay beneath. While Virginia Birdsall connects the youth and vigor of the oak tree

²⁷ Hawthorne, “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” 376.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Patricia Ann Carlson, “Image and Structure in Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *South Atlantic Bulletin* 41, no. 4 (November 1976): 4.

³⁰ Kau, “Individuation and the Poetics of Justice,” 170.

to Reuben's own youth, the more important element of the oak tree in the setting at this point of the story is its role as part of the larger surrounding wilderness.³¹ The wilderness here is a place beyond the frontiers of civilization where the oak and pine trees surround any man who enters. While the sunshine plays upon the tops of the trees, the trees themselves shadow what is below them, creating a world of darkness and difficulty, "a trackless, pathless, untrodden and illimitable" labyrinth.³² This second paragraph of the story, then, exposes the uncontrollable nature of the wilderness and its parallels to the uncontrollable nature of Reuben's unconscious self. In placing his protagonist in the forest at the beginning of the story, rather than focusing upon his journey into the wilderness, Hawthorne thus immediately begins his exploration into Reuben's liminal state.

That this exploration is central to this story is also evident in how Reuben is introduced. The third paragraph of the story first shows Reuben in an unquiet sleep where he dreams about the violent fight of which he recently took part in. In initially placing Reuben in this dream state, his initial characterization as a static, obtusely overconfident character is glossed over and only merely suggested or implied, as will soon be evident. Reuben is able somewhat to access his unconscious self because he is already experiencing the dream/nightmare that took both Robin Molineux and Goodman Brown the majority of their respective journeys to experience. This is evident because upon waking, Reuben is immediately confronted by a moral crisis that requires him to delve

³¹ Virginia O. Birdsall, "Hawthorne's Oak Tree Image," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 15, no. 2 (September 1960): 182.

³² Sheldon W. Liebman, "'Roger Malvin's Burial': Hawthorne's Allegory of the Heart," *Studies in Short Fiction* 12, no. 3 (1975): 254.

into his inner self. As Juhasz argues, even though Reuben may awake from his dream, he is still “wrapped in the nightmare past of the battle,” thus further heightening the complicated boundary between tangible reality (conscious) and the intangible dream world (unconscious).³³

Despite his dream/nightmare, Reuben, like Robin and Brown, still displays indicators of his previous, youthful and obtuse sense of self. Not only is this clear in Hawthorne’s description of Reuben as a youth who has scarcely attained the years of manhood, but it is also evident in Reuben’s continued reliance upon the advice and approval of an older, more experienced male figure, Roger Malvin. Malvin, mortally wounded and aware of his inability to continue the journey through the wilderness, attempts to convince Reuben to leave him in order to save himself. While Reuben is most certainly not easily convinced, as Crews would argue, he does require Malvin to provide him with not only the reasons for abandoning him, but also with his wholehearted approval to do so.³⁴ In requiring this, Reuben exposes his own lack of self-determination as well as his inability to appraise his own motivation.³⁵ Jochen Achilles further argues that this reliance upon Malvin’s approval manifests itself in Reuben’s understanding of his own position in society that warrants his child-like admiration for patriarchal

³³ Juhasz, “The House of Atreus on the American Frontier,” 50-1.

³⁴ Crews, “The Logic of Compulsion in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 460. Crews argues that Hawthorne takes an ironic view of Reuben’s mental struggle at this point in the story. He argues that Reuben, upon unconsciously making his decision to leave Roger Malvin, purposefully poses easily refutable objections in order to satisfy his own selfish motives.

³⁵ Kau, “Individuation and the Poetics of Justice,” 172; Thompson, “The Biblical Sources of Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 93.

authority.³⁶ These mere glimpses are the only evidence given that shed light upon Reuben's former youthful and assumingly innocent life.

What is more significantly illuminated in this section is Reuben's problematic and ambivalent sense of self that directly results from his interaction with Malvin. Malvin realizes that convincing Reuben to leave him to die alone will be a difficult task met with many objections. He first attempts to persuade Reuben, stating "I have loved you like a father...I should have something of a father's authority. I charge you to be gone that I may die in peace," to which Reuben speedily replies that it is this very bond between the two men that should keep Reuben by Malvin's side.³⁷ Malvin then reminds Reuben of his daughter, Dorcas, who will be completely desolate if both of them die. While Reuben was able to staunchly refute Malvin's first entreaty, this new reason now forces him to face an internal struggle between his consciousness and the more selfish motives of his heart. Clearly, Malvin intends to use Dorcas primarily at this point in the story to represent the life that Reuben could have, as well as the possibility of continuing his own family.³⁸ While the mention of Dorcas does cause Reuben to momentarily question himself, Malvin discussing the possibility of his survival if Reuben leaves to secure a search party heightens Reuben's sanguine nature "almost to certainty."³⁹ Again, though, the uncanny word "almost" is used, suggesting that Reuben will still require further

³⁶ Jochen Achilles, "Purgers and Montaged Men: Masculinity in Hawthorne's and Poe's Short Stories," *American Studies* 43, no. 4 (1998): 591.

³⁷ Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," 377.

³⁸ J. T. McCullen Jr., "Ancient Rites for the Dead and Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (1966): 318.

³⁹ Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," 379.

counsel. To this further counsel, Malvin replies with a possibly fictitious story from his past when he abandoned his comrade, then returned to rescue him from Indian captivity.

Malvin's story is followed by this line: "this example, powerful in affecting Reuben's decision, was aided, unconsciously to himself, by the hidden strength of many another motive."⁴⁰ Again momentarily, Reuben feels reassured that he is making the right decision. One paragraph later, though, Reuben is again only half-convinced by Malvin's reasoning. Still, Reuben uses the tombstone-like rock to reach the top of the sapling, where he ties one of his handkerchiefs turned bandages, thus vowing by blood that he will return to save Malvin. After he finally parts with Malvin, Reuben creeps back for one final glance at Malvin, only to be met with a feeling from his own "conscience, or something in its similitude [that pleads] strongly with him to return and lie down again by the rock."⁴¹ Clearly, Reuben is struggling with a very real inner turmoil. He cannot overcome his thoughts nor can he admit them into consciousness, which forces him into a liminal state where he is not in control.⁴² Agnes Donohue succinctly summarizes Reuben's inner turmoil:

More and more Reuben is beginning to act like a human being, almost any human being, in the given situation, trying to do the noble and supererogatory act and being persuaded not to – failing in perfection but with an unaccountable masochistic desire to look back at the one who, in a sense, demands the perfection and yet persuades him against it.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 379.

⁴¹ Ibid., 381.

⁴² Crews, "The Logic of Compulsion in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 460.

⁴³ Donohue, "'From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns,'" 10.

While Reuben's decision is difficult, it needed to be made. Reuben's conscious, rational self realizes that Malvin's request and his own subsequent act are both reasonably justifiable, but they also illuminate his unconscious, uncontrollable, and illusive inner self. In just this one section of the story, Reuben has been forced into recognizing a part of the complicated, oftentimes dark, and ultimately unknowable human condition.

The third section of this story shows Reuben's return to his frontier town, his recovery, and explores more thoroughly Reuben's confused understanding of himself. This confusion stems from Reuben's own understanding (or misunderstanding) of the source of his guilty feeling. The interpretations for the sources of Reuben's guilt and/or exactly what he is guilty of are quite varied. Many scholars do not place any direct blame upon Reuben because they see Malvin as the perpetuator or instigator of Reuben's ultimate decision to abandon him. Citing parallels between Malvin and Satan from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Daly argues that Malvin is Satanic because he knowingly leads Reuben, who is only a young and confused innocent boy, into temptation, thereby placing Reuben's decision "into a moral, rather than solely psychological, context."⁴⁴ Both Byers and Erlich argue similarly by noting that Malvin knew the psychological doom that he was imparting upon Reuben by asking him to leave, and that Malvin acted diabolically by coercing Reuben to violate his more honorable feelings.⁴⁵ Still, these scholars are reaching in their assertion that Malvin has evil or secretive notions since there is no textual evidence from the second section of the story that suggests any ulterior motives

⁴⁴ Daly, "History and Chivalric Myth in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 104.

⁴⁵ Byers, "The Geography and Framework of Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 18; Gloria Chasson Erlich, "Guilt and Expiation in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 26, no. 4 (March 1972): 380.

on his part. The only coercion that he may have used is in his acknowledgement that his story of abandonment/survival does not parallel Reuben's current situation. Even this coercion is clearly used to aid in Reuben's difficult decision. From this line of reasoning, it is much more reasonable to conclude that Malvin is a rational character, existing in the present moment who counsels Reuben to leave in order to save himself and return to his community.⁴⁶

In not blaming Malvin for Reuben's sense of guilt, there still remain many possible sources for Reuben's guilty feeling. The most obvious and least conjectural is Reuben omitting the specific details surrounding his departure from Malvin to Dorcas. Colacurcio argues that Reuben glosses over the gory details of his story because he knows that his audience (Dorcas and his community) wants to hear a clean-cut story of bravery and not the "grisly realities of Love and Death in the American Wilderness."⁴⁷ If that is the case, Reuben is still clearly aware and regretful of this omission, citing his moral cowardice "pride, the fear of losing her affection, [and] the dread of universal scorn" as reasons why he could not "rectify his falsehood."⁴⁸ Dorcas unknowingly spreads a tale of false heroism to the community, producing yet more feelings within Reuben that he cannot readily contend with: misery and humiliation. His concealment from the community of the entire truth makes it impossible for him to return to redeem his pledge, and further magnifies his shame because he is constantly "surrounded by

⁴⁶ Juhasz, "The House of Atreus on the American Frontier," 50; Liebman, "'Roger Malvin's Burial': Hawthorne's Allegory of the Heart," 255.

⁴⁷ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 120.

⁴⁸ Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," 382-3.

idolatrous but ignorant admirers.”⁴⁹ Although Reuben’s omission is his only clear “wrong” at this point in the story, he continues to internally struggle to find the definite source of his feelings of guilt and shame.⁵⁰

Other scholars argue that Reuben’s source of guilt is a result of Reuben breaking his vow to return and bury Malvin. As mentioned above, in omitting that critical portion of his story to Dorcas, Reuben is unable to both maintain this story of omission and redeem his vow to Malvin. Ortolano argues, “while his [Reuben’s] lie to Dorcas constitutes the sin that most directly damages Reuben’s life, his failure to redeem his vow to Roger becomes the sin that most haunts him.”⁵¹ This is played out in the story, as Reuben is unable to banish from his mind the haunting possibility that his father-in-law remains alive, waiting for Reuben’s assistance. Byers confirms this argument by relating it to a religico-chivalric code: Reuben has broken the chivalric code by leaving his comrade to die, but he has forever shattered the religious code by not returning to perform the burial rites that Malvin insisted upon.⁵² In combining both of these sources for Reuben’s guilt, it becomes clear that the real source of Reuben’s long-lasting and transformative guilt is Reuben’s own confusion about the desertion; he has created a guilt based on an imagined murder and nourished by his inability to acknowledge his

⁴⁹ Carlson, “Image and Structure in Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 6; Anderson Jr., “Hawthorne’s Crowds,” 46.

⁵⁰ Paul A. Newlin, “‘Vague Shapes of the Borderland:’ The Place of the Uncanny in Hawthorne’s Gothic Vision,” *ESQ* 18, no. 2 (1972): 87; Juhasz, “The House of Atreus on the American Frontier,” 53.

⁵¹ Guy Ortolano, “The Role of Dorcas in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” *The Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 25, no. 2 (1999): 9.

⁵² Daly, “History and Chivalric Myth in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 114.

justifiable abandonment of Malvin and the non-fulfillment of his vow.⁵³ This lack of understanding or acceptance of his actions, with Malvin, with Dorcas, and with his surrounding community, compounded with his growing internal, guilt-ridden conflict, are indicative of Reuben's loss of control of his own conscious reality and descent into a more liminal state.

The effects of Reuben's sources of guilt, though tragic and confusing for Reuben, are laid out quite clearly in the story. Although Reuben's physical wounds from battle heal, his mental wounds grow in magnitude; Reuben slowly disintegrates, and is unable to protect himself from uncomfortable thoughts.⁵⁴ Reuben's unconscious is slowly taking control over his conscious reality; he is unable to make a profit from the expansive land that Dorcas inherited, he quarrels with his neighbors and is overall an irritable man. In this way, Reuben is very much like Robin Molineux and Goodman Brown at the end of their journeys: they have lost control of their previous senses of reality, thus resulting in their gloomy and cynical countenances. Additionally, the characters are somewhat estranged from their surrounding communities because they are unable to connect with their neighbors since they are so engulfed in their own inner conflicts.⁵⁵

In addition to his relationships with the surrounding community, Reuben's personal relationship with his son is also wrecked with confusion and selfish animosity.

⁵³ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 112; Burton J. Fishman, "Imagined Redemption in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *Studies in American Fiction* 5, no. 2 (Autumn 1977): 258; Donohue, "'From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns,'" 14.

⁵⁴ Juhasz, "The House of Atreus on the American Frontier," 54; Daly, "History and Chivalric Myth in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 111; Adams, "Hawthorne's Provincial Tales," 48.

⁵⁵ Donohue, "'From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns,'" 17. Donohue characterizes Reuben as the isolato with a crooked heart, unable to love his neighbors.

As a clear parallel to Reuben's former self, Cyrus is "peculiarly qualified for, and [has] already begun to excel in, the wild accomplishments of frontier life."⁵⁶ Many scholars have rightly argued that Reuben identifies himself with Cyrus, but that the love he feels for Cyrus is a form of self-love.⁵⁷ Hawthorne writes, "he [Reuben] could no longer love deeply except where he saw or imagined some reflection or likeness of his own mind;" Reuben has lost the ability to love and care for another because his guilty unconscious will not allow him to form meaningful personal relationships.⁵⁸ While it is evident from their two-month expedition into the woods that Reuben is able to enjoy spending time with his son, and even become momentarily revived by his youth and spirit, his love for Cyrus only exists as a secondary emotion to the guilt that he feels.⁵⁹ This driving emotion, however misunderstood as it is by Reuben, dominates every aspect of his life, and ultimately drives him away from his town and his community, and back into the woods from his past.

After years of living in the frontier town, Reuben takes his family away from their community and into the surrounding wilderness, ostensibly to settle in a new town, far removed from their current home. As the family begins their journey, the narrator waxes romantic in a description of Cyrus' thoughts; nature in this daydream is bountiful, and serves as the foundation for limitless positive possibilities. Cyrus dreams about becoming

⁵⁶ Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," 384.

⁵⁷ Adams, "Hawthorne's Provincial Tales," 49; Crews, "The Logic of Compulsion in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 461; Kau, "Individuation and the Poetics of Injustice," 179.

⁵⁸ Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," 384.

⁵⁹ McCullen Jr., "Ancient Rites for the Dead and Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 321.

a “patriarch of the people, the founder of a mighty nation yet to be...men of future generations would call him godlike...remote posterity would see him standing, dimly glorious, far up the valley of a hundred centuries.”⁶⁰ The following paragraph, though, blatantly opposes this romantic fantasy in portraying the wilderness as tangled and gloomy. This contrast, similar to the contrast of the opening paragraphs of the story, reveals that the wilderness that should not be considered as solely bountiful or virginal, but also as dark, mysterious, post-paradisaical and paradoxical.⁶¹ This journey will not follow Cyrus’ romantic notions because it is Reuben’s journey: Reuben has his family leave their frontier town, and Reuben determines the path that they will take. In contrast to Cyrus’ romantic dream of establishing a new frontier town, Reuben leads his family along a course that even he does not consciously understand.⁶² Reuben is beginning to cycle back to the very beginning of his hardships by returning to the wilderness and eventually to the very spot where he last interacted with Malvin.

How Reuben navigates through this unknown territory is further evidence of the power that his unconscious self has over his conscious self. Crews concludes that is clearly Reuben’s repressed unconscious that remembers the exact route to take in order to return to Malvin.⁶³ While living in the frontier town, Reuben’s unconscious self affected his relationships with family and fellow townspeople; in the wilderness, his unconscious

⁶⁰ Hawthorne, “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” 384-5.

⁶¹ Robinson, “‘Roger Malvin’s Burial:’ Hawthorne and the American Environment, 154; Donohue, “‘From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns,’” 12.

⁶² McCullen Jr., “Ancient Rites for the Dead and Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 319.

⁶³ Crews, “The Logic of Compulsion in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 462.

self is strong enough to literally guide him in his journey. That the route is determined by something other than conscious logic is clear in Cyrus' failed attempts to redirect Reuben to their known course. Any attempt to do so is met with Reuben's outward discomfort and furtive glances, apparently searching for enemies. Reuben's unconscious is so powerful at this point in the story that he is unable to redirect himself, or to be redirected, without suffering from heightened anxiety and paranoia that are only "cured" when his unconscious resumes control over the journey.

As the family settles down for the night after five days of travelling, Reuben and Cyrus make ready to hunt for their dinner. After Cyrus bounds away, Dorcas, evidently without malicious intent, mentions to Reuben that this day marks the eighteenth anniversary of her father's death. At the mention of Malvin, Reuben is afflicted by a momentary confusion where he asks, "'where am I? Whither am I wandering?'"⁶⁴ Following this interaction, Reuben's descent into the depths of his unconscious is evident as he sets out to hunt:

Many strange reflections, however, thronged upon him; and, straying onward rather like a sleep walker than a hunter, it was attributable to no care of his own that his devious course kept him in the vicinity of the encampment. His steps were imperceptibly led almost in a circle, nor did he observe that he was on the verge of a tract of land heavily timbered, but not with pine-trees.⁶⁵

He is not consciously aware of the cyclical path that he is taking, nor of his surroundings, yet his unconscious self confidently leads him to exact location where Malvin died.

Try as he might to access the "secret place of his soul where his motives lay hidden," Reuben cannot. At this point in the story, where Reuben is wandering aimlessly

⁶⁴ Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," 386.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

through the woods, marks the climax of his liminal state: here he is most disconnected from his rational self and unable to understand his decisions and the motivations behind them. Many scholars argue for this reading, citing Reuben's blind trust in some supernatural power that he is doing the right thing, his compulsion that has overtaken his conscious intentions, and the parallel between the unknowable wilderness and the depths of the human heart.⁶⁶ Both Schulz and Liebman further these arguments, and assert that that Reuben falls victim to his morbid imagination that is itself incapable of perceiving reality except in terms of the one image: his guilt over not returning to bury Malvin.⁶⁷ Clearly, Reuben is a man obsessed. His obsession over the guilt that he feels over Malvin, compounded with the guilt that he feels over lying to Dorcas and his community has manifested itself in the form of his increasingly powerful unconscious. Completely falling victim to the unconscious, Reuben trusts that the force now controlling him will somehow afford him an opportunity to bury Malvin, thus allowing peace to once again enter his heart.

The shooting scene, however, precedes this opportunity for Reuben's redemption. As in the beginning of the story, this scene is also shrouded in uncanny language. Reuben "perceives" the motion of "some object" that is a considerable distance away and obscured behind thick undergrowth. He does not know for sure what he has shot, nor does he take heed of the low moan produced by his victim because he is finally aware of

⁶⁶ Donohue, "'From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns,'" 13; Crews, "The Logic of Compulsion in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 462; Robert Emmer Whelan Jr., "'Roger Malvin's Burial': The Burial of Rueben Bourne's Cowardice," *Research Studies* 37, no. 2 (June 1969): 114.

⁶⁷ Liebman, "'Roger Malvin's Burial': Hawthorne's Allegory of the Heart," 260; Dieter Schulz, "Imagination and Self-Imprisonment: The Ending of 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 10 (1973): 184-5.

the location where his unconscious has taken him. The cycle of the story has come full circle; again Reuben finds himself in the thick undergrowth, next to the giant rock with the forgotten characters carved upon it, and most significantly, the oak sapling where he tied his bloody handkerchief eighteen years ago. Whereas before the sapling appeared young and vigorous, like Reuben himself, the uppermost branch of the tree where Reuben had tied his handkerchief is now “withered, sapless, and utterly dead.”⁶⁸ Liebman argues that this branch is clearly representative of Reuben’s reason because it has been utterly abandoned and replaced by his delusion, which Liebman equates with his unconscious self.⁶⁹ However, a Freudian understanding of the unconscious self suggests that the unconscious is not delusional, just misunderstood because it is more closely connected with the fundamental psychological forces of the self that are difficult and even impossible to fully comprehend. Both Erlich and Robinson note further symbolism of the oak tree: Erlich argues that Hawthorne displaces the normal vegetation of an area (the pine trees) with a less desirable plant that has leaves that wither and die away as a way to symbolize that this area is one filled with sin, while Robinson cites Reuben’s failure to redeem his vow as directly afflicting the young sapling.⁷⁰ The oak tree, therefore, works on many different levels, all of which work to address and illuminate Reuben’s liminal state. Most notably psychological, though, is how the withered branch of the oak tree, as well as the contrast of the oak trees to their surrounding pines, represent Reuben’s guilt and how it has withered away his own rational sense of self.

⁶⁸ Hawthorne, “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” 387.

⁶⁹ Liebman, “‘Roger Malvin’s Burial;’ Hawthorne’s Allegory of the Heart,” 259.

⁷⁰ Erlich, “Guilt and Expiation in ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 382-3; Robinson, “‘Roger Malvin’s Burial:’ Hawthorne and the American Environment,” 158.

After this climactic scene in the story, the point of view shifts from Reuben's inner turmoil to Dorcas' lack thereof. This scene is interesting in the way that it illuminates Dorcas' role in the story. Hawthorne writes, "the heart of Dorcas was not sad; for she felt that it was better to journey in the wilderness with two whom she loved than to be a lonely woman in a crowd that cared not for her."⁷¹ First, it clearly shows the contrast between Dorcas' heart and Reuben's. Dorcas is able to enter the wilderness and transform it to a place of relative normalcy, preparing their encampment for dinner while singing a melody instilled with the "very essence of domestic love and household happiness."⁷² Secondly, and more importantly, it exposes Dorcas' love for her family. In this manner, Dorcas quite resembles Malvin: her focus is on the well being of her family, and she is able to accept and love Reuben for all his erratic behaviors.

Once Dorcas hears Reuben's gun shot, the entire tone of the story shifts back to Reuben's dark and shadowy wilderness. Dorcas begins to see illusions caused by the shadows, and is tricked several times into thinking that she sees Cyrus at the base of many trees. Upon reaching the same location as Reuben and observing his expression in the dead silence of the wilderness, she is filled at once with fear and then horror as she realizes that Reuben has killed Cyrus. While there is no ambiguity over the fact that Reuben has killed Cyrus on the same site where Malvin died, the story does not end with this fact; instead it ends with the withered branch falling upon Reuben and his family, causing Reuben to pray for the first time in years because he feels that his sin is expiated.

⁷¹ Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," 387.

⁷² Ibid.

As with the endings of “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” and “Young Goodman Brown,” the ending to this story remains a point of contention among scholars. Both Byers and Donohue argue that Reuben kills Cyrus intentionally, citing the biblical allusions to the story as evidence. Byers argues that Reuben breaks ties with God by not burying Malvin; therefore, he must perform some act of atonement, in this case the sacrifice of his son.⁷³ Donohue sees the fact that Reuben did not fulfill his vow to his father figure, Malvin, as a parallel to him not fulfilling his vow to God, and is subsequently required to make a complete sacrifice to propitiate this Puritan vengeful God.⁷⁴ A reading of the ending of story in this manner overlooks the significant role that Reuben’s unconscious plays at the point in the story. Additionally, Hawthorne’s use of uncanny language from the shooting scene, as discussed above, does not suggest that Reuben is consciously aware of who or what he is shooting.

A stronger argument as to the ambiguous ending of this story focuses more explicitly upon the power of Reuben’s unconscious, and the effects of Malvin’s symbolic burial. Some scholars see the ending as enlightening for Reuben: Daniels and Newlin argue that by killing Cyrus, Reuben is able to awake from his dream-like trance because he has finally paid for his sin and laid his guilty soul to rest by symbolically killing a version of himself; Kau argues that Reuben, by admitting to Dorcas that he has killed his son instead of lying to her as he did regarding her father’s death, has succeeded in

⁷³ Byers, “The Geography and Framework of Hawthorne’s ‘Roger Malvin’s Burial,’” 18.

⁷⁴ Donohue, “‘From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns,’” 14.

recognizing his dark self and accepting both his conscious and unconscious self.⁷⁵

Opposing the enlightenment readings are scholars who see the ending as indicative of Reuben's further descent into his own self-created delusions. Reuben is still misguided in his thoughts; he incorrectly believes that he has expiated his self-inflicted guilt, when in actuality he now suffers from an illusion of absolution.⁷⁶ Schulz sees the shooting of Cyrus and Reuben's reaction to it as a triumph of Reuben's morbid imagination and a withdrawal even further into subjective consciousness.⁷⁷ These arguments, though more negative, more clearly identify the role that Reuben's unconscious plays at this juncture. Reuben *believes* that he has expiated his guilt, but all he has done is performed an action that removes the guilty feeling.

As Crews argues, Reuben is in a way more enlightened because he has rid himself of his compulsive guilty feeling, but his ultimate salvation at the end of the story remains unclear.⁷⁸ Similar to the ending of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Hawthorne does not leave the reader with a simple and conclusive ending. Just as the reader does not know whether or not Robin stays in the town or returns to his country home, the reader of "Roger Malvin's Burial" does not know whether or not Reuben tears and prayers are indicative of true salvation, or only believed salvation. The moral ambivalence that Hawthorne ends this story with is indicative of the ultimate unknown areas that are an

⁷⁵ Daniels, "Hawthorne and his Audience: History, Dream, and Moral Values," 126; Newlin, "'Vague Shapes of the Borderland,'" 88; Kau, "Individuation and the Poetics of Justice," 180-1.

⁷⁶ Fishman, "Imagined Redemption in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 261,

⁷⁷ Schulz, "Imagination and Self-Imprisonment: The Ending of 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 185.

⁷⁸ Crews, "The Logic of Compulsion in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" 463.

inherent part of the human condition. As he was in the beginning, Reuben remains a liminal character because his journey throughout this story is cyclical; he ends in the same place where he began. While it is true that Reuben considers his sin expiated, it is unclear whether or not Reuben is even able to discern between expiation and further descent into illusion, nor whether his feeling of salvation at the end of the story continues or is exposed to be unfounded.

In this story of initiation of a youth into the more adult world of reality, Hawthorne shifts his focus from the actual journey that his protagonist takes and how various interactions within that journey affect the character's unconscious towards an exploration of the effects of the character's unconscious, both within and outside of himself. By beginning the story with the event that most changes Reuben, Hawthorne is able to explore more thoroughly just how such a traumatic and morally critical event can manifest itself in a character's life. Additionally, Hawthorne uses a morally ambiguous historical battle as the framework for the story as a way to indicate that the content of the story itself will be morally ambiguous as well. As Levin writes, "the historical setting does serve to remind us that American history, like all moral experience, should be read with critical sympathy."⁷⁹ Here, as in the other short stories, Hawthorne manipulates and is critical of history as a way to heighten the psychoanalytic portion of his story. In placing Reuben in a manipulated setting of a morally questionable historical event, Hawthorne is able to explore Reuben's ambiguous source of guilt, as well as the effects of his guilty compulsion.

⁷⁹ Levin, "Modern Misjudgments of Racial Imperialism in Hawthorne and Parkman," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 13 (1988): 158.

CONCLUSION

TIME TRANSCENDENT QUESTIONS

The preceding chapters focused on a dualistic approach that can be used to analyze and understand Hawthorne's protagonists. A different yet still profound understanding of these characters occurs through analyzing them using a combination new historic and psychoanalytic lens, with a specific emphasis on the effects of liminality upon these characters. By emphasizing their liminal states, where the protagonist attempts to balance the complicated threshold between conscious and unconscious understanding of self, a new layer is added to the story, and more significant conclusions are drawn about the character.

In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Robin begins his journey as a country bumpkin: overconfident, unable to grasp the gravity of his situation, and wholly obtuse. As soon as he steps foot in the town that is so far removed from his previously understood sense of reality, Robin begins to encounter a number of different characters who all play a part in his gradual journey into liminality. After these encounters, Robin experiences a moment alone, where he slips into a dream-like state, finally affording him the opportunity to access his unconscious self. Robin's journey to liminality is slow, and he oscillates between his former self and his newly understood identity. It is not until he sees his kinsman tarred and feathered that a loud laugh emanates from him, indicating a significant emotional moment: the letting go of his former structured and rationalized self. Hawthorne ends this story ambiguously as a way to highlight liminal state where Robin now finds himself. Neither Robin nor the reader knows if Robin will choose to

stay in the town or return to his countryside home, yet it is clear that in either case, Robin's own understanding of self has changed.

In "Young Goodman Brown," Brown is also obtuse in the beginning of the story. He relies upon his wife, Faith, and his skewed understanding of and admiration for the people in his community. Because of this reliance and misunderstanding, Brown believes that he can enter the woods and stand strong against the wickedness of the devil. Like Robin, Brown experiences various interactions during his night in the woods, all of which force him to question his preconceived notions about himself and his community. Hawthorne expertly utilizes uncanny language to accomplish this; the reader can never be sure that what Browns sees, hears and experiences actually occur or are part of a nightmarish dream sequence. The nightmarish experience triggers Brown's unconscious to become more powerful, and he loses control of his former, more conscious sense of self. Once Brown realizes that the communion of his race includes not only his revered community, but also his own Faith, he is unable to occupy the same place his the society. Brown believes that what he experienced in the woods that night actually happened; therefore, he spends the rest of his life teetering on the threshold between his former place in society and his newly understood sense of self. Brown is a liminal character at the end of the story because he is unable to find or form a place for himself in his community. While the town seemingly continues to function as it did prior to Brown's excursion into the woods, the simple concept that Brown had about his town is shattered and replaced with a chaotic and perversely enlightened understanding.

"Roger Malvin's Burial" does not follow the same process as "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," or "Young Goodman Brown." This story focuses almost exclusively

upon Hawthorne's treatment and exploration of the power of Reuben's unconscious self. His youthful and innocent (or even obtuse) self is not highlighted in this story; instead, the story first shows Reuben already in the midst of the wilderness as he is forced to come to terms with a moral crisis. This singular moment in his life has profound and lasting effects upon Reuben and how he spends the next eighteen years of his life. Like Brown, Reuben's return to his frontier town does not equate with a return to his previous understanding of his reality. Instead, the guilt that he feels over both lying to Dorcas and not keeping his vow to Malvin steadily turns him into a sad man who is unable to get along with his community. Ostensibly in search of a new start to life, Reuben eventually leaves his town to return to the wilderness, and at this moment, his unconscious self takes over. Reuben cannot physically control where his body takes him, nor what his body does. He has lost all understanding of his rational self and has given himself completely over to his unconscious mind when he shoots his son. Reuben believes that he has redeemed himself by shooting Cyrus and symbolically burying Malvin, but again the ending is left wholly ambiguous. Hawthorne does not tell the reader whether or not Reuben has been truly saved, thus leaving him in a continued state of liminality.

A significant focus of this thesis is the exploration of the many psychoanalytic similarities between these three stories. All of these protagonists went through some type of psychological change that caused them to question their previously understood sense of self and community that resulted in their existing within a more liminal state. While it is clear that a psychoanalytic reading explains and strengthens this argument, significant portions of the argument are further strengthened when the new historical framework outlined in Chapter 1 is used to synthesize the stories.

In each of the stories, it is clear that Hawthorne used his vast and extensive knowledge of New England history to set the scene. What is also clear, and of greater value for the purposes of this thesis, is how Hawthorne interpreted and manipulated his own understanding of history to fit the specific purpose for each story. In doing so, Hawthorne stories support Nietzsche's position that all history is just an interpretation of actual events. By setting each story in or around a semi-tangible historical location or event, but changing or altering the commonly understood perception of said location or event, it is not only Hawthorne's protagonists that are in a liminal state, but also the entire historical setting of his stories. In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," the story takes place in what appears to be Boston, although this is never explicitly stated. It also takes place around in 1730, although the actions of the other characters in the story are more true to the 1770's. In "Young Goodman Brown," the exact location of the story, Salem Village, is given in the first sentence of the story. The exact date of the story, however, is never mentioned. Instead, Hawthorne uses both subtle and not so subtle clues and references about witches and witchcraft to suggest that the story takes place around the time of the witch trials in the late 17th century. Finally, in "Roger Malvin's Burial," both an exact time and exact location are given in the opening historical paragraph. A close reading of this opening paragraph reveals Hawthorne's ironic treatment of Lovell's Fight; this irony is compounded by the lack of bravery and heroism exhibited by Reuben, one of the few survivors from the battle.

Hawthorne does not only manipulate the setting and time of his stories, he also uses an interesting combination Nietzschean/Foucauldian to expose misconceptions about history. Specifically in his treatment of history, it is clear that Hawthorne used the

historical events and locations that he chose for his stories because they all reveal a discontinuity between the “actual” (as far as it is possible to know “actual”) events and how these events are understood by future generations. For example, Hawthorne never explicitly exposes a bias towards a particular side in “My Kinsman, Major Molineux.” Neither Robin, the mob, nor Major Molineux himself are portrayed in a significantly positive or negative light. As an American author, one may assume that Hawthorne clearly favored the American side, but there is no evidence of this in the text. Similarly, in “Young Goodman Brown,” and “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” Hawthorne takes controversial events from American history (Salem Witch Trials and the effects of westward expansion) and writes each story in such a way that it exposes the commonly accepted but overall faulty understanding of these events by Americans. Hawthorne focuses on the subtle disruptions and discontinuities between the text and history, and refuses to write another version of a given historical event. By placing himself more as an observer of particular historical events, Hawthorne provides an interesting commentary about history.

Hawthorne’s focus on the discontinuities between history and text is compounded by Greenblatt’s theory of chaos becoming the new normal. Hawthorne’s ambiguous endings for all three of these stories suggests that he is not looking for or trying to provide a sense of unity at the end. Instead, he uses the ambiguity or ambivalence of his protagonists at the end of his stories as a way to heighten their liminal states. In “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” it is wholly unclear whether or not Robin will stay at the end of the story or return to his country home. Robin cannot occupy any other space at the end of this story, though, because it is precisely this lack of understanding of his new self

that gives him the opportunity to explore his new self. Brown's ending is also ambiguous: he remains in his town but cannot form any meaningful relationships with his family or his community. Brown's understanding of his community has been turned upside-down; there is nothing and no one on whom he can rely yet he remains trapped and unhappy in Salem Village. Reuben leaves his frontier town behind, and after killing Cyrus, believes that he has been redeemed and that his guilt has been expiated. Yet, in similar fashion to the two previous stories, the ending is ambiguous and no form of closure is provided. The endings of these three stories all place the protagonists in a chaotic world, be it a mob scene, a midnight witch/devil gathering, or the shooting of a family member. Their relatively "normal" previous lives have been overcome by this new and chaotic world. By highlighting the new world of chaos where these protagonists exist, Hawthorne leaves each character in a state of liminality, which in turn forces them to navigate through their complicated new (mis)understandings of self.

In the conclusion of his discussion on Hawthorne's earliest tales, Michael Colacurcio expertly summarizes how Hawthorne uses history in his fictional stories:

Hawthorne's texts everywhere present us with historical names and facts (or version of facts)...To learn the meaning of these words, from whatever source, is to study history. To study the relevant history is to learn to construe the text. To construe the text is to be instructed in the difference between the events of the past and their legend or "story," as solemnly celebrated in occasional poems or as soberly editorialized in the newspapers...And we should at least entertain the notion that to interpret his tales is to deconstruct, one by one, the various chapters of an emergent American mythology.¹

The aforementioned speaks to the longevity and timelessness of Hawthorne's tales, particularly his early short stories. Hawthorne begins these stories using versions of history that are well known, but does not simply use these histories as a simple

¹ Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety*, 130.

framework for his stories. Instead, Hawthorne delves into the discontinuities and misconceptions of these historical locations and events. Hawthorne then writes his protagonists into this expertly manipulated understanding of history and adds in the next, psychological layer of his stories. The events and crises that these protagonists face are indicative of the events and crises that all humans face: be it as simple as leaving ones home for the first time, to the complexities and unanswerable questions that revolve around the nature of good and evil, or guilt and sin. The quality of Hawthorne's early tales is a result of his ability to seamlessly combine the historical with the psychological; an added dimension to his work is found when various new historical theories are applied to the stories. An analysis of Hawthorne's early stories using the new historical and psychoanalytic framework is not meant to give readers answers to the ambiguities within Hawthorne's stories; the liminal state of the three protagonists instead suggests that readers should continue to ask and seek answers to the meaningful and time transcendent questions that the three protagonists asked in their stories.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abel, Darrel. "Black Glove and Pink Ribbon: Hawthorne's Metonymic Symbols." *The New England Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (June 1969): 163-180.
- Achilles, Jochen. "Purgers and Montaged Men: Masculinity in Hawthorne's and Poe's Short Stories." *American Studies* 47, no. 4 (1998): 577-592.
- Adams, Richard P. "Hawthorne's Provincial Tales." *The New England Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (March 1957): 39-57.
- Allison, Alexander W. "The Literary Contexts of 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 23, no. 3 (December 1968): 304-311.
- Anderson Jr., D. K. "Hawthorne's Crowds." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 7, no. 1 (June 1952): 39-50.
- Autrey, Max L. "'My Kinsman, Major Molineux': Hawthorne's Allegory of the Urban Movement." *College Literature* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 211-221.
- Bensick, Carol M. "Hawthorne's Tragicomic Mode of Moral Allegory." *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 43, no. 1/2 (1989): 47-59.
- Birdsall, Virginia O. "Hawthorne's Oak Tree Image." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 15, no. 2 (September 1960): 181-185.
- Bunge, Nancy. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Study of Short Fiction*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.
- Byers, John R. "The Geography and Framework of Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 21 (1976): 11-20.
- Carlson, Patricia Ann. "Image and Structure in Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *South Atlantic Bulletin* 41, no. 4 (November 1976): 3-9.
- Carpenter, Richard C. "Hawthorne's Polar Explorations: 'Young Goodman Brown' and 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24, no. 1 (June 1969): 45-56.
- Castle, Gregory. *The Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Coale, Samuel Chase. *The Entanglements of Nathaniel Hawthorne: Haunted Minds and Ambiguous Approaches*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011.

- *In Hawthorne's Shadow: American Romance From Melville to Mailer*. Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1985.
- *Mesmerism and Hawthorne: Mediums of American Romance*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998.
- Cochran, Robert W. "Hawthorne's Choice: The Veil or the Jaundiced Eye." *College Literature* 23, no. 5 (February 1962): 342-346.
- Colacurcio, Michael J. *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne's Early Tales*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Colebrook, Claire. *New Literary Histories: New Historicisms and Contemporary Criticism*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1997.
- Cook, Reginald. "The Forest of Goodman Brown's Night: A Reading of Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown.'" *The New England Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (September 1970): 473-481.
- Costopoulos-Almon, Olga. "A Previously Unnoted Source for Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Notes and Queries* 34 (1987): 40.
- Crews, Frederick C. "The Logic of Compulsion in 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Modern Language Association* 79, no. 4 (September 1964): 457-465.
- Crowley, J. Donald, ed. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Collection of Criticism*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975.
- Daly, Robert J. "History and Chivalric Myth in 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 109, no. 2 (1973): 99-115.
- Daniels, Patsy J. "Hawthorne and his Audience: History, Dream, and Moral Values." *LATCH* 2 (2009): 115-128.
- Donohue, Agnes McNeill. "'From Whose Bourn No Traveller Returns': A Reading of 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 18, no. 1 (June 1963): 1-19.
- Doubleday, Neal Frank. *Hawthorne's Early Tales: A Critical Study*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1972.
- Downes, Paul. "Democratic Terror in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux' and 'The Man of the Crowd.'" *Poe Studies/Dark Romanticism* 37 (January 2004): 31-35.
- Duban, James. "Robins and Robinarchs in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 38, no. 3 (December 1983): 271-288.

- Erlich, Gloria Chasson. "Guilt and Expiation in 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 26, no. 4 (March 1972): 377-389.
- Fishman, Burton J. "Imagined Redemption in 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Studies in American Fiction* 5, no. 2 (Autumn 1977): 257-262.
- Fogle, Richard H. "Ambiguity and Clarity in Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown.'" *The New England Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (December 1945): 448-465.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Edited and Translated by James Strachey. New York, NY: Norton, 1990.
- Gibadi, Joseph, ed. *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures* 2nd ed. New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America, 1992.
- Gilman, Sander L., ed. *Introducing Psychoanalytic Theory*. New York, NY: Brunner, 1982.
- Goulimari, Pelagia. *Literary Criticism and Theory From Plato to Postcolonialism*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015.
- Grayson, Robert C. "The New England Sources of 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *American Literature* 54, no. 4 (December 1982): 545-559.
- "Thomas Hutchinson and Robin's Molineux Problem." *Studies in the American Renaissance*. (1982): 177-194.
- Gross, Seymour L. "Hawthorne's 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux:' History as Moral Adventure." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 12, no. 2 (September 1957): 97-109.
- Hanover House. *The Complete Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. New York, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1959.
- Harding, Brian. *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Critical Assessments*. 4 vols. East Sussex: Helm Information Ltd., 1998.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The American Notebooks*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.
- *Twice- Told Tales*. Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1882.
- Herbert Jr., T. Walter. "Doing Cultural Work: 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux' and the Construction of the Self-Made Man." *Studies in the Novel* 23, no. 1 (1991): 20-27.
- Herndon, Jerry A. "Hawthorne's Dream Imagery." *American Literature* 46, no. 4 (1975): 538-545.

- Hochberg, Shifra. "Etymology and the Significance of Names in 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 26, no. 3 (1989): 317-321.
- Hoffman, Daniel. "Yankee Bumpkin and the Scapegoat King." *The Sewanee Review* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1961): 48-60.
- Hostetler, Norman H. "Narrative Structure and Theme in 'Young Goodman Brown.'" *Journal of Narrative Technique* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 221-228.
- Hurley, Paul J. "Young Goodman Brown's 'Heart of Darkness.'" *American Literature* 37, no. 4 (January 1966): 410-419.
- James, Henry. *Hawthorne*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1879.
- Jones, Bartlett C. "The Ambiguity of Shrewdness in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 3, no. 2 (Fall 1962): 42-47.
- Jones, Victor H. "Laughter in Hawthorne's Fiction." *College Literature* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 57-61.
- Juhasz, Paul S. "The House of Atreus on the American Frontier: Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial' and the Search for an American Mythos." *CEA Critic* 68, no. 3 (2006): 48-58.
- Kau, Joseph. "Individuation and the Poetics of Justice: Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 33 (1988): 165-182.
- Keil, James C. "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': Early Nineteenth-Century and Puritan Constructions of Gender." *The New England Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (March 1996): 33-55.
- Leavis, Q. D. "Hawthorne as Poet." *The Sewanee Review* 59, no. 2 (Spring 1951): 179-205.
- Liebman, Sheldon W. "'Roger Malvin's Burial': Hawthorne's Allegory of the Heart." *Studies in Short Fiction* 12, no. 3 (1975): 253-260.
- Leibowitz, Herbert A. "Hawthorne and Spenser: Two Sources." *American Literature* 30, no. 4 (January 1959): 459-466.
- Levin, David. "Modern Misjudgments of Racial Imperialism in Hawthorne and Parkman." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 13 (1988): 145-158.
- "Shadows of Doubt: Specter Evidence in Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown.'" *American Literature* 34, no. 3 (November 1962): 344-352.

- Levy, Leo B. "The Problem of Faith in 'Young Goodman Brown.'" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 74, no. 3 (July 1975): 375-387.
- Lovejoy, David S. "Lovewell's Fight and Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *The New England Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December 1954): 527-531.
- Lynn, Steven. *Texts and Contexts: Writing About Literature with Critical Theory*. 4th ed. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2005.
- Machor, James L. "Pastoralism and the American Urban Ideal: Hawthorne, Whitman and the Literary Pattern." *American Literature* 54, no. 3 (October 1982): 329-353.
- McCullen, J. T. Jr. "Ancient Rites for the Dead and Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (1966): 313-322.
- McGann, Jerome P. *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- McIntosh, James. "Nature and Frontier in Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *American Literature* 60, no. 2 (1988): 188-204.
- McKeithan, D. M. "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': An Interpretation." *Modern Language Notes* 67, no. 2 (February 1952): 93-96.
- McWilliams, John P. Jr. "'Thorough-Going Democrat' and 'Modern Tory': Hawthorne and the Puritan Revolution of 1776." *Studies in Romanticism* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1976): 549-571.
- Miller, Paul W. "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': Cynicism or Meliorism?" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 14, no. 3 (December 1959): 255-264.
- Newlin, Paul A. "'Vague Shapes of the Borderland': The Place of the Uncanny in Hawthorne's Gothic Vision." *ESQ* 67, no. 2 (1972): 83-96.
- Newman, Lea Bertani Vozar. *A Reader's Guide to the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979.
- Orians, G. Harrison. "The Source of Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *American Literature* 12, no. 3 (November 1938): 313-318.
- Ortolano, Guy. "The Role of Dorcas in 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *The Nathaniel Hawthorne Review* 25, no. 2 (1999): 8-16.
- Paulits, Walter J. "Ambivalence in 'Young Goodman Brown.'" *American Literature* 41, no. 4 (January 1970): 577-584.

- Pearce, Roy Harvey. "Hawthorne and the Sense of the Past or, the Immortality of Major Molineux." *ELH* 21, no. 4 (December 1954): 327-348.
- "Robin Molineux on the Analyst's Couch: A Note on the Limits of Psychoanalytic Criticism." *Criticism* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1959): 83-90.
- Pebworth, Ted-Larry. "'The Soul's Instinctive Perception:' Dream, Actuality, and Reality in Four Tales from Hawthorne's 'Mosses from an Old Manse.'" *The South Central Bulletin* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1963): 18-23.
- Reynolds, Larry J., ed. *A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan, ed. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd Ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998.
- Robinson, E. Arthur. "'Roger Malvin's Burial:' Hawthorne and the American Environment." *Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal* (1977): 147-166.
- "The Vision of Goodman Brown: A Source and Interpretation." *American Literature* 35, no 2 (May 1963): 218-225.
- Ronan, John. "'Young Goodman Brown' and the Mathers." *The New England Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (June 2012): 253-280.
- Russell, John. "Allegory and 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *The New England Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (September 1967): 432-440.
- Schulz, Dieter. "Imagination and Self-Imprisonment: The Ending of 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 10 (1973): 183-186.
- Shaw, Peter. "Fathers, Sons, and the Ambiguities of Revolution in 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *The New England Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (December 1976): 559-576.
- Stein, William Bysshe. "Teaching Hawthorne's 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux.'" *College English* 20, no. 2 (November 1958): 83-86.
- Stoehr, Taylor. "'Young Goodman Brown' and Hawthorne's Theory of Mimesis." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 23, no. 4 (March 1969): 393-412.
- Thompson, W. R. "The Biblical Sources of Hawthorne's 'Roger Malvin's Burial.'" *PMLA* 77 no. 1 (March 1962): 92-96.
- Turner, Arlin. "Hawthorne's Literary Borrowings." *PMLA* 51, no 2 (June 1936): 543-562.

- Van Doren, Mark. *Nathaniel Hawthorne*. New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1949.
- Weber, Samuel. *The Legend of Freud* 2nd ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Whelan, Robert Emmer Jr. “‘Roger Malvin’s Burial:’ The Burial of Reuben Bourne’s Cowardice.” *Research Studies* 37, no. 2 (June 1969): 112-121.
- Wineapple, Brenda, *Hawthorne: A Life*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003.
- Wolfreys, Julian, Kenneth Womack, and Ruth Robbins. *Key Concepts in Literary Theory* 3rd ed. George Square, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2014.
- Woodberry, George E., *Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1902.