

Self-Deception in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Selected Short Stories through a Sartrean Lens



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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nafisa". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

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Abstract

Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories delve into complexities of the human condition, exploring how individuals react to an emotional or intellectual crisis. Hawthorne's works, as part of the literary subgenre of dark romanticism, explore darker psychological and moral aspects of the human condition, often incorporating elements of his Puritan heritage. This research considers the theme of moral and psychological fallibility observed in Hawthorne's four selected short stories – "The Minister's Black Veil", "Young Goodman Brown", "Ethan Brand" and "Rappaccini's Daughter", and how this appears to stem from self-deception in individuals. In response, the research explores the presentation of self-deception within these stories through a cohesive theoretical framework derived from the lens of existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, consisting of bad faith and authenticity in conjunction with the Look. The devised framework analyzes how Hawthorne's characters respond to a psychological or moral crisis not only through sin or guilt as commonly explored, but also in terms of conflicts of the self internalized by the evasion of choice, responsibility or freedom through self-deception from a secular perspective that does not attach divine connotations. This is a qualitative literary analysis founded upon close reading of the primary texts and consideration of current literature on Hawthorne's works. The key findings demonstrate how bad faith and authenticity provide a solid understanding of self-deception, and how the internalization of the Look plays a key role simultaneously. The research contributes to literary criticism by highlighting how Sartre's, and by large, existential concepts in general continue to reveal new philosophical perspectives in literary works, and how this enables these works to be studied as profound expressions of the human condition.

Keywords: self-deception, bad faith, authenticity, the Look, Jean-Paul Sartre, existential

Chapter 1

Introduction

Among 19th century authors of American literature, Nathaniel Hawthorne is significantly notable for his exploration of the darker psychological and moral aspects of the human condition. Belonging to the Romantic literary subgenre of Dark Romanticism, his fiction delves into the somber and unsavory elements of the human psyche, such as self-destructive psychological torment, moral fallibility and religious hypocrisy. Essentially, Dark Romanticism highlights the inevitable vulnerability of humans to suffer and succumb to these concepts, and Hawthorne's characters tend to strongly reflect this in their narratives. Hawthorne has written an extensive number of short stories, published across multiple collections, and the narratives often demonstrate a consistent pattern of individuals avoiding the truth or self-confrontation in response to an existential crisis in a manner that ultimately leads to their downfall in some way. This brings the theme of self-deception into consideration, and the consistent pattern invites a closer reading of these works from an existential perspective that can provide broad insights into the individuals' existential perceptions. Hawthorne's themes have traditionally been explored through a religious lens, accounting for the influence of his Puritan upbringing which fuelled him to expose corruption and hypocrisy in the Puritan self-righteousness (Elbert 6). This is certainly invaluable and relevant, but it also highlights a scope for analysis through a more secular philosophical perspective, including one that has an individualistic focus on the internal conflicts of the self rather than emphasizing on divinely guided judgment or redemption. The theories conceptualized by Jean-Paul Sartre fulfill such criteria, as developed in his seminal work on existentialism, *Being and Nothingness*. In particular, a framework devised by his concepts of bad

faith, authenticity and the Look provide grounds for delving into the self-deception that affects characters across these short stories and highlighting fine similarities or differences in its mechanism in an individual. Moreover, the framework shifts the focus on Hawthorne's works from the usual theologically heavy interpretations to a more concrete focus on the individual as their independent self.

The research objective is to explore how self-deception presents itself in its outward expression and inner workings in a selection of four short stories that demonstrate a strong portrayal of this theme – “The Minister's Black Veil”, “Young Goodman Brown”, “Ethan Brand” and “Rappaccini's Daughter”. In each of these stories, the protagonist faces a psychological dilemma that exposes their self-deception, but the narrative may also highlight other secondary characters that are dealing with self-deception. Through the application of Sartrean theories, this research aims to present these dilemmas as manifestations of self-deception. Consequently the analysis will showcase how the self-deception is lucidly clarified through bad faith and the necessity of authenticity for the existential condition; how the rejection of authenticity causes an individual's downfall. Simultaneously, the Look will showcase external expressions of self-deception in the individual and its internal effects in their role either as an Object under the Look or the Other projecting the Look.

Hence, the research question is as follows - how can a Sartrean existential framework consisting of bad faith, authenticity, and the Look be used to analyze the mechanisms of self-deception in Nathaniel Hawthorne's selected short stories? This aims to inquire into how the Sartrean theories, devised from a non-literary context are applicable to the literary expressions of

self-deceptions in the selected short stories, and to provide a refreshing contrast to the traditional psychoanalytical and religion-based critique that dominates existing research on Hawthorne.

This research utilizes a qualitative, literary and textual method of analysis. By closely examining the characters' interactions, thoughts, feelings and attitude in each story and significant any symbolism or metaphor in the narratives, key highlights of self-deception are identified and interpreted through a Sartrean lens. Additionally, drawing upon existing literary analysis on Hawthorne provides supporting context and validity for the scope of analysis in each story.

By focusing on Sartrean concepts instead of other explored existentialists – Kierkegaard's religious subjectivity, Heidegger's broader, abstract concepts relative to life and death and Camus's niche absurdity, the research provides a new take on existential applications to Hawthorne's works with a unique framework devised especially to address the theme of self-deception. Furthermore, Sartre's emphasis on individual interpersonal dynamics is highly relevant to analyzing the inner mechanisms of what they deal with within them. Hence a potential research gap is identified in this regard, that can be filled by introducing this research's new take on a theme in Hawthorne and the introduction of Sartrean theories, which have never been done before. Broadly, this contributes a new perspective to existential concepts in literary contexts and establishes Hawthorne's works within greater philosophical discourse about the human condition.

Chapter 2

Methodology

The research examines a selection of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories – "The Minister's Black Veil", "Young Goodman Brown", "Ethan Brand" and "Rappaccini's Daughter". A qualitative research method grounded in analyzing the primary texts and research has been utilized. Jean-Paul Sartre's theories of bad faith, authenticity and the Look, outlined in his seminal work *Being and Nothingness* have been utilized to create a cohesive theoretical framework.

In his work *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre provides insight into the concept of the self and existential themes fundamental to life, i.e. consciousness, free will, and human nature, and relevant elements including choice, responsibility and freedom that relate to the individual's daily living. Ultimately, Sartre asserts the need to live in authenticity which is essentially a complete awareness of the self in free will. An examination of bad faith reveals how an individual engages in self-deception – the essence of this is that the individual exists in a state of falsehood that extends inwards rather than outwards; they lie to themselves about what they can or cannot do and fixate upon a particular role or perception of reality that is false or not the complete truth. The contrasting concept of authenticity is basically the opposite of bad faith; it is the state of being authentic to oneself, which entails breaking free from self-deception and is achieved when the individual transforms themselves on the basis of their newfound truth. Finally, the Look is applied in conjunction with these concepts to demonstrate how self-deception works in the context of a subject being an Object of the Other's gaze or the

Other's perception of the Object or Objects as this provides important insight into how they look at elements of reality.

The aforementioned short stories were selected for their shared depiction of characters dealing with self-deception, which makes them suitable candidates for an analysis on the basis of the chosen theoretical framework. While other works by Hawthorne share some thematic similarities, these particular stories present a strong suggestion of self-deception that is compatible with bad faith, authenticity and the Look. Therefore, aligning with the theme of self-deception, this research analyzes how bad faith manifests in "Young Goodman Brown's" dream-allegory and how the Look of the Other plays a role, the dynamics of the Look in "The Minister's Black Veil" and how it demonstrates bad faith, catastrophic consequences of bad faith in "Ethan Brand", and finally, multiple expressions of bad faith in "Rappaccini's Daughter" and how those in bad faith conduct themselves as projectors of the Look. The way in which characters across the stories reject the potential to evolve towards authenticity, which could enable them to break out of self-deception, is explored in the context of each consciousness in bad faith.

Thus, through textual analysis in conjunction with the given framework, the expression of self-deception and its impact on the highlighted characters are revealed. An interpretive approach to themes and symbols as well as psychological dynamics, in combination, also allow for a systematic method of identifying patterns of self-deception and how they resonate or differ across the texts. In addition, the variations in the textual analysis contrast the different characters across the short stories to portray the diversity and universality of human experience in this regard. The secondary material which this research draws upon offers insights into

interpretations across various dimensions of thought, the conceptualization of human nature as well as the context for Hawthorne's literary style that is reinforced by his timeline and corresponding philosophical heritage. In this manner, the existing greater academic scholarship is accounted for and incorporated into the specifications of this research. Much of current scholarship attaches theological, namely Biblical, elements to analyses; hence the Sartrean lens of this research takes on a secular approach that emphasizes the philosophical and psychological essence of the texts in a different manner compared to the traditional approach.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

This study reviews key concepts regarding the human experience in Hawthorne's works, particularly of the short stories that form the primary material for the research. It examines how Hawthorne created complex characters who are confronted with dilemmas in their journey of life. Also highlighted is their potential relevance in analyzing self-deception, and Sartre's theoretical framework of bad faith and authenticity in conjunction with the Look that provides the foundation for this analysis. For this review, core perspectives that account for literary and philosophical intersections will be considered to gain a comprehensive understanding of the inner self within Hawthorne's characters and the universality of it that is necessary to relate to Sartre's notions of the human condition.

In his work *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre establishes the philosophy of his existentialism, analyzing concepts of consciousness and being and their relevant elements and critiquing a range of other schools of thought including Heidegger and Husserl to justify his rationale. He classifies existential states as being-in-itself, which simply exists, and being-for-itself, which is conscious and capable of defining itself through action. Sartre explains that humans, who are beings-for-themselves, are condemned to freedom due to the burden of responsibility for their choices. In this context are the concepts of authenticity, which discusses the nature of living true to oneself, and bad faith, which is essentially the opposite and refers to the trappings of self-deception. Another central concept is the perception of the Other through the Look, which heightens awareness of the being as Objects being observed and consequently affects their self-perception. The book presents an in-depth understanding of the concept of the

self that answers questions about human beings' actions in light of its existential state, which creates a framework for understanding how the concept of deception works within the self and its manifestations and consequences within Hawthorne's characters.

In "Hawthorne, Champion of the Middle Way", Chester E. Eisinger argues against dominant interpretations of Hawthorne's works, citing heavy emphasis on the gothic and theological aspects. While acknowledging them as invaluable, Eisinger asserts Hawthorne's essence as one of moderation and uses his short stories to demonstrate. This shows how Hawthorne adopts a dualistic theory that highlights potential and limitations in the individual's capacity, and advocates for this in his condemnation of characters who pursue extremes of the mind and heart. To comprehend his middle path, the importance of looking at the intention behind his literary devices is emphasized and this leads to understanding how Hawthorne critiques life itself. The contribution of his nineteenth-century experience and Puritan knowledge is considered as well. Hence, Eisinger's work prepares for analyzing the primary texts of this research through the chosen theoretical lens, as a comprehensive understanding of the writer's essence in his works is necessary to conduct a grounded analysis.

Expanding upon Hawthorne's short story characters, Melvin W. Askew in "Hawthorne, the Fall and the Psychology of Maturity" analyzes them in terms of the Biblical fall of man from a psychological, rather than the commonly theological, dimension. It discusses the characters' transformation, and equates the divine fall to a loss of innocence, where innocence is likened to the idealized world or Eden. The loss is deemed necessary for maturity in the face of complexities, and the article discusses the receptivity for adaptation in certain characters and a contrasting rejection in others. It includes insights into the short stories that form the primary

material for this research. This makes it important in understanding the psychological implications behind the theme of self-deception and how each character deals with this in their unique context. Moreover, it demonstrates how the protagonists fail to mature in conditions requiring some form of accountability that can be aligned with Sartrean notions of bad faith and its consequences.

A close reading of the article “Hawthorne’s Black Veil: From Image to Icon” by Samuel Coale exposes the central focus in “The Minister’s Black Veil”, the black veil shrouding the face of the minister, as a profound emblem for the Puritan community. Initially it is acknowledged as a nondescript object, and then examined as an allegorical sign. Coale utilizes theories relative to image and idolatry to demonstrate how the veil’s power lies in gazing upon it and how it becomes a projection of the beholder’s internal dilemma. He also acknowledges how Hawthorne realized the veil as a literary image of power in *The American Notebooks*. Coale’s work is crucial to understanding the symbolic undertones and psychological impact of the veil upon the characters, and the examination of the gaze further contributes to the research’s alignment with Sartre’s theory of the Look.

Additionally, G. A. Santangelo in “The Absurdity of ‘The Minister’s Black Veil’” analyzes the story drawing upon Søren Kierkegaard’s philosophy of alienation and absurdity. Santangelo also seeks to show how the harshness of moral evolution can be explained as a journey from an illusory sanctuary to a confrontation with uncomfortable truths, with results of sublime awareness or anguish dependent on the individual. The way in which individuals deceive themselves in this transformation and its outcome is explored through the minister’s actions. Ultimately, elements of existential absurdity are revealed in the dynamics of

self-deception. This work offers insights into Søren Kierkegaard's existential philosophy which helps to comprehend the gap in previous existential study on Hawthorne's works as well as provide insight into how the Sartrean nature of this research makes a differing analysis of self-deception explored in the article.

In "Young Goodman Brown's 'Heart of Darkness'", Paul J. Hurley discusses how the evil in "Young Goodman Brown" is a presentation of a distorted mind. He contrasts critics with differing perspectives – Mathhiessen and Stein present Goodman Brown as a deliberate seeker of evil, while Levin argues that it is the devil's deception. Hurley disagrees with Levin and argues that the evil originates from Brown's inner self rather than any external force and manifests itself in accordance with triggers. The devil is viewed as an extension of Brown's psyche, and the forest setting a reflection of his psychological turmoil. The article thus provides insight into the inner workings of Brown's being. The insights gained from this lead the way for an analysis of Brown's inner self-deception within the framework of this research.

An enhanced insight into Brown's inner workings of the self can be secured through the exploration of ambivalence in Walter J. Paulits's article "Ambivalence in 'Young Goodman Brown'". Paulits defines ambivalence as conflicting feelings within the individual when confronted with a decision or a set of values, as opposed to ambiguity which refers to mixed meanings. He acknowledges both ambiguity and ambivalence in the story, but with ambivalence as the encompassing theme. Here, Brown's inner struggles are presented in a more complex light with ambivalence in regard to good and evil, and right and wrong. Therefore, Brown's story is shown to be an allegory of ambivalence, and one that ends in a tragic state of existential disillusionment for him as he fails to navigate the moral ambivalence of the self. It paves the way

to explore how unknowingly spiraling into Sartrean bad faith leads to living in inauthenticity and its consequences.

Cyril A. Reilly's analysis of the dog in "On the Dog's Chasing His Own Tail in 'Ethan Brand'" with reference to Hawthorne's personal experience in his journal *The American Notebooks* outlines Hawthorne's revision process, offers insight into his creative vision and showcases how the dog's humanized actions are a parallel of the protagonist Ethan Brand's own activities in "Ethan Brand". In the analysis of Hawthorne's revisions, his refinement of language is highlighted in its thematic depth as he draws inspiration from an incident in reality and modifies it accordingly. The dog's unusual behavior of chasing its own tail is shown to be a mirror of Brand's futile quest for the Original Sin. The narrative of the scene involving the dog's chase and surrounding reaction intensifies the understanding and absurdity of Brand's existential concerns, and the realization of Brand's epiphany that leads to his suicide. Furthermore, it provides comprehension of the entrapments of bad faith. Reilly's analysis leads to an understanding of the thematic vividness of the story as well as how Hawthorne utilizes language, which is necessary to assess the protagonist's complexities.

Building further upon this, in "The Unity of Hawthorne's 'Ethan Brand'", Kevin Vanderbilt details Brand's quest to show how Hawthorne achieved a circular unification structurally and thematically. He discusses how Brand's journey is initially driven by human inquisitiveness that escalates into an isolating imbalance of the mind and heart, which warps his humanity. Brand then meets his demise after his epiphany within the flames of the same kiln where his inquiry first dawned upon him. Vanderbilt also highlights Hawthorne's use of circles in the scene with the dog as well as the audience around the circular kiln, and draws upon

Nietzsche's philosophy of tragedy and Emerson's theory of circles with regard to existential dilemma. Thus, this article lends a new perspective to Brand's self-deception that leads to his despair, worth introspecting within the theoretical lens of this research.

Roy R. Male's article "The Dual Nature of Evil in 'Rappaccini's Daughter'" examines the dual nature of good and evil in "Rappaccini's Daughter". Their worldview is taken into account – Baglioni's skepticism, Giovanni's clash between his imagination and intuitive thoughts of Beatrice, and how the former's worldview overrides the other. Thus, contrasting perspectives of imagination and intuition are shown. Parallels are drawn with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, as Giovanni and Beatrice are likened to Adam and Eve. As a result, the article takes on theological undertones in analyzing Giovanni's struggle to distinguish between worldly illusions and spiritual truths. The article's incorporation of perception versus reality is particularly important as it aligns with an analysis of bad faith in Giovanni's character, as well as his sensory judgment with regard to Beatrice that escalates into a tragic case of self-deception leading to her demise.

Furthermore, the male characters' perception of Beatrice and how it is a projection of their desires is examined in depth in Richard Brenzo's "Beatrice Rappaccini: A Victim of Male Love and Horror". It highlights Giovanni's inner conflict in contrast with his outwardly demeanor, and Rappaccini's imbalance of the mind and heart that shapes his treatment of Beatrice. Through these characters, whose actions lead to her death, Beatrice is analyzed as a victim. Brenzo's analysis of how Beatrice is perceived is crucial to understanding how Sartre's theory of the Look applies here, contributing further to the study of self-deception in this story.

Therefore, the assessment reveals a consistent resonance of internal struggles within Hawthorne's characters across the highlighted works that share mutual similarities despite

differences in experiences. It also highlights how perceptions, values and choices of the self and others interact in a manner that impacts the individual's journey. Influences of the author's background in Puritan nineteenth-century America are also noted to be a contributory factor regarding the nature of his writing. However, much of the existing scholarship analyzes Hawthorne's works from a theological angle, especially with regard to man's downfall. This creates a research gap in regard to Sartrean existentialism, as this school of existential thought highlights a secular emphasis on the self; moreover, Sartre's philosophy was driven by a non-theistic essence which focuses on internal workings of the self. Hence, it justifies the objective of this research, which would lead to comprehensive understanding of how the self deceives itself.

Chapter 4.1

“The Minister’s Black Veil”: Self-Deception in Self-Righteousness

Central to the significance of “The Minister’s Black Veil” is the nondescript veil – the minister, Reverend Hooper’s simple act of donning this causes much uproar in the community of Milford. The veil itself is indicated to be the sinner’s burden; it is essentially a “figural emblem” (Newberry 170) that denotes exegetical significance on the subject of sin, and in Milford’s context it creates a varying yet mutually resonant impact upon the minister and his community. This highlights a complex dynamic between the Look and the concepts of bad faith and authenticity on both ends, as Milford community’s unusual reaction and the minister’s apparently sudden eccentricity are both cause for analysis.

The villagers’ reaction to the change in the minister’s appearance – a familiar figure of holy guidance in their community – is notable due to its intensity. The act of donning the veil, an unremarkably plain black fabric overshadowing the facial features, transforms him into something fearfully unfamiliar in their eyes. The manifestation of the Look, and their resulting Objectification, occurs in the moment they are faced with the “convergence of his ocular globes” (Sartre 257) upon them under the veil. The veil is described as, although not obstructing his sight, seemed “to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things” (Hawthorne, *Twice-Told Tales* 53). This alludes to how the Object of the Look is perceived in his worldview as the Other. The visceral reaction of discomfort and uneasiness stirred within anyone on the receiving end of his gaze can be explained by the effect of Objectification (Sartre 260) – the onlooker’s being is immediately affected by an awareness of changes within the perception of their being due to the awareness of the Other that gazes with a specific perspective.

However, they cannot reason why they feel such deeply negative feelings towards this superficial visual change. The church sermon, which on any other day would sound amiable, has a disorientating impact on this particular day that reverberates through the audience, said to be caused by something “either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors” (Hawthorne, *Twice-Told Tales* 55). As the subject of the sermon is secret sin, it is as if the minister’s darkened perspective under the veil’s influence is stripping bare the secrets of the sinners before him, but they are not enlightened to this. They are affected, but instead of searching within themselves, again, why they feel this way, they convince themselves that it must be the somber speech or wild imagination, and move on to muse upon his eccentricity with their scrutinizing eyes. Therefore, they also deceive themselves in the suppressed awareness of their own Objectification - seemingly projecting the Look instead when in actuality it is the Objectification minister’s Look that causes them to feel in a particular manner.

In the case of bad faith, Sartre states that it is a lie to oneself as a unity of the deceiver and the deceived within a singular consciousness (Sartre 49). Hence, the villagers, rather than reflecting upon how the nature of the sermon calls to their own sinful selves, and why the veil could trigger such a tumultuous reaction, reason with themselves by speculating aloud that the minister must be mad, or something is amiss with him alone. Their consciousness, in lieu of their Objectification by the Look, is affected by bad faith, since it is not a process one undergoes, but an affliction of the consciousness. The story demonstrates how the Look showcases the effect of bad faith in their consciousness. In the process, they deny themselves the privilege of existing authentically. This upholds their status as ordinary, righteous onlookers, while Hooper inadvertently becomes the scapegoat of their projections. The first step towards Sartrean authenticity would be a deep self-reflection that would have purifying effects upon the results of

bad faith. But this, in itself, is not enough – the self must morally commit to the results and make the necessary changes to embrace authenticity (Sartre 742). However, it is evident that the collective consciousness of Milford's residents is far too affected by bad faith to allow any scope for evolution towards authenticity, and they continue to firmly fixate on their speculations that the minister must be eccentric, or burdened with some secret sin. It may be that they project their own sinfulness upon him – at the maiden's funeral which he solemnizes, some superstitious ones speculate afterwards that they envisioned him and the maiden's spirits holding hands in an insinuation of adultery. In this manner, they continue to deceive themselves by not considering the possibility that they are perhaps projecting their own sinful narrative onto him, or that their train of thought has been corrupted by worldly cynicism without the basis of rationality.

Moreover, the entire community continuously postpones an agreed meeting to formally confront the minister regarding his veil out of sheer fear, showcasing a stubborn denial of authenticity as they insist on the perspective they have established in their bad faith. It is only during his dying hour that they are forced to confront the Object they have become under the Look, and their bad faith is exposed. As he forcibly insists upon taking his veil to the grave and, finally, the aghast onlookers vocally accuse him of carrying a grave sin, he finally cries out to them to reflect upon themselves and adds, "I look around me, and, lo! On every visage a Black Veil!" (Hawthorne, *Twice-Told Tales* 69). This has a powerful effect as they flinch from each other, instead of collectively flinching away from the minister in the way they have done throughout the course of the story. This shows that they have finally been made aware of their bad faith, and that they have only been deceiving themselves all along in their alienation of him. It can also be said that their collective moral dynamic, grounded in Puritan righteousness, has

been a subconscious defense mechanism for them against the unpleasant truth, because self-deception has been the easier option.

At this junction, a question forms about whether the minister's ways therefore represent authenticity in this regard. For this there is negative evidence, because his own consciousness is affected by a different manner of bad faith. He is an egotist with a monochromatic vision who denies himself natural human instincts and cuts himself off from the earth that is his natural home (Stibitz 190), and therein lies the irony as his egotism is "a parable of that hidden sin he wishes to expose", suggesting that he deceives himself in his own intentions. "A Parable" is the subtitle to this story, as appearing in Hawthorne's short story collection *Twice-Told Tales* and it thus paints this story as a lesson in morality. Moreover, Hawthorne acknowledges in a footnote in regard to his subtitle the existence of a New England clergyman, Joseph Moody, who had veiled himself for life as he had accidentally caused a friend's death (Hawthorne, *Twice-Told Tales* 52). In this light, the minister's role as a harbinger of morality is worth looking into in the context of bad faith and authenticity. There are several excerpts in the story that lend weight to this.

The narrator suggests that the frightened onlookers at the church sermon are equally frightening to the minister himself. His bearing is such that the veil casts a barrier between him and the holy book, begetting the narrator to question whether he intends to hide from the divinity addressed. This suggests that the minister, while aware of his own sin in his symbolism with the black veil, has not come to terms with confronting it. Furthermore, a churchgoer in conversation speculates about the strange effect of the veil, and wonders if the minister would be afraid to be with himself. This is answered positively for the reader when the minister flees, aghast, upon glimpsing his own reflection in a mirror, as the narrator posits "for the Earth, too, had on her

Black Veil” (Hawthorne, *Twice-Told Tales* 59). Hence, while he possesses enlightenment that the villagers do not, he is still paralyzed with the same fear upon viewing himself. Additionally, he is subject to the Look himself, but in this case the Other is an imagined possibility, because Sartre confirms that a physical pair of eyes is unnecessary; any possible third perspective in the object’s awareness is capable of simulating the Look (Sartre 257).

The minister takes no action to resolve the fear of his own reflection and condemns himself to the way he represents himself as a sinner. Even when his devoted fiancé beseeches him to let her gaze upon his visage, he refuses to give in with such adamance it condemns him to solitude until his dying hour. The minister’s consciousness is in bad faith, as he simplifies the complexity of the human condition to that of the symbolism he has undertaken. He freezes himself within the condemned role of the eternal sinner and stagnates within it even in the grave where he is laid to rest with the veil. It can thus be argued that although he envisioned a truth the others around him could not see, he deceived himself because it was only a partial truth that did not take into consideration the whole of human experience, particularly its joys and the significance of reality. Though his vision that struck through social denial gave him an illusion of authenticity, he ultimately fails to truly see himself. Thus, the veil became an enforced barrier preventing his transcendence. Since there seems to be no hint of transcendence for the community of Milford, it is evident they are caught in an illusion of bad faith until they reach greater self-awareness.

Chapter 4.2

“Young Goodman Brown’s” Dream-Allegory of Self-Deception

The case of “Young Goodman Brown’s” titular protagonist is a journey towards a revelation, which lends scope to be interpreted in terms of the Sartrean notions of self-deception of this research. In the process of his journey, Brown “rejects the actual and real, clings to the dream of perfection and security, and lives by that disastrously” (Askew 341) which highlights the prominence of his bad faith and an adamant denial of authenticity. The nature of reality in Brown’s story is uncertain, as his journey into the forest could be the imaginative result of a psychological crisis, or a “dream-allegory”, or perhaps a cross between a dream and external worldly referents (Levy 375).

Prior to the journey, Brown tenderly bids his wife, Faith, farewell, and he is evidently lucid as he inwardly pities her perceived innocence in light of his journey’s sinister nature. His inner musings in this aspect demonstrate how his consciousness is already in bad faith – he acknowledges to himself his upcoming dalliance with the devil, but he thinks that afterwards he will “cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven” (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 103). He has already deceived himself into believing that this intention will redeem him from the gravity of the sin he is about to commit, and that he is free from accountability of moral agency. Considering that the story may be interpreted in terms of the Puritan problem of faith that the dream-allegory is allegedly based upon (Levy 375), Hawthorne used the concept of faith, represented by Faith herself, as he ultimately intended to critique the Puritan hypocrisy of faith (Elbert 6). He also simply states Faith “kept him back awhile” when explaining his lateness to his devilish companion. The phrasing of this is important as it also represents his resistance to

the goodly innocence that Faith stands for, hinting at an inner struggle of conscience that he ignores, and instead he lies to himself by denying himself agency and blaming his wife.

Brown's devilish companion is vividly described to be "bearing a considerable resemblance to him (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 104), which, in the context of the dream-allegory, suggests that the devil is a projection of Brown's own capacity for evil upon an external entity. Here again his bad faith is evident - he believes sin to be the effect of external influences rather than an inherent part of himself. In a way, this is not just Brown's self-deception but that of the Puritans' – in their pride as members of a model colony of divine virtue, they believed themselves to be responsible only to God and saved by Him (Heike 150-151). To solidify this point, during the journey, Brown hypocritically trudges forward while proclaiming reluctance, exclaiming how his ancestors had been "honest men and good Christians (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 106); in Sartre's terms they were in bad faith by lying to themselves about their moral innocence, as shown in the devil's response. The devil responds with descriptions of Brown's ancestors' injustice committed against Quakers and Native Americans, citing how he has been as close with them "as ever a one among the Puritans" (106), which unmasks how the Puritan consciousness has been in bad faith by straying from their original values in their actions as authority-holders. The following course of conversation suggests that Brown is struggling with his bad faith – considering the devil as his internal projection to which he is denying these revelations in bewilderment, he is rejecting his subconscious awareness of the innate nature of sin; the devil responding with mockery and laughter highlights the aspect of struggle. As Brown chances upon Goody Cloyse in his journey, the pious catechizer of his youth, consorting with the devil, his bewilderment continues to increase and so does the evidence of his self-deception in bad faith. He questions why he should

follow his companion like the “wretched old woman he thought was going to heaven” (106), when she is making the very same journey he thinks he will be forgiven for by the grace of God. After a certain length of the journey, Brown struggles enough to stop and prepare to return home, “applauding himself” for possessing a “clear conscience” (111) only for it all to fall apart as he is confronted by visions of his reverend and his entourage proceeding on the same journey, demonstrating how flimsy his perceived resolve is.

Brown’s episode of anguish in the forest, when he has visions of Faith as well, provides insight into his potential for authenticity or lack thereof. He valiantly proclaims, “With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!” (113) and as soon as he glimpses Faith’s stray ribbons fluttering away he despairs “My Faith is gone!” (115). When he declares the former, it seems that he has regained some clarity of resistance against the devil, but simultaneously, he is a hypocrite to regard heaven on his side when he has condemned his fellows in his visions embarking upon the same journey even before the destination has been reached. Secondly, he is quick to crumble when he feels that he has lost Faith to the devil, and this exclamation is also a metaphor for his loss of faith. It demonstrates that he has deceived himself as being a firm believer of goodness when he has been debating with himself all along the path, and his spiral into despair shows the fragility of his will. The first step towards authenticity is to proceed through self-reflection which would lead to clarity of mind; he is unable to reach that state because he is in such delirious despair at having his perfect illusion of a virtuous world shattered.

The devil’s induction ceremony in the forest is the climax of Brown’s confrontation with his self-deception. The surreal nature of the scene, with Brown’s familiar community

members standing against hellish flames framed by the gloom of the forest, can be interpreted as the collapse of his moral perceptions against inner turmoil. It is during this time that he finally feels with them a “loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart” (119), and thus perceives the sinfulness in himself and all of them. The devil’s elaboration of sins committed by the community, of lustful church elders and homicidal family members, can be interpreted as Brown’s, and in effect the Puritan’s, awareness of these dark secrets, which they have chosen to repress and deceive themselves to be paragons of virtue but which are now laid bare in this dream of revelation. The following scene of Brown and Faith’s welcome – with the devil declaring that evil is all there is and Brown’s despair at being “partakers of the mystery of sin” (122) highlight the black-and-white manner of his thinking that has possibly shaped his bad faith. Until the revelation of his fellow townspeople, Brown had tormented himself for being a sinner among the virtuous, but as these virtuous individuals surface in his vision, he is hammered with the sense of finality that everything worldly is corrupted by evil. This is confirmed as he ultimately resorts to a life of solitude, in complete belief that there was no goodness in anyone around him. It was a “dream of evil omen” (124) for him, and it was also an omen of his doomed inauthenticity. This is because he cannot comprehend the ambiguity of human nature; that good and evil may coexist.

The dynamic of the Look in alignment with bad faith and authenticity is much more subtle in “Young Goodman Brown” – it is not as overbearingly evident in its significance as in “The Minister’s Black Veil”. But it incorporates further insight into Sartre’s concept of the third perspective in the Look. In the course of the story there is a looming sensation of Brown being observed, and in this context he is the Object of the Other. Since the Other can be any third perspective, throughout the forest journey, he is always in view of the Other. This is because, in

the dream-allegory, even the forest takes on sentient qualities in the vivid narrative. Even Brown is unsure whether he hears his fellow sinful travellers or “the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind.” (114). Regardless of whether he is in conversation with the devil, or surrounded by the unfathomable forest, or faced with his neighbors at the devilish ritual, there is always a third perspective that can project the Look. Considering that his journey is that of a conflict between sin and virtue, and he even acknowledges the heavens above him, it can be interpreted that his Puritan consciousness feels Objectified by an otherworldly doctrine that influences the world around him and makes him feel consciously observed. The Look is not just a mere projection of the Other’s self, but a “pure reference to myself” (Sartre 259), and in this regard the apprehension of the Look is not about the presence of another but an awareness of one’s vulnerability, which begets the question of what being observed means for the Object. Hence, Brown’s hallucinatory dream can be interpreted as the result of an inner turmoil due to the Look he feels subjected to in the everyday Puritan lifestyle of sermons and strict virtue, that salvation can only occur at the mercy of the ever watchful Holy Being (Heike 151). This makes it easier to comprehend why he is steeped so deeply in bad faith, and broadly, refers to the Puritans’ self-deception in their perceived righteous ways.

Chapter 4.3

Ethan Brand's Self-Annihilation through Self-Deception

The titular protagonist of “Ethan Brand” expresses particularly strong parallels with the example of Sartre’s example of the waiter in bad faith. Sartre argues that the waiter is only the waiter in representation; the individual in the role is separated as the “object from the subject” (Sartre 60), by a nothingness that isolates the two. But when the consciousness misunderstands that fixed identity as the subject itself, it has been affected by bad faith.

This is evident in Brand, who becomes so fixated upon his quest for the origins of the Unpardonable Sin that the seeker becomes his sole identity and he discards all duties and relationships to pursue his philosophical career, replacing other aspects of his self, only to find that the Sin lay in his own heart. This has been a journey for him, much like Goodman Brown’s journey towards the revelation of inherent wickedness in humankind. However, unlike Goodman Brown, it is a journey of self-deception that lasts eighteen years, and takes him across different worldly places. But the reader only finds vague impressions of the details and experiences of this journey because the focus of the story is on the climax. It had begun as a spark of enlightenment that drove him from being an “unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence” (Hawthorne, *The Snow-Image* 105), which highlights the vast intellectual development he has undergone and its prominent resonance. It then begets the question of when the bad faith affects his consciousness and how it impacts this seemingly stellar development. The answer lies in the imbalance of his mind and heart over the course of eighteen years, which had created such a dynamic that his mental faculty had developed by destroying the humanity of the heart (Reilly 980-981). This reduced him to a circular loop of logic with no truly intrinsic evolution of the self

and which ultimately spirals, collapsing unto itself (Vanderbilt 453), and stunted his potential for authenticity as his bad faith maintained this loop. A demonstration of this is made in the scene with the otherwise sensible, elderly dog chasing its own tail in nonsensical loops, which Hawthorne drew inspiration from an incident detailed in *The American Notebooks*, utilizing the humane mannerisms of the dog's futile chase to symbolize the absurdity of Brand's life purpose (Reilly 975-978). Coming back to the example of the waiter, he may realize to himself "in vain do I fulfill the functions" (Sartre 60) when he comprehends his self-deception. This is akin to Brand's similar realization in the face of the dog's chase, which happens as he breaks out into a haunting laugh filled with hopeless despair that "expressed the condition of his inward being" (Hawthorne, *The Snow-Image* 103).

Unlike the protagonists of the previously discussed stories, Brand does demonstrate a potential for authenticity as he contemplates deeply the meaning of his quest. In his final lamentation at the kiln, he acknowledges the flaws in his approach – the discarded human connections and the mind-heart imbalance. He is conscious of his bad faith, however, authenticity would require him to recognize his freedom to make choices that would make his existence meaningful in relation to the values obtained (Greene 267). This freedom is also subtly acknowledged in Hawthorne's *The American Notebooks*, where he observes in the reference to the anthropomorphic dog that it "seemed to be its own master" (Reilly 978), and hence, capable of creating its own meaningful and principled destiny.

But instead of taking the necessary steps for authenticity, Brand chooses to annihilate himself in the lime kiln because he believes that there is nothing more to be done; he was on the cusp of authenticity with his self-reflection but chooses to destroy his existence instead of

existing with evolved principles and a new sense of accountability. Sartre elaborates that one's values are their own creation, and thus their burden of responsibility (Greene 266). Brand fails to take that responsibility that could have led him to authenticity, moreover, he did not reconcile with the nature of the Sin that was an inherent part of the human condition, as asserted by Biblical origins (Stock 133). Furthermore, in the aftermath of his suicide, the lime-burner discovers that his heart was such that it survived the flames encased in his ribs, hard as marble. On a symbolic level, this physical unnaturalness shows how he died still entrapped in the self-deception that had caused the imbalance of his mind and his heart, because he had created "a proud, isolated prison of the self" (Vanderbilt 453).

Similar to "Young Goodman Brown" the Look is much more subtly implied as to its effects within this story, but in this specific case Brand is the Other projecting the Look, and his self-deception affects his perception of the Object. In one example the Object is the old man's missing daughter whom he had applied his psychological experimentation to, and the results of which had "wasted, absorbed, and perhaps, annihilated her soul" (Hawthorne, *The Snow-Image* 99). In other words, she had undergone Objectification through Brand's warped scrutiny, which he had convinced himself was the only way, only to produce unexpected results that haunted him until he realized that he was looking for the Unpardonable Sin in others while it had been in himself all along. Brand's consequences can be explained in terms of the Look – the daughter's apprehension of his appraisals of value-laden judgments from her position as a worldly existence in time and space, and thus an available subject to the Other's appraisal (Sartre 267), had tormented her essentially to self-destruction. In another example of Brand's self-deception via the Look, the Object here – the boy attempting to gaze through the bioscope reels back in horror because the "eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him" (Hawthorne, *The Snow-Image* 101). Brand

projects the Look particular to his consciousness upon the Object, and evokes within him the harrowing feelings that are the results of his journey's contemplation. This highlights how Brand had once again deceived himself into a black-and-white perspective regarding the fruits of his journey, and instead of embracing the coexistence of redeemable virtue and unpardonable sin, he perceived complete and utter corruption within him and everyone around him. Thus, he exercises his Objectification in the context of the Look with a distorted outlook, not realizing this imbalance, and the reader sees the consequences of his self-deception expressed within the Object.

Chapter 4.4

“Rappaccini’s Daughter”: Contrasting Cases of Self-Deception, with a Common Victim

“Rappaccini’s Daughter” differs from the previous stories significantly when it comes to analyzing self-deception from a Sartrean perspective. This is because the secondary characters are significantly fleshed out and the focus is not primarily on the protagonist. This allows for a fresh take on how the interconnected dynamics of bad faith, authenticity and the Look work in each individual simultaneously. Although the protagonist is Giovanni, it is through Rappaccini’s daughter, Beatrice, that these dynamics are best understood, as she is the central focus of the other characters in the story. Though no fault of her own, she becomes the object of these characters’ fears and desires, and is “credited with (or at least punished for)” it (Brenzo 153), hence she is forced to bear the brunt of their intentions and actions.

The expression of bad faith resonates with the imbalance of mind-heart imbalance in “Ethan Brand”, but in this case, there is a case of contrast between Giovanni and Rappaccini as they lean towards opposite directions of the imbalance. Rappaccini immerses himself in his experiments from a purely scientific perspective, with no regard for the ethical concerns, and would sacrifice his own daughter for the sake of scientific advancement. This is comparative to his heart hardening to marble, much like Ethan Brand (Price 402). But Rappaccini’s bad faith runs so deep he truly deceives himself into believing all he does is for the greater good of humanity. It is impossible to say whether he could have pivoted towards the despair of clarity like Brand had, because the story ends with the words of his rival Baglioni exclaiming “and is *this* the upshot of your experiment!” (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 177) Until then, however, he passionately justifies himself to his accusing daughter that he only meant to elevate

her for the greater good, so it can be presumed that at least until the moment of her death he was completely content in his self-deception. It can be said that he is akin to Brand's parallel comparison with the example of Sartre's waiter, but in this case, a scientist who has deceived himself into fixating himself completely in that role and avoiding his responsibilities as a father and a human which results in bad faith's effects of the "inner disintegration of his being" (Sartre 70). The narrator describes him as like an "artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary and finally be satisfied with his success" (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 175) which further emphasizes his fixation on his role at the expense of all else. Thereby the reader sees in Rappaccini a shared fate with Brand in his warped intellect and corruption of the heart.

Giovanni represents the opposite side of the coin in the mind-heart imbalance. He fails to "apply an intellectual corrective to his emotional state" (Price 402) regarding his fluctuating passions for Beatrice. He is tormented with inklings Beatrice's poisonousness as the result of her father's experiment that makes his love become "thin and faint as the morning mist" (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 160) one moment - only to dismiss them when he again appraises her beauty on their next meeting and feels beyond doubt that his spirit "knew her with certainty beyond all knowledge" (161). In this manner he continuously deceives himself; his bad faith lies in his lust that weighs upon his heart with tyrannical passion and causes his intellectual reasoning to soften and jelly (Price 402). Giovanni keeps denying himself the truth until his final, angry confrontation with Beatrice, in which he fully blames her for the poison that he has inhaled over their meetings, that has infected him due to his continual self-denial. His self-deception lies in the fact that he aims "to flee what he can not flee" (Sartre 70) which is a hallmark for bad faith in avoidance. This is until he cannot do so anymore, but then it can be seen he has no scope for

authentic redemption because he refuses to take any accountability and pins the blame of his misery upon Beatrice.

A comparison of Giovanni and Rappaccini is incomplete without an analysis of the shared element in their respective narratives, Beatrice. In the way they have treated her – as the projection of their desire and fear – she is evidently a victim of their distorted Look. They essentially make her the subject of their own impulses without taking accountability (Brenzo 153). As the Object, she is perceived differently by each of them. Rappaccini perceives her purely as the subject of his experiment, which ultimately makes her aware in the end as a “victim of man’s ingenuity and thwarted nature” (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 177) while Giovanni perceives her with lust which affects his conflicting treatment of her, and finally accuses her of being a femme fatale, but the true blame is upon these men, “the homme fatales who made her deadly” (Brenzo 153). She languishes in shame and anguish at Giovanni’s accusatory words, and it is at this moment her awareness as the Object dawns upon her, as feelings of shame or pride reveal to the Object the Other’s Look and their position as Object, which results in the Object feeling as if their freedom has left them (Sartre 261). Moreover, Sartre emphasizes on shame as specifically the awareness of being judged as an Object. Thus, the spiraling aftermath of the Look upon Beatrice has led to her decision to end her life. While doing so, she addresses Giovanni, “thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart; but they, too, will fall away as I ascend” (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 177). This suggests that she feels she can only regain the freedom that has escaped her as Object by removing herself from the subjection of the Look.

The story thus presents a unique dynamic through Beatrice – she is the center of the projection of the Look, by two individuals afflicted with bad faith but in different ways. They deceive themselves into believing their treatment of her is justified, but she expresses herself as the honest victim among them. To Rappaccini she says “I would fain have been loved, not feared” and to Giovanni she asks “was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?” (Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* 177) in the face of their displeasure at her refusal to placate them. Hence, through Beatrice their self-deception is exposed at the climax of the story. They victimize themselves when the true victim has been Beatrice all along, as a consequence of their thoughtless impulses.

Conclusion

The selected short stories by Hawthorne share a mutual element of psychological downfall in one or more than one character. This can be traced back to their self-deception, and the framework of the selected Sartrean theories of bad faith, authenticity and the Look highlights a cohesive pattern for how this self-deception functions in each story. The protagonists, and often the secondary characters, encounter a moment of existential crisis where they are challenged to confront the reality shaped by their perspectives and an unpleasant truth behind it. In these particular short stories it is seen that those in bad faith do not successfully embrace true authenticity, but nonetheless it still provides insight into the redemptive potential of authenticity in individuals who present various manners of bad faith. Moreover, the Look – both as a projection upon one in bad faith and a projection of the one in bad faith – demonstrates the perspective of these individuals towards reality to deepen the understanding of how being an Object can reinforce self-deception, or how the perception of the self affects self-deception in the case of the Other being in bad faith.

The characters in “The Minister’s Black Veil”, “Young Goodman Brown” and “Ethan Brand” share religious connotations in their expressions of self-deception through the concept of Unpardonable Sin, and the application of the Sartrean theories – which do not share the religious elements of Christian existentialism – provides a refreshing take by focusing deeper on the individuals themselves in terms of how they affect others in their self-deception and vice versa, and differing from the popularly Biblical interpretations of these works. The protagonists Reverend Hooper, Goodman Brown and Ethan Brand share similarities in their crisis, but they are each applicable to unique aspects of bad faith and authenticity, as well as the power of the

Look. This shows the importance of how the Sartrean theories, in conjunction, can showcase the minute, differential details of how self-deception can express itself and influence an individual. On the other hand, in “Rappaccini’s Daughter”, Hawthorne is shown to express none of the Puritan aspects in the other works, instead diverting completely from it and highlighting the impact of scientific rationalism, which allows for a differing analysis of self-deception particularly through Rappaccini and his experiment, Beatrice.

In summary, “The Minister’s Black Veil”, “Young Goodman Brown”, “Ethan Brand” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter” present various unique differences and mutual similarities in the way self-deception works in individuals, and in accordance with various, interconnected aspects of the Sartrean theories of bad faith, authenticity and the Look that provide a complete framework for analyzing this theme. It is also evident in concluding this research that Sartre’s concepts are not only restricted to philosophical narratives but also have the scope to be utilized for exploring themes relating to the human condition in literary works. The complexities of self-deception, as analyzed, also tie back to a core concept of broader Sartrean existentialism – that human beings may have the choice and responsibility to utilize their fundamental freedom but flee from it due to their own impositions. In this regard, Hawthorne’s short stories have certainly proved themselves in terms of their potential for further case studies related to the human experience in the future. Finally, in the context of broader existential applications in literature, differing from existentialists such as Kierkegaard’s faith-based existentialism or Heidegger’s abstract connotations of death which have also been referred to in analyses of Hawthorne’s works, Sartre uniquely stands out by emphasizing on the interpersonal dimensions of self-deception in the everyday context.

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