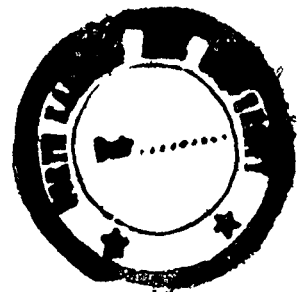


HAWTHORNE AND HUMAN LIMITATIONS :  
A STUDY ON ETHAN BRAND, YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN,  
THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL, RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER  
AND THE BIRTHMARK

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## C O N T E N T S

		<u>Page</u>
	<i>Supervisor's Certificate</i>	
	<i>Acknowledgement</i>	
	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1-7
CHAPTER-I	HAWTHORNE'S VIEW OF THE INHERENT WEAKNESS IN MAN THROUGH A STUDY OF <u>ETHAN BRAND</u> (1851)	8-19
CHAPTER-II	HAWTHORNE'S STUDY OF THE PROBLEM THROUGH RELIGION IN <u>YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN</u> (1835) AND <u>THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL</u> (1836)	20-35
CHAPTER-III	HAWTHORNE'S STUDY OF THE PROBLEM THROUGH THE INTELLECTUAL ASPECT OF MAN IN <u>THE BIRTHMARK</u> (1843) AND <u>RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER</u> (1844)	36-46
CHAPTER-IV	CONCLUSION	47-54
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	55-59

## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

"'My study is man,' said Hawthorne. He listened to the legends of the past from old women and from such traditions he put them in shapes in some of his earlier tales. What he could not get from the life around him, he got from books. What he owed to his New England heritage was a sense of the depth and complexity of man's inner life. The Puritan instinct, however it may have been expressed was one of honest and sober introspection. It penetrated the sham of man's exterior to his more animal nature beneath. It knew that man's heart is to be trusted more than his lips, and this duplicity it attempted to lay bare."<sup>1</sup>

As a true child of the religious mood and cultural heritage of New England, Hawthorne understood certain fundamentals about man and nature which he expressed in words of simple and pure language in his writings. He knew that there are complexities in man's inner life; that what appears outward is not always what is inside, that man acting according to what society expects of him does not always adhere to what he intends and thinks otherwise. Filled with the sense of the depth of this complexity in man, he knew all about human limitations. As a way of expressing what he felt and

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1. Pearson, Norman Holmes. Introduction to the Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne. New York, 1937, Random House Inc. p.9.

knew to be the true character of man, his writings deal with characters of different types who show man's limitations in every sphere of life. Though his Puritan ancestry had a lot to do with this preoccupation with human limitations and conscience, it did not blind his view as to ignore the negative qualities of Puritanism too; instead, he went so far as to question the actions of his forefathers which he felt were wrong - their killing of innocent people accused of witchcraft, and even tried to expiate for their sins through his art. Almost all his writings are filled with the atmosphere of gloom and despair, and tinged with the subject which interested him most, that of conscience and the nature of human limitations.

"He was always concerned in his stories, not merely with the individual but with the collective existence. This may seem contradicted by his absorption with the inner life of his characters, with 'the deep warm secret - the life within the life'. But though this relates him to the main development of the novel of consciousness and though like James he also found his dramatic contrasts in moments of moral crisis rather than in external events, he wanted none the less to study not merely 'human character in its individual developments' but also 'human nature in the mass'".<sup>2</sup>

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2. Matthiessen, F.O. American Renaissance : Book II. Hawthorne - The Haunted Mind. Oxford University Press, 1941, pp.238-239.

In writing the stories which show human limitations, Hawthorne presented his characters not just facing their problems as individuals but his writings contain problems and crises common to all of mankind. He knew that the problems faced by mankind in different walks of life, though appearing in different circumstances and stages, all share the same source and arise due to certain inherent predilections in man. So the significance of each tale and each novel is that the characters reflect and set off others as the writer's moral study of humanity. His probe into the human mind as a way of discovering the hidden quality that makes man turn evil and commit sin went through different stages and he examined man from all spheres of life enabling him to discover limitations everywhere. The tendency to do evil is natural for man as he is born with both the qualities of virtue and vice, And Hawthorne, realizing this duality in man tried to study this aspect of man in his writings. His study of mankind did not centre itself on just a particular individual aspect but presented human nature in many different circumstances.

"He was not a moralist; and he was not simply a poet. The moralists are weightier, denser, richer in a sense; the poets are more purely inconclusive and irresponsible. He combined in a singular degree the spontaneity of the imagination with a haunting case for moral problems. Man's conscience was his theme, but he saw it in the light of a creative fancy which added out of its own substance, an interest and, I may almost say an importance".<sup>3</sup>

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3. Wilson, Edmund. The Shock of Recognition Vol.I, 19th Century : Henry James - Hawthorne. New York, 1975, Octagon Books, p.434.

Though his writings have man's conscience as their theme and show human limitations, Hawthorne was not a moralist; nor was he a politician either. His aim was to show the complexities of man's inner life, the presence of the qualities of good and evil in man. His writings certainly show moral teachings and the depravity of man's moral life, they also deal with different aspects of life at the same time. Using symbolism, allegories and sometimes the irony too, Hawthorne showed the blending of his artistic imagination with what he sees and hears in reality. He exposed human limitations with pure and unsophisticated style that brings in a new dimension to the scope and understanding of American literature.

With the observation that Hawthorne was constantly preoccupied with the notion of guilt and conscience, and was writing his tales with the idea of exploring human limitations, this study will endeavour to examine in detail the various aspects of this theme in the five tales chosen for this purpose. They are Ethan Brand, Young Goodman Brown, The Minister's Black Veil, the Birthmark and Rappaccini's Daughter. The tales deal with the themes of guilt and secrecy, intellectual and moral pride, and also show Hawthorne's preoccupation with the effects of Puritanism in New England. Although these tales have moral implications on the one hand, they are not really didactic tales and seem to concern themselves with

some vital questions of life as lived within a narrowly defined outlook.

Ethan Brand, while showing one man's depravity of soul as well as his physical being, seems to probe deeper than the other tales of Hawthorne. Consciousness of man's inherent sinfulness brought on the search for the unpardonable sin. But Brand, the character who contemplated this idea first with love for his fellow men, turned fiendish and heartlessly experimented with others finally making him realize that he was the unpardonable sinner. Then Brand committed suicide damning himself according to accepted beliefs of his society. The moral implication of acting against religious beliefs is overtly displayed here but on the other hand, the idea that seems to be behind this tale is Hawthorne's way of showing his readers the fact that the heart is the cause of all sins and from which no one can escape.

Young Goodman Brown and The Minister's Black Veil are two tales showing man's natural tendency to commit sins in spite of religious trainings and indoctrination. The realization of this natural characteristics in man brought about isolation for the two protagonists, Brown from Young Goodman Brown and Hooper from The Minister's Black Veil. In these two tales, Hawthorne implies that even religion cannot restrain a man from his natural inclinations to sin and that giving

in to temptations is a natural failing, no matter what his calling in life is.

The Birthmark and Rappaccini's Daughter, the two tales that deal with intellectual achievements show what could result from vanity and arrogance that arise out of too much intellect. Innocent victims suffer when intellect takes over reason and makes people blind to their limitations. Intellect then, just as religion, becomes ineffectual in averting human tragedy - and thus highlighting man's vulnerability to destruction through his own actions.

Thus, Hawthorne with his tragic vision of life examined and found the many limitations of man in all spheres of life. Though he studied particular characters in a particular life-style, all his tales ultimately deal with the whole of mankind.

"Hawthorne's concern with the problem of life was not political and not always directly social. But his writings did contain social implications: clear the world of Ethan Brands, Rappaccinis; make the Pilgrim's Progress better, regenerate man, and society will itself in turn be regenerated."<sup>4</sup>

This statement aptly sums up this aspect of Hawthorne as a

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4. Pearson, Normal Holmes. Op.cit., p.15.

writer; he was interested in making life better and as a way of expressing his views he dealt with human limitations in a particular time and society - but which in the ultimate analysis can be viewed as the essence of all human tragedy.

## CHAPTER - I

## HAWTHORNE'S VIEW OF THE INHERENT WEAKNESS IN MAN THROUGH A STUDY OF ETHAN BRAND (1851)

Hawthorne had a sense of the depth and complexity of man's life and wanted to find out what lay at the core of man's mind. His fascination with the notion of guilt and human limitations was such that most of his tales deal with man's limitation in one way or the other. He wanted to explore the mystery of man's nature to find out what makes a person imperfect. So, in his tales, he examined man's nature through the different aspects of life and found that there is always a limit to a man's virtue, that human nature is such that a person is never thoroughly virtuous.

Throughout his fiction and especially the tales selected for this study, Hawthorne displays a sense of guilt due to the cruel and unreasonable practices of his ancestors because of religious differences. He could not understand how a man could go to such lengths as torture and even commit murders due to religious fanaticism. He condemned the religious bigotry of the New England Puritans - that of torturing and murdering quite a number of innocent victims. He showed that a man, even though he may follow his religious convictions and tries

to live piously does and will continue to give in to some kind of temptation at one stage or the other in life; that mere religious practices do not make a person free from weaknesses or sin.

Hawthorne showed man's limitations not only in the religious aspect but also the intellectual flaws in man through some of his tales. He found that man, with the increase in his knowledge tends to show the inner weakness in him. He showed that the so-called intellectuals often over-estimated themselves and thus took pleasure in experimenting with other human beings showing a streak of evil in their nature. This vanity led them to believe that they could perform difficult tasks which often resulted in disasters. Thus Hawthorne showed that even in the intellectual sphere, a man has certain limitations.

However, it was not enough for Hawthorne to merely examine these lapses in human nature. He wanted to delve deeper and find the root cause of the many limitations in man. He examined different aspects of life and showed that man is never wholly virtuous and that a streak of evil is always there in human nature. Then, after what appears to be a long and continuous search, Hawthorne reached the conclusion that man, being born in sin has an inherent weakness at the very core of his being, in his heart. This understanding

of the root of all human limitations he presented through the tale Ethan Brand.

Ethan Brand, the last tale of Hawthorne deals with a man who is damned by his own will and brings to light what the writer has tried to find out for so long - what is the cause of human limitations that makes human beings wicked and evil at some stage of life or the other, be it a clergyman, an intellectual or just an ordinary human being? Through a study of the character of Brand, he shows that there is an inherent quality, that of sin, at the core of man's heart which can be considered as the cause of man's limitations.

Ethan Brand had seized upon the notion of discovering a sin so wicked as to be unpardonable and went in search of it; as well as to find a redemption for it. He travelled all over the world for eighteen years for this purpose, all the while "converting men and women to be his puppets and pulling the wire that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study."<sup>1</sup> When he finally found what he was looking for, it was the realization that he was the unpardonable sinner through his manipulation of others for his research. The vast intellectual development in his pursuit of success had disturbed Brand's mind and soul. He had become

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1. Crews, Frederick C. Great Short Works of Hawthorne: Ethan Brand. Harper & Row Publishers, New York 1967, p.365.

a cold observer of mankind and became a fiend as a result producing the unpardonable Sin in his heart. After coming back to his own people, he became an outcast out of his own volition in order to brood upon his actions and realizing more and more that it was he who had sinned. But instead of seeking salvation, he had become so obsessed with the notion of his own guilt that it led to his believing that all that was left for him to do was to give himself body and soul to the devil that has possessed him. This realization that the heart, the core of man's being is the cause of all sin and that he himself is a sinner was too much for him which resulted in his committing suicide. The concept of the Unpardonable Sin is a Christian one - and one such sin is the act of taking one's own life. Thus by committing suicide Ethan Brand commits this unpardonable sin as well as having committed the sin of corrupting and manipulating others earlier in his search for the sin. Thus Hawthorne brings out this tragic irony inherent in man's lot on earth.

There are quite a number of statements and explanations given by different critics as to the idea behind Hawthorne's Ethan Brand:

"The search of an investigator for the unpardonable sin:- he at last finds it in his own heart and practice.

The unpardonable Sin might consist in a want of love and reverence for the human soul; in consequence of which the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity - content that it should be wicked in whatever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out, would this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart?"<sup>2</sup>

The above statement by Arthur Voss states that Brand had gone out in search of the unpardonable Sin out of love and reverence for mankind, and that the theme of the tale is sin. But then it goes on to say that Brand was content to study the human heart as long as he succeeded in finding out that man is wicked; that the search for the Unpardonable Sin began with a cold philosophical curiosity. While Arthur Voss is of this view, it seems to be otherwise. In spite of Brand turning fiendish at the end of his search, he was, at the beginning of the tale, a simple lime-burner with love and sympathy for his fellow beings. When he contemplated the idea of his search, he was a man bent on doing something good - The realization of human sufferings and hardships due to something that is in man's nature had led him to contemplate upon this and inspired him to discover this. He was filled with love and sympathy for mankind so that he wanted to find

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2. Voss, Arthur. The American Short Story : A Critical Study. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1973, p.29.

the factor which causes these sufferings in order to remove so much pain and agony from human life. "He remembered with what tenderness, with what love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe ...."<sup>3</sup> Only after his intellectual development did Brand become the fiend that he was, that his heart and soul became hardened enabling him to find the Unpardonable Sin of his own heart. If it was as Arthur Voss has stated, that the investigator was content to find out that wickedness because he was only desiring to study it out, then how does one explain Brand's despair at finding out the truth in the end? If he was only desiring to study the human soul, he would not have been so desperate to discover the true nature of mankind. He would instead be happy to have reached his goal at finding out that man's heart, the core of his being was the root of all evils and ... may be resume his profession. But Brand, discovering that all human beings are burdened with this lot and that he himself was no exception forgot all about his first intention and fell into despair. When he came back to his village also, it was not with a thought for his people but thinking only of himself he came back with a purpose to fling himself and get killed in his lime-kiln. Brand's despair and his committing suicide clearly show that Brand's motive was not just to discover the Unpardonable Sin out of intellectual curiosity. He at the start of the tale was not an intellectual being

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3. Pearson, Normal Holmes. Ethan Brand: The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Random House, Inc. New York, 1937, p.1194.

anyway, he was just a simple lime-burner and that his intellect developed and grew as his search for the unpardonable sin progressed. Brand's first motive stem from love and sympathy for his fellow beings and to find a solution for their despair and woe. It was just that he had become so hardened during his travel that he committed suicide at the end without really fulfilling his purpose.

Then there is the comparison of Brand, the character with Hawthorne, the author of the tale.

"Ethan Brand may be read as a cautionary parable of artistic sin and atonement. We learn that 'eighteen years' before the story's present time, Brand has seized upon the notion of discovering a sin so wicked as to be unpardonable and has gone to search it out in the hearts of others - that is, he has taken evil for his theme and has sought a supreme instance for it for fictional treatment. By a terrible irony, Brand's manipulating proves the worst sin of all and when he realizes this, he returns for one discernible purpose: to fling himself into the kiln...."<sup>4</sup>

Thus Christopher Brown presented Brand as the author - figure who manipulated and examined the hearts of his fellow beings in an effort to find out the cause of man's evil way, the same way as Hawthorne did in reality. But unlike this view that seems to accuse Hawthorne of probing in to the human

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4. Brown, Christopher. Ethan Brand: A Portrait of the Artist (Studies in Short Fiction, Vol.17, Spring 1980, No.2), pp.172-173.

heart for his own selfish, artistic reasons, it seems to be that Hawthorne was genuinely concerned with human beings and their weaknesses which resulted in his trying to find a reason for man's limitations in order to find a kind of solution for it. Brand committed suicide at the realization that he was a sinner, but Hawthorne knew and showed that there is redemption for all mankind through love and reverence for their fellow beings. It can be argued that Hawthorne was filled with a curiosity that stems from the notion of man's limitations. His probe was of a kind that wanted to find out the reasons for man's plight and to free man from it. He was not obsessed with the idea of sin just for the sake of artistic reasons but as a human being's love for his fellow men.' Therefore, it seems a very limited analysis of Ethan Brand to say that Brand is the author - figure as has been contended in the above statement. For Hawthorne, the concern with the notion of guilt and sin was a genuine offshoot of his Puritan lineage which had always been present in his thinking. It projected from everywhere and like a black patch, it stood fixed in the general atmosphere under which he grew up so that his whole outlook on life was marred by it. Therefore all that was left for him was to do what he could with it and he transmuted this heavy moral burden into the very substance of imagination and using it for artistic productions while at the same time trying to find some sort of solution for the burden that mankind has to shoulder.

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On the other hand, there is yet another comment on Ethan Brand, which seems a more likely explanation.

"The story of a lime-burner, who after a long search, finds the Unpardonable Sin in his own heart and commits suicide. Chief sources of the tale are the Bible (White, Stook) and Hawthorne's notebooks (Bro. Joseph). To emphasise the fertility of Brand's quest, which ends where it began - in his own heart - the author uses circular structure and images e.g. the dog chasing its own tail (Vanderbilt). Various minor characters have functional roles. The German showman, a composite of Mephistopheles and the wandering Jew (Herndon and Moss) serves as Brand's double (Sokoloff). The villagers are linked with Brand (and with hell) through fire imagery but are no more sympathetic with his plight than is Bartram (Davison). Only Joe exhibits the love that enables and saves. He functions along with the brief description of the dawning day, as a glimmer of optimism in this dark story."<sup>5</sup>

The above statement finds the story full of gloom and despair which is only natural as the theme suggests - that mankind is doomed to despair because of their sins. But along with the atmosphere of darkness, there is also a note of hope. The purpose of Hawthorne in writing Ethan Brand was to present human beings as they are and to show that there is a cause for all evils in life. Ethan Brand went in search of the unpardonable sin which causes man to do evil deeds

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5. Callow, James L., and Reilly, Robert J. (Edition). Guide to American Literature from its Beginning Through Walt Whitman. Barnes and Noble books (A Division of Harper & Row Publishers, New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London) 1976, pp.107-108.

and at the same time he was planning to find a cure or an escape from it. But in the process of his discovery, he became a fiend in spite of his good intentions. When he realized this - that he was the unpardonable sinner because the evil was in his own heart, he committed suicide. This discovery of Brand that sin stems from man's own heart from which there seems to be no easy remedy clearly shows Hawthorne's understanding of the inherent weakness in man. Man is fated to do evil deeds from the very start and even though man's weakness is natural, he also shows that there is redemption through love and reverence for mankind. Ethan Brand did not understand this and so rejecting the very power that can save him, committed suicide.

Although Brand was wilfully hell-bound and lost to grace, it was not Hawthorne's purpose to show man as lost forever because of his natural weaknesses. Brand was shown as an example of one who realized his sins but who would not accept the salvation that was there before him as there is for everyone. Through the presentation of Brand, Hawthorne shows that he had at last understood that man is fated from birth to do evil, that man who is governed by the heart from within cannot escape from his fate, thus showing that all of man's limitations are caused by the heart which is only natural. While showing this natural tendency in man to do evil deeds, Hawthorne at the same time understood too that

there is a way out. He showed that there is redemption and salvation from sin through love for mankind and through God's grace. The tale is an attempt, on the part of the writer, at revealing the inherent evil that lies at the core of man's being which is the cause of all human limitations. Hawthorne was conscious that there is a factor which causes human limitations but could not pin-point it exactly. Then after finding out that religion or even intellectual developments cannot restrain man from evil deeds, he probed deeper and found that man's natural curiosity stems from the heart which directs man's every move and thus causes him to commit sins and do evil to such degrees that man destroys not only himself but others even which brings about despair and gloom. Brand too, was at first just a curious observer of mankind, then his curiosity grew making him eager to find more, resulting in intellectual development. But as his knowledge grew more, he grew to love it more too, making him uncaring of whom he destroys and manipulates thus resulting in his turning into a fiend. But his human instincts made him to recall his works and to realize that what he had done had been wrong. He had gone too deep and had grown astray far too much to want to try and be saved from his damning self that he at last committed suicide. The author's attempt at showing that the heart is the cause of all human limitations is clearly shown in this tale. Thus, Hawthorne presents through Ethan Brand

man's natural tendencies to do evil which stems from within, at the same time suggesting ways of overcoming this inherent weakness which will be further elaborated in the following discussions.

## CHAPTER - II

1

HAWTHORNE'S STUDY OF THE PROBLEM THROUGH RELIGION  
IN YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN (1835) AND  
THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL (1836)

Since Hawthorne believed that there is an element of evil in every human being, he tried to show the evils inherent in man and to discover the reasons behind all of man's limitations. As a way of understanding the cause of man's sins, he examined and delved into human nature in every aspects of life. He was plagued with a sense of guilt because of the unreasonable and merciless acts of his ancestors due to their religious beliefs which made them victimize many innocent people just because they were not of the same religious convictions. He knew that religion was supposed to make men more understanding and that it should erase all devilish acts, but was instead, used by his ancestors as a means of justification for their cruel and unreasonable acts while at the same time professing to be pious and virtuous through their puritan beliefs. Hawthorne knew that there must be something in human nature that makes him cruel despite all his yearnings to be virtuous and which even the most strict and faithful religious followers could not escape from; that human beings are governed from within and felt the need to discover this cause. He at the same time felt

the need to discover this cause. He at the same time felt the need to expiate for the acts of his ancestors and to give reasons as to why they committed those inhuman acts against their fellow men. He wants to show too that there is a limit to which a man's goodness or virtue extend even in the religious sphere so that people would understand other people's faults as well as their own. How he understands the religious limitations in man is shown through the two tales which have been chosen for this particular purpose. The two tales are Young Goodman Brown and The Minister's Black Veil. A study of these two tales show that a man, even though governed in some ways by his religion, falls prey to the evils within himself which will come out at one stage or the other of his life; that human nature is such that a man can never be wholly virtuous even with all his religious faiths and practices.

Young Goodman Brown is a tale showing one man's disillusionment at finding out that good and evil co-exist in human nature, and that even with all the religious doctrines, teachings and practices, a person can succumb to the evil character in him at one time or the other in his life. Goodman Brown, a true follower of the puritan doctrine and one who thought himself one of God's elect gave in to his natural instinct by giving in to temptation and made a date to go and attend a witch-meeting in a forest one night. He knew

that he should not go and that it was a sin for him to have discourse with the devil, but the forces within were too strong and he was unable to resist, so he finally gave in to his human instincts. At the course of his journey, he found to his horror and astonishment that not only him but many of his own people, especially those he considered to be pure and holy came to attend the very meeting he was to join. His grandfather, his father, his catechist and at last his own wife were there at the witch-meeting making him realize that people were not as virtuous as they seem to. This discovery that the good people were not without sin was too much to bear and a fact which he could not accept that his whole life was spent in disillusionment and being suspicious of others. He became an outcast of society and died a very sad and gloomy death.

Brown, like everyone else in the tale was a prey to the forces from within. Although he was a staunch Puritan who knew that temptations of any kind should be resisted, he could not help himself, for the weakness was within himself which his religious beliefs or his virtuousness could not overcome and he fell prey to the devil's trap. The discovery that even the others whom he had admired because of their faith and virtue too were not without sin made him lose faith in human beings as well as in religion till his dying day. Through this story, Hawthorne shows that religion does not

bring complete virtuousness and that it should be understood that there is a limit to a person's virtue or goodness, even for the most religious man. He shows the inevitable presence of both good and evil in human nature. Brown could not understand this nor could he accept that men could fall prey to evils in life and that human nature is such that good and evil exist side by side - that a man cannot be completely virtuous or completely evil. This refusal to accept human nature as it is, led Brown to such a degree of disillusionment in life that even his dying hour was gloomy.

Goodman Brown encounters his devil because he tried to avoid a recognition of the disturbing character of human nature. He holds on to a strict framework into which he fits his experience of the world: people are either completely virtuous or completely evil ... By means of his story, Hawthorne is urging his readers to break free of such categorizing and recognize that violence, lust, hate and cruelty are a part of human nature."<sup>1</sup>

"Brown returns from that nightmarish journey but he returns 'like a bewildered man'. He accepts his vision of evil in the community with being the devil worshippers of his night time experience. Along with the evil of his neighbors, however, the forest experience depicted his own evil".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Winslow, Joan D. The Stranger Within: Two stories by Oates and Hawthorne Studies in Short Fiction, Vol.17, No.3, p.268.
  2. Tritt, Michael. Young Goodman Brown and the Psychology of Projection: Studies in Short Fiction, Vol.23, No.1, Winter 1986.

Brown refused to accept that human nature is a mixture of good and evil. He could not come to terms with the fact that a religious person could fall into the web of deceit and pretensions, and he assumed that once a person falls into temptations, he is doomed forever. His view of virtue and vice was such that a man has to be either wholly virtuous or wholly vile. When the recognition that he is of the latter category (of his own making) came about through his forest experience, his faith in God and human beings in general was dashed to the ground. He fell into such depth of despair and doubt that his dying hour was gloomy and no words of hope was there to be carved in his tombstone. Brown knew that what he was planning to do was against his religious faith and felt too guilty to confide in his wife. His faith in God and the teachings of his religions were not strong enough to get him away from this urge. Even after the forest experience, he felt guiltier and could not share what he had experienced with anyone. If what he saw in the forest had taught him that his grandfather, his father, the catechist and even his wife were not what they appear to be outwardly, it at the same time showed that he too was not entirely blameless either for he had gone to the same witch-meeting that the others had gone to. But since he was a man who had such a tight framework of mind as far as man and his morality were concerned that he was doomed to suffer.

If he had shared his feelings and experiences with someone, there would have been some reassurance for him and he might have been made to realize that virtue and vice are parts of human qualities. Instead, he isolated himself and retreated from the outside world into the dark shell that he had made for himself damning himself even on earth itself. Brown could not bring himself to accept that the forces within were the ones which caused him and the others into submitting to evil deeds and that religion and its doctrines cannot eradicate the evil in man's heart. He turns his experience in the forest into an expedient to be directed at the others only whom he considered wicked. It was the congregation that sang and the minister speaking from the pulpit, who were the sinners but never Brown himself. He only felt guilt at having had that meeting with the devil in the forest but could not and would not consider himself one among the people that he so despised.

Brown's encounter with the devil can be taken as an encounter with part of oneself in a way to show that there is a little bit of the devil in each one of us that which even religion cannot force to lay low at all times. It shows that once a character has projected his emotions outside himself, his attitudes and actions reveal what he really is and show what a person really is underneath all all the disguises. From the very beginning, Brown had to

lie to his wife to have the meeting with the devil in the forest and he felt guilty about it too. But after coming back from the forest, his love and faith in his wife turned to loathing and even tinged with some amount of fear too so that he could not even consider confiding in her and found all her actions as prompted by evil forces within. His first feeling of guilt at having acted in such a way as attending a witch-meeting was over-ridden by his feeling of suspicion towards his family as well as the whole community in general. Brown's grandfather, his father, his catchist and Faith, his wife show that whatever degree of faith a person may have, he is still liable to give in to temptations. The tale clearly shows that one cannot deny the presence of evil in man nor can it be destroyed or curbed entirely through religion but that this quality of evil is an inevitability in human nature.

For Brown, the Puritan who considered himself as one of God's elect through faith, his experience in the forest and such devilishness was too much to comprehend and an irreparable shock. He could not accept the revelations the experience had brought on and had to pay with a terrible isolation, becoming a stern, sad, darkly meditative and a distrustful man.

"The vice-like grip with which such processes grasp Brown is all the more paralysing, indeed terrifying because 'one cannot flee oneself: flight is no help against internal dangers.' The origins of Brown's behavior lie buried beneath his consciousness. As a result Brown is trapped, an unwary prisoner of forces acting from within, though ironically in trying to defend himself, he feels victimized from without."<sup>3</sup>

Brown is a true example of one who would not accept the reality of life and who is damned forever through his own fault. Hawthorne shows through Brown as well as the different characters of the tale that religion which governs man and his behavior to some extent could not really free man from temptations. Even the most religious ones like the Parson and the Catechist, as found in the tale, do give in to the evils of the world at times. Hawthorne, while showing that even religion does have its limitations in keeping human nature from going astray, at the same time shows the need to accept the fact that all human beings are not perfect and that even if a person does give in to evil ways, he should not be condemned for ever as it is his nature from which he cannot escape. He shows that it is wrong to have a staunch framework of mind like Brown's which expect people to be either completely virtuous or completely vile. Brown's own sin lies in the fact that he

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3. Ibid.

could not and would not budge from the belief he had even after his forest experience. He shifted all the people around him to the evil category and at the same time brought his own destruction. Hawthorne shows that Brown and his belief, such as categorizing human nature into isolated compartments is wrong and that it should be understood that religion too has its limitations.

The Minister's Black Veil is another tale which shows Hawthorne's exploration of man's nature at the religious level. In this tale, we have a parson who knew the existence of sin in all human beings and who tried to teach his parishioners of that fact, but who instead became as isolated as Brown from the people of the village where he lived. The parson was found donning a black veil one day, the cause of which gave rise to much speculation. He would not take his veil off from his face till his death which made him a dreaded and feared figure. It resulted too in his being deserted even by the girl whom he was to marry. The significance of the black veil seemed to be quite vague except for the teachings and sermons delivered by the parson to his parishioners. His favourite theme was sin and urging the congregation to realize their hidden sins. He would not give any explanation as to the reason for wearing his veil but it seemed to symbolise the dark shadow that hangs

over everyone - the evil nature in men. In the end, lying on his death bed, the parson turned his veiled face on those around him saying "I look around me and lo! on every visage a Black Veil!"<sup>4</sup> The black veil was a symbol of evil on every human being: that they are sinners in spite of their religious practices and faiths. He had covered his face only because he realized that he is not thoroughly virtuous even though he is the parson whom people expected to be thoroughly good in thoughts and deeds, teaching men and women about their moral needs and how to practice them. Hawthorne here shows once again that there are limitations even in the "most sacred profession in life, that of religion. The reverend Mr Hooper showed that all men are covered with a black veil - that of sin and even gave reasons why the congregation should realize this. He showed through his answer to Elizabeth, his betrothed, that it was because of this hidden sin and sorrow that made him cover his face - "If I hid my face for sorrow there is cause enough, and if I cover it for secret sin, what mortal might not do the same?"<sup>5</sup> Hawthorne clearly shows here that no man is free of sins and that it should be acknowledged by all.

The congregation did not understand this and refused to acknowledge their parson's message: that he preached on

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4. Cannolly, Thomas E. The Minister's Black Veil: The Scarlet Letter and Selected Tales, Richard Clay (The Chaucer Press Ltd.), Bungay, Suffolk, p.313.

5. Ibid., p.307.

secret sin and that he was trying to relay the message that all are sinners and they should realize this fact whether it shows outwardly or it was hidden within themselves. He was clearly giving them a clue to the reason of his donning the black veil on his face. But instead of trying to understand what lay behind the parson's sermon and his veil, the congregation found the veil to be something dreadful and shuddered even to think of it. Hawthorne here shows, as he does in Young Goodman Brown that the congregation refused to accept that there is a limit to a man's virtue in spite of religion, as is the way of the world. He shows that every human heart consists of some evil thoughts even if it does not show outwardly and that was why the reverend Mr. Hooper had donned the black veil as a symbol of the evil that clouds even religious thoughts and practices.

"The theme that man is naturally depraved and that every human heart conceals iniquity of thought or deed is given effectively in the Minister's Black Veil ... Like Dimmesdale in The Scarlet Letter whose prototype he is in certain respects, his (Hooper) sense of guilt results in his becoming a more effective clergyman, and yet like Goodman Brown, his revelation of sin in the human heart dooms him throughout a long and irreproachable life to be a man apart from other men...."<sup>6</sup>

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6. Voss, Arthur. The American Short Stories - A Critical Study, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, pp.25-26.

"The significance of Hawthorne's story and Hooper's veil clearly has a 'different import' in that Hooper does not don his veil because of personal sin, but rather because he wished to symbolize in himself and by example, almost as a living parable, the 'darkened aspect of all living and inanimate things'. Hooper takes this drastic measure not for his own sake but to show, through his example what his parishioners seemingly could not otherwise see - that they were all, in Jonathan Edward's words, 'sinners in the hands of an angry God'. Rather than villain, Hooper becomes by example, a willing victim, his veil the visible symbol, his life a living parable".<sup>7</sup>

The two extracts that have been quoted show that The Minister's Black Veil shows Hawthorne's realization that man is constantly plagued by evil and that any occupation, be it religion or whatever, does not keep him from giving in to the evil thoughts or deeds somehow, making him do what even in his own belief and practice he does not approve of. Religion, the most reverend form of human occupation which shows and teaches men and women what is right and wrong could not really and completely control man and his evil tendencies. He shows that even though religion may be responsible for guiding man in the right path in some ways, it cannot prevent him from giving in to temptations occasionally, to think and do what is wrong at some time

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7. Davis, William V. Hawthorne's The Minister's Black Veil : A Note on the Significance of the Sub-title: Studies in Short Fiction, Vol.23, No.4, Fall 1986.

or the other in his life. The reverend Hooper too was not an exception to this human nature and he realizes this flaw in him at the same time realizing the flaw in all his parishioners. That was why he tried his best to convey the message that men should be aware of this limitation in them. But when the congregation found the parson covered with the veil, they questioned his motives and assumed that their parson was trying to hide a personal sin. Hawthorne here seems to show that men and women, instead of finding faults with others and condemning them should start examining themselves and should realize that even the most religious of people are prone to temptations as well as others and to acknowledge this natural instinct that is in every human being.

The reverend Hooper realized that man is born with both the qualities of good and evil and that virtue and vice go side by side throughout a person's life so that one cannot prevent the surfacing of either one in any stage of life. He was conscious of this lot in man and he knew that his parishioners were not aware of this fact but were of the belief that religion could bring about perfect goodness. So he made it his mission to convey this fact and to make them realize that inspite of their faith and religious practices each one of them were not perfect and that the presence

of evil in their hearts was like a dark cloud hanging over them - But he set about his mission in such a way that the congregation instead of finding the truth about themselves began to think that their parson was trying to hide something from them. His black veil, worn over his face and showing only his eyes as a symbol of the dark blot on every human being served to present the minister as a sinister figure. His sermon on the subject of hidden sin and the many instances that he tried to speak on hidden sin fell to deaf ears but made him an isolated person even from the girl he was betrothed to. Unlike Brown, of the earlier tale, he was isolated through the knowledge and an acceptance of the presence of virtue and vice in human nature; he realized not only the sin of others but was conscious too of the presence of evil in his own heart even though he was the parson. Hawthorne succeeded in conveying the message through Hooper that religion does not make a man perfect although it may to a certain extent restrain a person's instinct to give in to temptations. By showing Hooper as a person having in him this duality, Hawthorne shows that a man cannot always act in a way that he should, but is always directed by the forces from within which are too strong for him to overcome religion or no religion.

The two tales studied here show Hawthorne's pre-occupation with the idea of sin in man and how he studies

this with reference to religion He demonstrates here that religion is just one aspect of man's life and that it has its limitations too. Through his characters Goodman Brown and Reverend Hooper, he shows that religious though a person is, he is never virtuous through and through. Other minor characters like Brown's family and his religious teachers as well as Hooper's parishioners too play important parts in showing that religion has its limitations. All the characters in both the tales are God-fearing people, bound by their religious ideals and beliefs but all of them are prey to the evils inherent in themselves. Brown's family and religious teachers are all shown to have given into the devil's trap by attending a witch-meeting while Hooper's congregation just refused to accept and listen to the message given by their parson and would not confess their sins. He shows that a man can never be fully controlled by his religion and as this applies to each and every human being through nature, one cannot escape one's fate by means of religion alone. Through these two tales, Hawthorne tries to rationalize the actions of his ancestors too; at the same time showing that a man cannot always live according to religious teachings as it is in his nature to rebel against goodness. Brown and Hooper, because of this became outcasts of society, though in a different way - Brown because he refused to accept human nature and realize the presence

of evil in every human being, and Hooper because he was aware of the duality in human nature and tried to show it to others. Through his tales Young Goodman Brown and The Minister's Black Veil, Hawthorne succeeds in bringing out what he has tried all along to show: Though religion ostensibly preaches goodness and perfection, it cannot provide any absolute means to overcome man's inherent and natural tendencies towards evil. The two tales also expose the pretensions and weaknesses of the religious leaders of society themselves. Hawthorne however does not condemn this in the religious men of his times, but rather extends the same understanding attitude as he does towards simple people like Ethan Brand of the previous Chapter.

## CHAPTER - III

HAWTHORNE'S STUDY OF THE PROBLEM THROUGH THE INTELLECTUAL  
ASPECT OF MAN IN THE BIRTHMARK (1843) AND  
RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER (1844)

In his attempt to show man's limitations, Hawthorne made a study of people from different walks of life which included the intellectual aspect of man and showed its limitations even in this sphere. He knew the perils of depending too much on knowledge. He knew that man is never satisfied with his lot in life but is always trying to grasp at things which are out of his reach; man's search for and his obsession with what he thinks is the final perfection in life especially in the intellectual level almost always brings about doom and despair. He wanted to show that nothing is perfect and that even intellectual advancement cannot do anything to change natural things but instead often cause disappointments in life.

The Birthmark is a tale which shows that the refusal to accept the nature of things and trying to overcome them through scientific experiments brings about tragic results. Aylmer, a brilliant scientist who was very much in love with his wife however loved science more which resulted in his being the cause of the wife's death. A birthmark, shaped like a tiny hand on his wife's left cheek was for

Aylmer, a symbol of imperfection on his otherwise beautiful wife, Georgiana. He was so obsessed with it that an idea began to develop in him that it could be removed with his scientific skill. He even managed to persuade his wife to agree to have it operated on and have the offending mark removed. But instead of perfecting his wife, Aylmer caused his wife's death when she did not recover from the operation. Aylmer, though loving his wife very much in his own way could not accept her as she was and considering himself capable of performing a miracle to make his wife perfect through his knowledge, succeeded in bringing about destruction. Because of his knowledge, he became over-confident and full of vanity which made him unable to accept matters as they were. He did not even consider his wife's feelings in the matter but was first filled with curiosity and confidence in his surgeon's art. Aylmer's act of trying to remove the birthmark resulted not out of love for his wife but out of the idea that he was all powerful through his scientific skill. In trying to change what is natural, Aylmer turned it into something more hideous, which is death. The tale clearly shows Hawthorne's concern for this weakness in man, the refusal to accept what is in nature and the attempt to go beyond man's capabilities which arises out of intellectual curiosity and arrogance.

"... Although very close to being an alchemist, even a sorcerer, Aylmer is a symbol of man's desire for perfection, which impels him to try to transcend his physical and mortal part, typified by Aminadab, the Caliban - like laboratory assistant, who during Aylmer's experiment mutters. 'If she were my wife, I'd never part with the birthmark'. Aylmer is destined to fail because he aspires to the infinite. His aim had been a noble one, Georgiana tells him as she is dying; but true wisdom on Aylmer's part, Hawthorne seems to say in the somewhat ambiguous concluding paragraph, would have been for him to perceive that his happiness lay in accepting as near perfect as the earth has to offer..."<sup>1</sup>

When Aylmer first met his wife, Georgianna, the birthmark did nothing to his feelings for he loved the girl as she was, and accepted her as she was, birthmark and all. Only after his marriage and when he grew more confident and arrogant about his knowledge in his surgeon's skill that the idea first occurred to him that he would be able to remove the mark from his wife's face. His obsession grew so much that in the end, the birthmark was to him a thing of horror which made his wife repulsive to him. His knowledge of surgery made him to consider himself as able to do anything that he liked which resulted in the idea of making his wife a perfect beauty. His love for science obscured his love for his wife so much that he did not even consider her feelings. His presumption was such that he

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1. Voss, Arthur. The American Short Story: A Critical Study. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1973, p.28. (Hereafter cited as Voss).

did not even stop to think what the consequences would be if he failed in his endeavour, but instead plunged headlong into it sure that he would be able to bring about perfect beauty. Aylmer was a happy man while he accepted his wife as she was but he brought an end to any sort of happiness that were before with his intellectual arrogance and succeeded in bringing disaster in the family. The death of Georgianna in the hands of her husband not only show that intellectual knowledge has it's limit in giving happiness to mankind but at the same time shows that the vanity and arrogance arising out of too much intellect can actually result in destruction - both physical and moral.

Hawthorne knew that acceptance of what is given to one brings about happiness but not in rebelling or fighting against it. The less ignorant and less advanced people are more able to adapt themselves to their lot in life and are happier than the intellectuals. He wanted to show this flaw in man at the intellectual sphere and to make people aware of the dangers of fighting against fate. He clearly shows that rebelling against nature is a sin and would bring disasters. Aylmer too was a happy and contented man while he accepted his wife as she was, but his ambition to become great and to change nature's work brought on his unhappiness. Hawthorne shows through this tale that intellectual advancement

tends to make a man lose his wisdom and turn him vain which is one of the human limitations in life. Besides, through this tale, Hawthorne tries to show that such a deliberate act of interference in another's life, no matter how closely related, is somehow not moral. In The Birthmark, the actual tampering of Georgiana's physical appearance is but the symbol of Aylmer's violation of her inner self, her entire personality. The selfishness and vanity which motivate Aylmer's actions are his weaknesses which lead to his wife's death for which he is both legally and morally indictable.

Another tale which deals with the intellectual limitation and shows Hawthorne's concern for this particular aspect in life is Rappaccini's Daughter. It is a tale about a rivalry between two great scientists which brings about doom and despair to two young people. The heroine of the tale is a girl who was nurtured in a deadly poisonous atmosphere making her capable of killing plants and insects coming within her breathing distance. It was due to the rather vain idea of her father, the great scientist Rappaccini that she was in that state. Rappaccini wanted his daughter to be different from other women and caused her to be in this state by nurturing her with poison since her birth. Then a young scientist fell in love with the girl who wanted to free her from her situation. Through another great Scientist

Baglioni, a rival in the field of Science of Rappaccini, the young man got an antidote which was supposed to kill all the poison inside the girl. But instead of curing, the antidote proved fatal and caused the girl's death. Hawthorne again shows here the evils of intellectual arrogance. Rappaccini committed the evil act of thinking that he would be able to make his daughter stand apart from others with the help of his knowledge as a superior being, but instead turned her into a dreaded figure, alienated from others as well as from the one person she loved. And Baglioni brought about death through his conviction that his knowledge was definite and that he would be able to undo what Rappaccini had done. The combined works of the two scientists caused the death of an innocent girl as well as the unhappiness of all concerned. Indulging in false beliefs that they were great and could perform miracles. Rappaccini and Baglioni brought about death and despair through their scientific skills. Hawthorne once again shows through this tale the evils of intellectual curiosity and over-indulgence which often results in destructions.

"Far more reprehensible in his scientific zeal is Dr. Rappaccini in Rappaccini's Daughter. Unlike Aylmer, there is nothing holy or lofty about his scientific experimentation. It is diabolic in that he has experimented with his daughter, Beatrice, nourishing her with poisons from her birth and making her the human sister of the beautiful but deadly flower he has grown

in his garden. Giovanni Guasconti, the young student who falls in love with her, might save her by his love and sympathy. But because he cannot overcome his fear of her apparently poisonous influence, he urges her to take a powerful antidote, which results in her death..."<sup>2</sup>

Voss is of the view that Rappaccini had conceived of the idea of making his daughter Beatrice different from other women thus nurturing her with poison from the time of her birth. Unlike Aylmer, his purpose was not to make his daughter a perfect beauty to bring about his happiness but he made Beatrice a specimen for his scientific experiments and made her inhuman with the deadly poison, just like the flower he had grown in his garden. His scientific zeal made him an evil person devoid of the natural feelings which a father usually feels for a daughter; without giving a thought, or consideration for his daughter's plight at growing into such deadly person, he continued working on her until her death. The other scientist, Baglioni another over-confident intellectual helped in turning Rappaccini's work fatal by his interference. Thinking that he would be able to undo the damage that had been done to the girl by preparing an antidote which instead of curing her brought about instant death Giovanni might have been able to save the girl with his love and sympathy but he too depended too much on science and gave the girl the antidote which killed her. Hawthorne

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2. Ibid., pp.28-29.

shows that man's tendency to fall prey to the absurd belief that intellectual growth and endeavour would bring happiness and contentment would often instead lead mankind to deeper despair and depressions. While Voss is of this view that Hawthorne shows in the tale that love and sympathy, the natural human feelings could bring about a certain amount of happiness and contentment instead of relying too much on worldly knowledges, there is another interpretation as to the idea behind the tale.

"... This development highlights Hawthorne's exploration of the theme of chastity. Because of the medical/theological beliefs of the time, the male perceives himself as risking the health of his mortal body and the salvation of his immortal soul when he allows himself to respond to the attention of the female.... Even without the metaphorical consummation of the kiss, Giovanni has yielded to the poisoned maiden, and according to old tradition, fallen into sin and death, despite the warnings of an advisor and of his own reason."<sup>3</sup>

According to Margaret Hallisy, Hawthorne has written Rappaccini's Daughter as an exploration of the theme of chastity. She presents Giovanni as fearing the loss of his mortal body as well as his immortal soul through his love for Beatrice. But it can be argued that if Giovanni had had any fear for his safety, either his body or soul, he

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3. Hallisy, Margaret, Hawthorne's Venomous Beatrice: Studies in Short Fiction Volume 19, Summer 1982, No.3, pp.236-237.

would not have continued to go and meet Beatrice in the garden so many times, especially after finding out that she was capable of killing insects and plants within her breathing distance; nor would he be so desperate as to find a cure for her ailment for he would surely have known that if ever he succeeded, he would have continued to meet her and may be even marry her which would ultimately lead to his loss of body and soul. Instead, he knew the hopeless state of his beloved and was trying his best to release her from the bondage of her father, 'the bloodless intellectual who would reduce the heart to dust'. The critic does not state what role the two great scientists played but is concerned with only what seems to her as the most important aspect, the fall of Giovanni through his association with Beatrice. Even though the tale revolves around the two lovers, it seems to be that Hawthorne is presenting the evils of the two intellectuals while Giovanni and Beatrice were, though seeming to play major roles, are just pawns in the game of rivalry between the two geniuses.

Dr. Rappaccini and Aylmer, both geniuses in their field and highly esteemed in the intellectual level could not bring perfect bliss and happiness even in their own life. They wanted to show their power and ability as great intellectuals by introducing and trying to do something different

which would change nature's work and bring them satisfaction. Without considering the pain and suffering their actions could bring to the people they experimented with, they considered only themselves and of their own satisfaction. But their vanity brought about the suffering of not only their loved ones but also their own Aylmer by losing his wife and Rappaccini his daughter along with the knowledge that they were not as great as they thought themselves to be. Rappaccini and Aylmer show that happiness and satisfaction which intellectual endeavour can give is only to a limited sphere but that it can never bring total satisfaction and happiness. Hawthorne does not condemn intellectual growth as long as it does not make a person vain and arrogant but shows what it can do to a person.

The tragedies of Rappaccini and Aylmer are owing to the fact that they have lost their grasp of the central human elements and have drifted away from humanity. Their intellectual arrogance was such that they were blind to others and even to their loved ones' feelings, they were blinded by their ambition of becoming greater and tried to achieve the impossible. Besides showing the limitations of intellect as a means of happiness for mankind, Hawthorne's puritan ancestry and the belief that was all along in his heart is shown in these two tales. Rappaccini and Aylmer, by causing deaths through their experiments not only committed

physical wrong, but as well as moral sin for their actions were deliberate and were undertaken out of their pride. Hawthorne shows that intellectual advancement not only brings about physical despair but that it can also bring about moral degradation.

Both The Birthmark and Rappaccini's Daughter can be seen at one level as attempts to overcome human limitations. But the emphasis in the end is not on this aspect but rather on the motivations which are shown as evil arising out of man's intellectual curiosity and arrogance and which inevitably cause the tragedies in these tales.

## CHAPTER - IV

## CONCLUSION

The five tales that have been discussed show Hawthorne's preoccupation with human limitations and his presentation of these limitations through religion and intellect as well as exploring the basic cause of human limitations. It shows that mankind would never be free from temptations and as such would always commit sin and turn to evil deeds whether they are religious people or intellectual beings as the evil quality in man is inborn. All these tendencies in human beings, to turn away from what is considered the right way and go astray, the writer seems to say, should not be condemned nor ignored; it should instead be accepted as it is, that it is natural and men should try to find ways of coming to terms with it. Love for other human beings and the infinite Grace of God would enable people to have a more reasonable viewpoint and a better way of accepting human limitations in life.

Hawthorne, after examining and trying to comprehend the natural weakness in man through the religious and intellectual aspects of life succeeded in finding out that man's inherent weakness lay at the core of his heart. Ethan Brand, the tale that shows this understanding of the origin of

human limitations deals with a character who went in search of the Unpardonable Sin and to find a cure for it at the same time. The irony in the story is that Brand, after traveling all over the world, experimenting with other people in his search for the unpardonable sin, instead, found that he was the unpardonable sinner. His merciless acts of ruthlessly examining other people's heart turned him into a fiend. And when he discovered the fact that he was the sinner, the realization was too shocking and in his despair he committed suicide. This realization of Brand that the heart is the cause of all human limitations and that no one is free from it showed Hawthorne's concept that the heart, the very core of man's being, is the seat of human limitations.

The two tales that show man's limitations in the religious aspects are Young Goodman Brown and The Minister's Black Veil. Young Goodman Brown is the story of Brown, a firm believer in the puritanical doctrines who could not come to terms with the fact that good and evil are the qualities that man is born with. Though a very religious person, he could not suppress his natural instincts and allowed himself to be lured into a witch-meeting where he met all the people whom he thought virtuous and pure. The realization that man is born with virtue as well as vice was too hard to accept, and making himself an outcast of society, being

suspicious of all, Brown died a gloomy death. The Minister's Black Veil is a tale about a parson who realized the very qualities that Brown could not accept and which made him an outcast of society too. The Minister covered his face with a black veil to symbolize the dark cloud of sin that covers every heart while preaching about guilt and of hidden sin. But his parishioners, instead of trying to understand the underlying message grew suspicious of their parson which resulted in the latter becoming a dreaded figure. The two tales showed that religion, used as a means for fighting against sin and which is supposed to make men free from sin, to live a life of happiness does not always succeed. Instead, through Brown and Hooper, Hawthorne shows that a man cannot but follow his natural instincts, and would always give in to temptation. Religion can also bring about isolation of an individual from others through the knowledge that religion itself is inadequate in freeing man from sins inspite of good intentions and instructions.

Brown and Hooper are the two characters who show limitations in religion. Both of them realized the presence of evil in human nature but while Brown refused to accept it, Hooper did so. Even then, both of them became outcasts of society through this realization of the evil inherent in man showing that religion, though curbing man's desires

to give in to temptation to some extent, cannot completely free man from giving in to evils at some time.

Rappaccini's Daughter and The Birthmark show the evils of intellectual curiosity or the endeavour to change nature that can lead to failures through vanity out of man's growing knowledge. Man's thirst for power which results from advance in scientific knowledge gave rise to the refusal to accept what nature has to offer. In Rappaccini's Daughter, the renowned scientist Dr. Rappaccini had nourished his daughter with poison from her birth in order to make her different. But the deadly poison made her a dreaded figure even to the person who loved her. The young man wanted to help the girl out of this situation and gave her an antidote which was supposed to cure her ailment, but which resulted in her death. This antidote, prescribed by another scientist, the rival of Rappaccini which caused the final destruction also showed another aspect of the danger of vanity which comes as a result of dependence on too much knowledge. The Birthmark too shows the evil consequences of an intellect which lead to a man's search for perfection. Aylmer, the learned physician felt that he would be able to perform a miracle and remove the only blemish on his wife's otherwise beautiful face, a small, hand-like birthmark on her face. But in the process of removing the tiny birthmark, Aylmer causes his wife's death. The two tales show Hawthorne's

presentation of the limitations of man's intellectual faculties. They show that man, who is never satisfied with what he gets out of life is always trying to improve his situation and the acquisition of knowledge makes him think that he can even re-order nature. However, such attempts almost always end in grief and tragedy, thereby making the protagonists morally culpable for the consequences. Rappaccini, Baglioni and Aylmer all committed the sin of thinking themselves as all powerful because of their knowledge and even capable of working miracles. They show the dangers of too much knowledge and vanity of the so-called intellectual geniuses. Rappaccini and Aylmer tried out their scientific experiments on innocent victims with the belief that they would be able to change nature's work through their knowledge. But instead of achieving their goals, both succeeded in causing the deaths of their loved ones - the former his daughter, and the latter his wife.

While these four tales, Young Goodman Brown, The Minister's Black Veil, Rappaccini's Daughter and The Birthmark show Hawthorne's presentation of human limitations in the religious and intellectual aspect, Ethan Brand show Hawthorne's understanding of the cause of all human limitations. Brand, in trying to find the unpardonable sin, manipulated and experimented with others and found in the end that he himself was the sinner. Brand's realization that the heart is the

cause of all man's actions shows the writer's discovery that human limitations originate from the dictates of the heart. Hawthorne shows that man, born with the qualities of good and evil would never be able to deny the urge to commit evils and therefore it is necessary to understand this tendency in man to give in to temptations. He also shows the need to accept what nature has to offer. In concluding, one may mention here, his famous novel, The Scarlet Letter, which seem to be an embodiment of the different aspects of man's duality discussed so far.

Arthur Dimmsdale, the pastor is shown as an example where religion per se is no guarantee against man's instinctive desires. But the fact remains that Hawthorne seems to say that Arthur Dimmsdale is more guilty in suppressing his sin than the actual commitment of it. Roger Chillingworth, the physician, on the other hand, is given as an example of intellect which turns evil. Professing to have a real concern and help for the pastor, he stays mainly for the sake of investigating the pastor's mind and soul and to discover what sin he finds therein. His preoccupation with that end is such that he becomes more obsessed and fierce in his determination to prove his beliefs. The physician's manipulation of the two lovers as a means of destroying the pastor clearly shows the evil which arises out of intellect. Hester is an example of a human being who could not curb the natural instincts and

who gives in to temptations. She commits the sin of having an affair while being married and bearing an illegitimate child through this relationship. She is the symbol of human weakness which stems from the instinct and which is inborn. Though presenting her as an example to show human limitations, Hawthorne does not condemn Hester but views her even as a 'pure woman' in spite of her circumstances and presents her as a woman, who merely has a 'flaw' in her as is natural in every human being.

All these characters in The Scarlet Letter show that Hawthorne's preoccupation with human limitations was the prevailing theme of most of his writings. The tales which are studied in this particular thesis do not seem to show any way out for the characters from their bondage due to their flaws, they suffer and pay the price of their sin instead of trying to find a resolution for their situations. Thus the tales have the atmosphere of gloom and despair. But in The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne seems to have found a kind of solution for overcoming these human limitations. Hester Prynne, though an outcast, isolated from the townspeople, shows love and friendship which in the end makes her the counsellor and comforter of the very people who shun her. Hawthorne then seems to convey the message that through love and understanding along with hard work, men and women would be able to find a measure of happiness and

contentment in spite of the consequences of their commitment.

In the tales discussed in this study, all the characters, however, meet their end without finding any succour for their inner sufferings nor any hope for the future, hence the tragic note that pervades their stories, unlike the comic resolution of The Scarlet Letter.

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