

Structure of Hawthorne's Young Goodman Brown

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Structure of "Young Goodman Brown"

"Almost all literary theorists since Aristotle have emphasized the importance of structure, conceived in diverse ways, in analyzing a work of literature" (Abrams 300). This essay will explore some interesting points in the structure of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," considering the time-frame, foreshadowing, suspenseful incidents, climax and denouement (Axelrod 337).

The narrative in this tale is straightforward until the narrator, late in the story, asks the reader: "Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest, and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?" This query gives the reader the option of believing that the story is mostly a dream. The tale encompasses a period of time from sunset, when the young Puritan Goodman Brown leaves his wife in the doorway of their home, till the next morning when he returns to Salem village after spending the night in the woods.

As Brown leaves the house at the beginning of the story, his wife Faith foreshadows coming events with her reference to dreams:

"Dearest heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her [lips](#) were close to his ear, "pr'ythee, put off your journey until sunrise, and sleep in your own bed tonight. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts, that she's afraid of herself, sometimes. [Pray](#), tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year!"

Faith's use of dreams as an [excuse](#) for her husband to stay home on this particular evening is anticipatory of Goodman's experience in the woods, which turns out to be possibly a dream; in other words, the bulk of the narrative could be only a dream. The devil, furthermore, introduces the ...

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...ith Goodman until his dying day: "And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave, a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors, not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone; for his dying hour was gloom."

In this essay we have seen some interesting points in the structure of "Young Goodman Brown," including the time-frame, the use of foreshadowing, suspenseful incidents, climax and denouement.

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