

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the thesis writer states her reasons for choosing Nathaniel Hawthorne and his short stories, “Young Goodman Brown”, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”, and “The Birthmark” as well as her topic of the thesis. She also presents the statement of the problem, the purpose and importance of writing this thesis. The scope and limitation, the methodology of the research and the organization of the thesis are also in this chapter.

#### **I.1. Background of the study**

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804, at Salem, Massachusetts, a village still well known by its 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritanism. He died on May 19, 1864 after a lingering illness in Plymouth, New Hampshire, during a trip with Franklin Pierce. He was buried at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord,

Massachusetts (Magill, 1314-17). Nathaniel Hawthorne was well known as an American writer that achieved an unfaltering reputation as an author of short stories, romances, essays, and children books (Magill, 1314). Many of his short stories were originally published anonymously in such magazines as the Token and the New England Magazine between 1830 and 1837. During his lifetime, he had produced some novels, such as Fanshawe (1828), The Scarlet Letter (1850), The House of the Seven Gables (1851), The Blithedale Romance (1852), and The Marble Faun (1860). The other collections were Twice Told Tales (1837, expanded 1842), Mosses from an Old Manse (1846), and The Snow Image (1851). He also produced some stories for children, edited several books, and even wrote a biography for the presidential campaign for Franklin Pierce (Magill, 1314).

The thesis writer is particularly interested in studying Nathaniel Hawthorne because of several reasons. First, it is because of his reputation as a writer who was well known for his special blend and alternation of light and darkness. He enabled the readers to respond naturally to a writer who explored the darkness to the very limits (Unger, 244). He offered enough complexity and mystery to hold a wide variety of readers. His writings seemed to be very simple, yet the tales were most skillfully contrived that they offered problems and required intense critical analysis (Davidson, 361). Few nineteenth-century American writers today seem so likely to reward rereading as Hawthorne (Unger, 245).

Second, it is because Hawthorne was particularly masterful at carrying his moralistic message through metaphoric image in his writing (Poirier, ix).

Hawthorne's moralistic message filled with unhappiness. It was because he was burdened by the sins of his Puritan forefathers. Arlin Turner in his book Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography explains about Hawthorne's childhood that was not really pleasant because of the history of his ancestor that was interwoven with its good and evil. Hawthorne viewed his Puritan ancestor with a mixture of pride and guilt since Hawthorne's ancestor was the judge in the witchcraft trials. Hawthorne was proud of his prominence and accomplishments, but on the other hand, Hawthorne felt guilty for his ancestor's part in the witch trials and intolerant prosecution of Quakers (Turner, 5). Hawthorne himself admitted that he was haunted by the figure of the prominent but guilty ancestor (Turner, 6).

Among the Puritans, the word 'nature' was virtually synonymous with 'sin'. Hawthorne was the descendant of a Puritan witch hunters and a member of New England society, the moral standards of which had been strongly conditioned by its Puritan heritage. Hawthorne was obsessed with the nature of sin and with the psychological results of violating the taboos imposed by this system. That is why, Leonard Unger in American Writers, A Collection of Literary Biographies noted Hawthorne for his masterful exploration of the psychology of guilt and sin (Unger, 223). From that special ability in exploring guilt and sin, Edward H. Davidson in Major Writers of America stated that Hawthorne was not a mere tale teller but also a skilled artist (Davidson, 361).

Another reason that makes the thesis writer choose Nathaniel Hawthorne is because Hawthorne had a sense of the depth and complexity of man's inner life (Pearson, ix). It is because Hawthorne had a Puritan instinct within himself which was one of honest and sober introspection. This instinct makes Hawthorne

capable of understanding the complexity in man's heart, whether it is good or evil one (Pearson, x).

Nathaniel Hawthorne's writings were inseparable from the geographical and cultural backdrop of the New England landscape. Both were deeply rooted in the traditions and morality of its Puritan inhabitants. Most of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novels and short stories were representatives of the problems most writers of his era had with Christianity and Calvinism (Kaul, 85).

According to Rene Wellek in his book Theory of Literature, there is a relationship between an author and his works. He explains that the relation between the private life and the work is not a simple relation of cause and effect (Wellek, 77). It has a unique relation, that a work of art cannot be said as a mere copy of life. It has various meanings, for example it can be the author's dreams that completely different from the author's life, or it may be the 'mask', the 'anti-self' behind which the real person is hiding, or it may be the picture of the life from which the author wants to escape (Wellek, 78).

Based on Rene Wellek's opinion, the thesis writer states the fourth reason for choosing Hawthorne, since the thesis writer believes that there is a relation between Hawthorne's life and his works that contains his idea about evil nature in mankind. This idea is supported by Arlin Turner, the author of Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography, who once recognizes Hawthorne's life and writings as components of a consistent whole' (Turner, 33). That is why she will discuss Hawthorne's works that can be connected to his point of view about evil existence in humanity. Especially knowing that Hawthorne's past was closely related to the existence of evil nature in mankind.

The thesis writer is particularly interested in Hawthorne's works because she thinks that Hawthorne's life is unique and that it really influences his works of art. Norman Holmes Pearson in The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne showed that Hawthorne lived an ordinary and mysterious life, like his works (Pearson, ix). While George E. Woodberry in Nathaniel Hawthorne also stated that Hawthorne used to keep himself from the social life (Woodberry, 152). From this fact, the thesis writer agrees with Edward H. Davidson's opinion in Major Writers of America that Hawthorne was popular of his solitary existence as a result of his withdrawal from the world (Davidson, 362).

Norman Holmes Pearson in The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne said that Hawthorne's knowledge of the complexity of man's inner life was based on his psychological approach toward himself (Pearson, x). Moral and religious concerns are almost always central in Hawthorne's work, but Hawthorne's interest in them is primarily subjective and psychological. That is why, for Hawthorne, fiction is a way of exploring life to find meaning (Unger, 230).

Arlin Turner in his book Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography, said that Hawthorne begins by dissociating himself from the committed believers among his fellow townsmen. While they go to church, he stays at home and peeps at them through the window. He hears the bells but misses the sermon – and feels no loss. He finds aids to faith everywhere, not only in the sound of the bells. Even the sunshine seems to have a special "Sabbath" quality about it (Unger, 232).

Even Hawthorne himself once says;

“Doubts may flit around me, or seem to close their evil wings, and settle down; but so long as I imagine that the earth is hallowed, and the light of heaven retains its sanctity, on the Sabbath-while that blessed sunshine lives within me-never can my soul have lost the instinct of its faith. If it have gone astray, it will return again” (Unger, 232).

This speech concludes that Hawthorne’s point of view about faith is similar to the ‘religion of the heart’. Religion of the heart considers earth as a holy thing, and by living in earth, Hawthorne can find the sources of his faith from his life experience. Hawthorne’s religious side arouses the thesis writer’s interest in analyzing Hawthorne’s works further.

Two of his short stories that will be discussed in this thesis, “Young Goodman Brown” and “The Birthmark” were made when he lived in the old manse. There, as said by George E. Woodberry in his book Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hawthorne enjoyed the freedom in the place that first seemed to him like real home. He and his wife pleased their fancy with thinking of it as a native paradise, with themselves as the new Adam and Eve (Woodberry, 115). There, Hawthorne spent a great deal of time doing nothing in particular; he read, observed the world of the passing seasons, made long memoranda of nature and human nature (Woodberry, 152).

Another magnificent fact about Hawthorne that interests the thesis writer is his adopted philosophy on his life. It is the philosophy of uncertainty both in his private life and in his fiction (Donaldson, 216). This philosophy helps Hawthorne to develop a writing technique in which a mixture of fact and imagination lets the reader make his own interpretations. This fact encourages the

thesis writer to explore and analyze Nathaniel Hawthorne's works, particularly the three of his short stories, "Young Goodman Brown", "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" and "The Birthmark".

In literature, there are several literary genres, such as novel, poem, drama, and short story (Pickering, 1). The thesis writer decides to choose short stories rather than the other literary genres because she is interested in short fiction. James H. Pickering in his book An Introduction to the Short Story shows that short story as a consciously organized, highly unified piece of literary craftsmanship. Stories always constitute an important part of cultural heritage (Pickering, 1). They serve human's need to share knowledge and experience, to teach, and to amuse and delight. Although they are short fictions but their qualities can compete the long fictions since they actually share the same functions. The only different thing is in their length, but this does not make one's weaknesses. Hawthorne's stories nowadays are recognizable as the modern short story (Pickering, 2). These facts support the thesis writer to analyze short fiction, therefore she chooses Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories.

The thesis writer decides to analyze Hawthorne's short stories rather than his novels because his short stories are also very popular. Even though Hawthorne had made many magnificent novels, the short stories that he made were not ordinary short stories, but the memorable ones (Davidson, 361). For example "Young Goodman Brown" is universally acclaimed as one of Hawthorne's best short stories (Guerin, 52). It is published in 1835, when Nathaniel Hawthorne was 31 years old. It is one of the first tales which contains Hawthorne's fullest display of witch lore (Turner, 67). It presents several

ambiguous meanings. It is about a pious young man who sees a difficult vision through his dream. His reaction and his inability show that he cannot accept the reality that is different from his previous faith. The theme of the story is the reality of sin, the pervasiveness of evil, the results of doubt or disbelief, the devastating effects of moral skepticism, the demoralizing effects of the discovery that all men are sinners and hypocrites (Guerin, 53).

“My Kinsman, Major Molineux” is considered as a rare and rich story, yet controlled in meaning (Unger, 229). It is published in 1851 in Hawthorne’s collection The Snow Image. Arlin Unger also says that it is one of the finest short stories in the English language. The theme is the journey from country to city, from simplicity and innocence to complexity and experience. Unger explains that it happens in Boston, on 18<sup>th</sup> century, about forty years before the revolution, as a festive place, where masque and anarchy and playfulness had taken over the streets as a result of the widening political rift between England and the colonies (Unger, 230). The shrewd young Robin searches his powerful kinsman, Major Molineux, who will, he hopes, help him to “rise in the world” (Hawthorne, 1222).

While “The Birthmark” turns out to be one of Hawthorne’s most characteristic and most successful work (Turner, 163). Aylmer is the scientist hero who violates the covenant of humankind when he tries to eradicate the only blemish of his beautiful wife, a tiny mark on her cheek. He succeeds, but kills her in the process. The birthmark, which is shaped like a hand, is her grip upon earthly existence (Leary, 77). In short, “The Birthmark” is a short story about a man of science who, exchanging human sympathy for a pernicious curiosity, ultimately murders those he should love (Turner, 165).



Furthermore, Hawthorne was also well known as the one who was furthering the development of the short story form (Magill, 1314). Therefore, the thesis writer decides to analyze his three short stories, particularly “Young Goodman Brown”(from Mosses from An Old Manse); “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” (from The Snow Image); and “The Birthmark” (from Mosses from An Old Manse). One reason that made the thesis writer interested in Hawthorne’s writing is the simplicity and originality of his work that tempt to overlook what lies beneath (Leary, 76).

The thesis writer decides to choose those three particular short stories rather than the other short stories because they are the famous ones (Salzman, 107) and they share complex interrelationship (Kaul, 86). Furthermore, the thesis writer believes that these three short stories reveals Hawthorne’s personal idea about the evil nature in mankind. To find it out, the writer will analyze them. So, the thesis writer will use those short stories in her study for her thesis.

Furthermore, Hawthorne’s writing was on its ‘neutral ground’ – the junction between the actual and the imaginary. Hawthorne was unrivaled as an allegorist, especially as one whose character typologies and symbols achieve universality through their psychological validity (Magill, 1314). While, ‘dream’ is one thing that is between the actual and the imaginary. From this idea, the thesis writer believes that the three short stories share a relationship with the dreams that occur in each short story.

The topic of this thesis is the evil nature in mankind. The thesis writer chooses this topic because these three short stories reveal the evil nature in mankind. In addition, the thesis writer is personally interested in analyzing the

evil nature in mankind and she believes that from these three short stories she will get the answer of her question about the existence of evil in mankind.

### **I.2. Statement of the problem**

The thesis writer wants to find out how the evil nature in mankind is revealed in Hawthorne's short stories, "Young Goodman Brown", "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", and "The Birthmark".

### **I.3. Purpose of the study**

The thesis writer is going to find the way the evil nature in mankind is revealed in Hawthorne's short stories, "Young Goodman Brown", "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", and "The Birthmark".

### **I.4. Significance of the study**

Thus, through this thesis, the thesis writer wishes to show the evil nature in mankind, and how it is revealed in Hawthorne's short stories. The thesis writer also wishes that from reading this thesis, it will give the inspiration for the readers to create another study toward these three Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories, "Young Goodman Brown", "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", and "The Birthmark". Moreover, the thesis writer also hopes that this thesis will become one example of the study of evil nature in mankind.

### **I.5. Scope and Limitation**

The scopes of the analysis of her study is the topic of the thesis that is the evil nature in mankind. She limits the analysis in the three major characters in the short stories, such as Brown in “Young Goodman Brown”, Robin Molineux in “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”, and Aylmer in “The Birthmark”. The thesis writer also limits the discussion only on human’s evil nature.

### **I.6. Methodology**

The thesis writer uses library and on-line researches through the internet as a method of collecting the data that will help her and support her analysis and study. The primary data that the thesis writer is going to use are the short stories themselves. The short stories’ titles are “Young Goodman Brown”, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”, and “The Birthmark”, published in Modern Library 1937 at The Complete Novels & Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The secondary data that she also uses to help her analyze the short stories are the literary criticisms that can be applied to this particular works of Hawthorne.

The thesis writer will read the primary data then collect some critics’ opinion, which relates to the ‘evil as the nature of mankind’. Then the thesis writer is also going to collect the critics about the author, and his works. Since most of the source of her analysis comes from the short stories themselves, the thesis writer will have to use literary devices to support her analysis by using literary approach. The literary devices used here are characterization and conflict.

The thesis writer also uses some definitions of certain terms concerning the topic she is going to discuss in the thesis in order to avoid confusion. Then she will analyze the data, and then relate to the main point in the thesis. The final step is making the conclusion of this thesis.

### **I.7. Organization of the Study**

The thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, in which the thesis writer explains about her considerations in choosing the particular author, the short stories and the topic of the thesis. She also presents the statement of the problem in the thesis, the purpose and importance of writing this thesis, its scope and limitation, and the methodology of the research she is conducting. The following chapter will be about the review of related literature. It includes literary devices, such as characterization, and conflict. Besides she also manages to find some important terms concerning her topic. The definitions of important terms are also a crucial part of chapter two because they support the writer's analysis in chapter three. Chapter three will discuss about the evil nature in mankind, which the thesis writer divides into three parts based on the three short stories, "Young Goodman Brown", "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", and "The Birthmark". Then, in chapter four, the thesis writer will make the conclusion of the whole thesis.