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The Downfall of Colonial and Dark Romantic Masculinity in The Witch: A New England Folktale

David Miles Harrington
davidharrington13@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

COLONIAL AND DARK ROMANTIC MASCULINITY IN *THE WITCH: A NEW ENGLAND FOLKTALE*

David Harrington, MA
Department of English
Northern Illinois University, 2019
Melissa Adams-Campbell, Director

This thesis discusses the film *The Witch* (2015), directed by Robert Eggers, specifically, the character of William and his failures as a Puritan man. Puritan masculinity is a surprisingly understudied area of American literature and, to enter into the field, I use William and *The Witch* as a portal into various historical and literary interpretations of seventeenth-century Puritan maleness. The project takes a palimpsestic approach to these layers of influence on Eggers's film. From Hawthorne's Reverend Hooper in "The Minister's Black Veil" and Young Goodman Brown in "Young Goodman Brown" to real-world Puritans Roger Williams and Samuel Sewall. This thesis explores themes of exile, loss, and failure in both fiction and historical Puritan male characters. The culmination of three separate centuries of ideas about American maleness leave William as a patriarch and a man with the drive for success, but no possible way to ascertain it.

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THE DOWNFALL OF COLONIAL AND DARK ROMANTIC MASCULINITY

IN THE WITCH: A NEW ENGLAND FOLKTALE

BY

DAVID HARRINGTON
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INTRODUCTION

In the film *The Witch: A New England Folktale* (2015), Thomasin is the protagonist and sole survivor of a Puritan family killed by witchcraft. In the final act, she succumbs to evil and strips naked after signing Satan's black book. She is the last of her family to survive the onslaught of witch attacks and has a desire "to live deliciously." Her stark white naked form enters the foreboding nighttime woods with an onyx-black Satan in the shape of Black Phillip (the family's goat) by her side. She leaves her innocence behind and approaches the howls of a coven of witches; upon arrival, she assumes her place around the fire and, with the other witches, ascends into the night sky with an exuberant menacing cackle. After surviving the attacks of witches and being freed from her oppressive family, Thomasin embraces her new family of free women.

Thomasin's naked ascension captures the freedom and agency she acquires by refusing to conform to the strict religious, cultural, and gendered norms of her 1630s Puritan New England society. In her role as a witch, she gains power and freedom by accepting a socially deviant position in the occult. The film's director, Robert Eggers, uses this final, strikingly erotic scene to confirm the reality of witches within the film's diegetic world and to establish the freedom and pleasure of witchcraft in contrast to the extreme anxiety, fear, and harshness of Puritan life. This fantastical inversion of reality invokes a parallel world where female agency and power exist in tandem with traditional Puritan gender expectations. Indeed, this inversion justifies what a contemporary audience may have viewed up to this point in the film as baseless or paranoid fears of the supernatural. *The Witch* uses historical realism in an attempt to return the audience to

colonial America, a world full of unexplainable terrors. The film establishes this realism through context and setting; but, as more of the world is unveiled the audience becomes privy to the reality of witchcraft in the film's diagetical world, justifying the family's fear of the supernatural.

Historical inquiries into witchcraft have importantly been considered through a gendered framework, specifically the power relations between the emerging nation-state and nonconforming or uncontained forms of embodied womanhood. In contrast, this project centers its inquiry on Puritan masculinity, especially failed forms of Puritan masculinity as represented in popular depictions such as the recent film *The Witch*, and precursors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne's nineteenth-century fiction, as well as contemporary Puritan sources. Examining the film's representations of failed Puritan men through major influences such as Hawthorne's dark romanticism, my examination of Puritans ends with a consideration of masculinity in Puritan-era source texts, a surprisingly understudied period in the history of Euro-American masculinity.

Working back through historical layers of cultural representations of witchcraft and Puritan masculinity, this essay engages a palimpsestic methodology by moving through three significant eras and their representations of witchcraft in America: twenty-first century film, nineteenth-century fiction, and seventeenth-century primary sources. Sarah Dillion in *The Palimpsest*, constructs a fuller understanding of the palimpsest methodology. The birth of this rhetorical examination of interdisciplinary topics begins in 1845 with Thomas De Quincey, who published an essay titled "The Palimpsest." This essay "inaugurated" the term in academia and was also "implicitly related to palimpsests, which until 1845 were paleographic oddities of concern only to those researching and publishing ancient manuscripts" (1). Furthermore, "the process that creates palimpsests is one of layering," so in this context, the "layers," are

individually removed by each additive until the original foundation is met (3). My palimpsestic method examines how each cultural iteration and change in the meaning of witchcraft influences others. It begins with the most recent attempt to reckon with the Puritan legacies of witchcraft and gendered identity in *The Witch*.

The first section explores how *The Witch* blends genre staples from horror and historical drama to create a unique diegetic world where the most extreme Puritan anxieties about witches, the occult, and Puritan expectations of gender performance are justified. The second significant layer of cultural representations of witchcraft to be considered is Hawthorne's dark romantic fictions "Young Goodman Brown" and "The Minister's Black Veil." The third layer of cultural representation returns to consider original seventeenth-century sources for period accounts of Puritan masculinity and the witch controversy. The seventeenth-century will provide the founding layer of American Puritans through historical accounts of Roger Williams and texts written by Samuel Sewall.

A palimpsestic method proves particularly valuable as *The Witch* seems to desire to return twenty-first-century viewers to an "original" Puritan worldview with its antiquarian use of Puritan speech patterns and seemingly old-fashioned modes of viewing the world. It becomes clear, however, that any such attempt at historical authenticity will fail; twenty-first century viewers (and filmmakers) cannot entirely erase the influences of modern and prior-centuries' thinking about the occult. Instead of ignoring these layers of influence, my project renders them visible and significant, giving new meaning to our present-oriented investments in Puritan masculinity.

Puritan masculinity is largely untouched in masculinity studies. Much gender theory begins in the early nineteenth century, leaving Puritans outside these studies. Currently, the roles of Puritan men and women are understood broadly. However, there is less attention to how these socially constructed roles affected the daily lives of America's founders. Masculinity and male anxiety dominate much of the shaping of the New World. Understanding motivations and anxieties will lead to an understanding of colonial New England masculinity. Anthony Rotundo's *American Manhood* describes "communal manhood" in the colonies, where manhood is evaluated less on the individual than on community level. Specifically, he states:

"[t]here, a man's identity was inseparable from the duties he owed to his community. He fulfilled himself through public usefulness more than his economic success, and the social status of the family into which he was born gave him his place in the community more than his individual achievements did. Through his role as the head of the household, a man expressed his value to his community and provided his wife and children with their social identity." (2)

Puritan men are connected via masculinity to the entirety of their community. Both the success and failures of men are seen through the public eye and will change their stature as men in the communal perspective. If men are successful with their families, are productive in trade, and work well within the community, they are exemplars. Whereas the men who cannot produce, have unruly home lives, or do not work within the confines of the community, drift into a perceived state of failure.

Significant studies of New England witchcraft establish Puritan men's authority in seventeenth-century society. Historian John Putnam Demos's *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* uses surviving Puritan documents to track masculine and feminine gender roles in early New England. Demos dives into the masculine issues as well by examining multiple males executed for witchcraft and what made them stand out. As he

mentions, the majority of male witches were executed because of their connection to their wives; however, he states that some were not affiliated with women witches, and analyzes the characteristics leading to their unusual arrest and execution. While Demos contextualizes Salem, Richard Godbeer's *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion* grounds the belief in magic in reality. Godbeer establishes that magic was not a single evil entity in early New England, but rather, that the clergy preached all forms of magic cannot coexist with religion. Before these clergy attempted to quash the practice, magic was used for healing and to divine the future. Demos and Godbeer's texts do not directly engage the issue of Puritan masculinity itself; rather, they set up the basis for an analysis of gender. These texts examine historical events and actions taken by men, breaking down why such decisions were made. These scholarly claims will serve as my framework for discussing the New England witch trials, the mythology surrounding them, and the resulting literary and filmic depictions.

The Witch follows a Puritan family in 1630s New England as they are ejected from their village because of the father, William, and his public dispute over a Bible interpretation. As the family builds a new, isolated farm near the woods, the infant, Samuel, is taken despite his sister, Thomasin's, watchful care. William and Katherine want to believe a wolf took Sam, but the children think it may have been a witch. The loss of Sam leads multiple family members to enter the woods where supernatural events happen to them; and, thus, occult encounters in the woods open even the supposedly secure clearings around the home to supernatural forces. Unlike the family, who live in perpetual anxiety about Samuel's disappearance, the audience sees for themselves the horrific reality of witches as the film cuts to a scene of a witch grinding the baby Samuel into a jelly-like paste and applying it on her skin. The witch's early screen appearance leaves no speculation to the existence of witchcraft. It is this real-world witchcraft that the family

is forced to contend against without help from the townsfolk or, even, God. The family soon spirals out of control when their eldest boy, Caleb, arrives home bewitched and dies shortly after. Soon William, Katherine, Jonas and Mercy all die from witchcraft, while Thomasin gives into temptation, signing Satan's black book and becoming a witch.

Historically, men from the seventeenth century are not traditionally represented with masculine fears or anxiety; however, "failed" or exiled men such as Roger Williams, and the penitent Salem witch trial judge, Samuel Sewall, are possible models of Puritan masculine failure. Although uncited by the film, Roger Williams and Samuel Sewall are both historical figures worth considering. Williams is closely associated with the film's 1630s setting; he also illuminates the fractures in Puritan religious doctrine as those who disagreed with established Puritan theology were banished. Williams may not be a prime example of masculine failure, but he is a failure within Puritan society. His interpretations and ideas of God and man result in his exile, much like William in *The Witch*. Sewall is a failure in a different sense; he was a judge for the 1692 Salem witch trials. Sewall regretted his involvement as a judge, even from the beginning of the trials; however, as an educated man he felt obligated to serve his community. In his diary entries, Sewall often lamented his choice to serve as a judge and his sorrows when executions were carried out. This human connection to supposed witches haunted Sewall to the point, that in 1697, he issued an apology for being involved in the trials. He believed that they were a mistake and defended his desire to act righteously. Although Sewall recognized his failure, his mistakes affected not only himself, in what he believed was his righteous masculine duty, but also those whose lives were taken during the trials.

Influence of American male identity from the seventeenth-century's "failed" and exiled men can be seen in the film's twenty-first century male Puritan protagonists, William and Caleb.

From the film's beginning, William is a failed man, cast out of Puritan society for disputing about his interpretation of the Bible. His failure is represented two-fold when his oldest son, Caleb, is examined. When the family is removed from the village over the dispute, Caleb is left with only his failure of a father for a role model. On the new family farm, William's crops do not provide enough nourishment for his family. Moreover, William is not wealthy enough to provide for his family the only productive task he accomplishes during the film is chopping wood.

The film's three main male characters offer intriguing, divergent models of masculinity. First, there is William, a failure both as a provider and as a father. Second, William's pubescent son, Caleb, similarly fails to live up to Puritan standards of manhood, succumbing to the all too real temptations set out for him. Lastly, Black Phillip is a representation of a seductive and powerful Satan, clearly an inversion of proper Puritan masculinity and morals, but one that is nevertheless shown as successful. In these contrasting male figures, the film lays bare anxieties about Puritan definitions of masculinity and success; however, it does so through a curious layering of previous cultural representations, inheritances, if you will, of failed masculinity (a theme that resonates with Hawthorne's genealogical connections to the Salem witch trials as a descendant of Judge John Hathorne). Working palimpsestically through *The Witch*, this paper offers insight into conceptions of American masculinity through men's perpetual fears, anxieties and failures from the present to the past.

THE WITCH: HORROR AND MASCULINITY

The Witch sets itself apart from other horror films by defying the expectations of the modern genre. Contemporary films tend to over-use special effects and jump scares as horror elements. In contrast, *The Witch* uses a slow burn of uncertainty while establishing a diegetic world in which the belief in witchcraft is ever present and so too are actual witches. It is never certain when an element of horror will appear; and, when it does, it happens rapidly, leaving the audience no time to question the legitimacy of fantastic encounters with the occult. The pacing of the film allows the audience to believe that not only is the film's basis of witchcraft real, but that it may exist outside the diegesis too. *The Witch* actualizes Puritans' fear of witchcraft by reestablishing early New Englanders's justified beliefs in the supernatural. Upon its release, the film received high praise for taking a new perspective on the horror genre. Although it does not tackle anything new—topics such as feminine power, religion, and the supernatural are staples of horror films—it is lauded for its pacing and authentic feel and style. The film is a unique blend of historical drama with horror elements that bring the superstitious and fearful Puritans alive for a new generation of viewers.

Witchcraft in film has been around since the silent film era. While it once brought immense fear to audiences, its gradual familiarity over time ultimately diminishes its potential for generating fear. The witchcraft genre in film has gone through a multitude of changes. One of the original witchcraft films is *Häxan* (1919), which is a semi-witchcraft documentary. *Häxan* is considered a semi-documentary because it is loosely based on historical encounters from a real witch hunter who existed in the fifteenth-century; the film is also heavily fictionalized. As

portrayals of witches in films continue, they begin to change. In 1939, witchcraft is reduced to simplistic concepts of good and evil in *The Wizard of Oz*. Later decades use witchcraft as an allegory for domesticity, sexual freedom, and female agency, as seen in *Bell, Book and Candle* (1958), *Burn Witch, Burn* (1962), *Season of the Witch* (1973), *Four Rooms* (1995), and *The Craft* (1996). As these films progress in time, so do their message. In the 1950's the focus tends to be on the women in the home who are looking for love. In the 1970s exploitation films begin to take part in the witchcraft genre, making the films grittier and darker. The women become further sexualized and exposed to violence and revenge. As exploitation fades, the 1990's come in and begin to split witchcraft films into individual entities. Films can have sexualized witches like in *Four Rooms*, or more wiccan and power-based witches as seen in *The Craft*. Lastly, witchcraft is also used as a safe villain or relatable identity for children in *Hocus Pocus* (1993) and the *Harry Potter* films (2001-2011). The evil in *The Witch* is in direct contrast to the recent past of cinematic witchcraft which has become a caricature of the witch's roots as in *The Wizard of Oz*, *Hocus Pocus*, or *Harry Potter*. Instead, Eggers's film returns to the roots of witchcraft, bringing the audience back into the Puritan era with a historically accurate depiction of a witch who is terrorizing the protagonist's family.

As a historical film, *The Witch* provocatively and realistically recreates a world of sinister magic where Puritan men's fears and anxieties are warranted. Drawing on the auteur's historical research into Puritan religious beliefs and fears, the film authenticates its Puritan representations through historical dialect as well as consistent themes of paranoia and superstition. Reimagining this significant period of American history captures for us a very different, even alien "American" historical sensibility.

The long-standing fascination with witchcraft persists across decades of stories, novels, and eventually television and film. *The Witch* reverses a typical trend to present witchcraft as fantastic, by engaging a more realistic Puritan understanding of the subject. The realism is, surprisingly, truly horrifying. The film grounds the fear of paranoia by setting the family in an open plot surrounded by woods, without knowing what exactly is out there. For Puritans, this setting is the devil's dominion filled with unknown temptations and evils; the film establishes the family's fear as real by showing the audience the witch early in the film. From that scene on, the audience is able to attribute anything evil to witchcraft, while the family holds out hope that it is only a punishment from God. The witch permeates the physical world and the religious barrier of these New England Puritans' lives, exacerbating their fear of evil. To create fear, the film focuses on atmosphere and tension, slowly building the paranoia between the family, while keeping them in a gloomy and lowly-lit set. The visuals show a sinister forest that dwarfs the family's tiny clearing of farmland. This visual code signals the family's lack of success. They cannot conquer the forest let alone its supernatural elements fighting against them.

The physical existence of the witch herself grounds the fear of witchcraft within the diegesis of the film. She preys first on the children, exposing an almost holistic fear of and taboo against the corruption or loss of innocence. This plays on the viewer's inherent discomfort with story lines involving harm to children. The loss of a child is devastating for a family and the actual physical loss (or theft) exacerbates the pain and horror of life in the wilderness where fear of the unknown dominates. For William, this is the beginning of his horror. William takes the loss as a personal failure to fulfill his role as patriarch, the defender of his family. He attempts to find Samuel, but soon gives up, realizing anything that took the child has already killed him.

The realistically portrayed fear of the occult in *The Witch* takes Americans back to a time when witchcraft was believable and truly terrifying. The twenty-first century reconstruction of Puritan fears is demonstrated thoroughly throughout the film's story; however, as a film in the horror genre, it also stands out by not conforming to standard tropes. The film has typical elements of horror such as: gore, suspense, and anxiety; however, to be considered a witch film, it needs to fulfill certain conventions. Carol Fry constructs a working definition in *Cinema of the Occult*: the "important ingredient of the horror element in most Satanic films is paranoia, an irrational fear of the insidious Other who corrupts and would destroy our society from within" (93). Although *The Witch* is not purely a satanic film, it directly deals with the influence of Satan and how he destroys the family in the film. While William is attempting to discern who is and who is not a witch, his entire family (except his wife) become "the insidious Other." The Othering effect is the separating agent for the family, where those aligned with God are kept in the house, while the sacrilegious children and goat are kept out in the barn as savage outcasts. William's reaction to the possibility that his own children are witches stems from the "paranoia" feature that is so important to this genre of films.

A byproduct of creating an Other is that the Other tends to transition seamlessly from existence in the realm of the occult into the "real" world. The element of paranoia added to the occult "has always had broad appeal: fear of a group of Others, people who look just like us and fit into society but have their own agenda that is destructive of our values" (Fry 99). In *The Witch*, the witches are the "group of Others" who blend into society. They look and act like people—until they do not. Accusations of witchcraft come quickly in the film because of the established paranoia and the invisible evil lurking amongst them. No one in the family can definitively show that they are not a witch. This constant paranoia becomes a destructive force

within the home, promoting feelings of distrust and failure within the family. This paranoid negativity is most pronounced in the family patriarch, William, who feels his suffering is, perhaps, a truly justified punishment from God.

The Witch continues its unique historical horror with a new implementation of The Final Girl. In *Men, Women and Chain Saws*, Carol Clover describes the Final Girl as: “the one who encounters the mutilated bodies of her friends and perceives the full extent of the preceding horror of her own peril; who is chased, cornered, wounded; whom we see scream, stagger, fall, rise, and scream again” (35). Thomasin, as a Final Girl, meets many of the listed features, albeit, not in the typical fashion. In contrast to other Final Girls, Thomasin eventually succumbs to evil rather than fighting to the end. While Thomasin may end up as an atypical Final Girl, she is still subject to the central male crisis within the film as her father struggles to protect the family after his rejection by the Puritan village courts. In this new environment William is unable to provide for or protect his family; and, the effects of his masculine failure fall down the family chain, leaving Thomasin as the family’s scapegoat. The father-daughter gender dynamic is not unusual for occult films because “[i]t is in the realm of the occult that issues of masculinity and male sexuality come under long and hard scrutiny. On the face of it, the occult film is the most ‘female’ of horror genres, telling as it regularly does tales of women or girls in the grip of the supernatural” (Clover 65). Of course, William’s male crisis is the reason that the family falls into “the grip of the supernatural;” if he were a successful Puritan male, his family may not have been subjected to the horrors of Satan and witchcraft.

Another way *The Witch* is unique in the horror genre is its approach to horror itself. Modern horror cinema is bloated with gore and jump-scares. Modern films tend to make the horror visible (through gore, death, or emotional terror) soon after the title screen; this is not the

case in *The Witch*; rather, it is a slow burn from start to finish. The pacing of the film allows for character and audience connections to build alongside the paranoia the film creates around the mystery of the missing child, Samuel. This slow burn enhances the paranoia and anxiety experienced by both character and audience by building the anticipation. Even the conclusion of the film takes its time. Rather than an abrupt finish, it is a slow walk into the night with a near certainty of the horror.

In contrast to the lengthy ending, the film jarringly opens with a communal meeting, men on one side of the room and women on the other, where William stands trial in front of the judges, community, and his own family. The connotation of the trial reads that he is living by a different Biblical standard than the rest of the plantation; however, it also appears that if he adheres to church doctrine rather than his own, the judges will allow him to stay. The tone of William's accusers is that he needs to relinquish his independent (and, to them, heretical) religious conviction. Ultimately, William's pride gets in the way and, so, he and his family are exiled.

William's masculine anxiety is shown throughout the film as a father trying to provide for his family while sticking to his values as a Puritan man. According to Jo Anne Preston in "‘He Lives as a Master’: Seventeenth-Century Masculinity, Gendered Teaching, and Careers of New England Schoolmasters," Puritan men base much of their manhood on their "lifelong devotion to inculcating piety and civic values" (353). The "piety" can clearly be seen in William, in his devotion to Christ and God. He even praises God for sparing him and his family in the past. However, William's "civic values" are harder to verify. A return to the opening scene shows William and his family in court. William is arguing in front of the village and with the judges, clearly defying their authority. When told to be silent he states: "[w]as it not for the pure

and faithful dispensation of the Gospels, and the Kingdom of God?” indicating whatever he has done is because of his belief in God and the scripture, regardless of the societal consequences. It is plausible that William is operating and preaching a more radical variation of the Bible, making him a separatist within the community. He does not believe what he is doing is wrong because, in his opinion, he has the correct biblical interpretation. From his perspective, it is the others who are worshipping or practicing incorrectly. His belief is so strong that he is questioning the court about their belief in “the Kingdom of God.” The court responds by telling him, they are his judges, he is not theirs. William retorts: “I cannot be judged by false Christians, for I have done nothing, save preach Christ's true Gospel.” William makes it clear that he believes he has a better understanding of the religion; he believes that in his understanding of the Bible, he has done no wrong. Lastly, before forcing him to leave the village, the Governor states: “Must you continue to dishonor the laws of the commonwealth and the church with your prideful conceit?” The “dishonor to the laws of the commonwealth” solidifies William’s rebellion within the community. William believes he is living as a righteous man and refuses to submit out of pride and personal belief. However, William’s belief and pride do not save the family; they are removed from the plantation and forced into exile much like the historical figure Roger Williams, who I take up in Chapter Three.

Now in exile, William no longer has a community within which to register his masculine performance; the lack of masculine direction disrupts the traditional balance of the family’s gendered power dynamics. He lacks control over the family because his faith is wavering. Since William’s exile he has not succeeded in any task, making him question himself. In the Puritan family, the father is expected to be the backbone and authority of the family. He is also the dominant figure. Addressing the power dynamics of Puritan homes, Edmund Morgan in *The*

Puritan Family states: “The essence of the social order lay in the superiority of husband over wife, parents over children, and master over servants in the family, ministers and elders over congregation in the church, rulers over subjects in the state” (19). In this scenario, William should be the ultimate figure head in his home. He is meant to be both preacher and provider, the only higher being in his family is God. Instead, his wife becomes the authoritarian parent. The eldest daughter, Thomasin, becomes the scapegoat for all wrongdoing. Caleb is seen as a young boy even when he is verging upon manhood and the twins upset all parental authority. The upset of Puritan gender norms leaves William emasculated and Caleb without a proper male role model.

As William falters as a man, his wife, Katherine, is forced to take over as “parents over children” because William refuses to be the first to make a decision toward them (Morgan 19). In this instance, we see William’s first instance of true masculine failure. He cannot lead his house, nor guide his own children. Further, he is forcing his wife into an unnatural role. Morgan discusses the traditional role of power relations between man, wife, and God:

The proper conduct of a wife was submission to her husband’s instructions and commands. He was her superior, the head of the family, and she owed him an obedience founded on reverence. He stood before her in the place of God: he exercised the authority of God over her, and he furnished her with the fruits of the earth that God had provided. To her and to the rest of the family he was “the Conduit Pipe of the variety of blessings that God suplyeth them with.” (44-45)

The film begins with William as the “superior” and as “the Conduit Pipe” of God, but as his fields fail him and his family falls to ruin, he neglects his duties as leader. William’s doubts leave him in a state of patriarchal anxiety, where he lets the mantle of leadership fall to Katherine. With no husband leading the way, Katherine exercises a more robust authority within the family. The wife, in this instance, becomes the leader the struggling family needs.

Traditional Puritan masculinity begins to shift in the film as William's anxieties grow after Samuel's disappearance. The loss of the child is devastating for Katherine but immobilizing for William. He no longer commands the home. Even though Katherine admits she has become "cold" she still takes over the dominant paternal position. The takeover, although necessary, displaces William. William no longer focuses on the family as a whole, but rather reflects on his relationship with God. He questions if he is righteous or a blasphemer for leaving the plantation. When Samuel is missing, he gives up searching after a few days, citing the fact that either the wolf (what he believed took his son) ate him, or if that has not yet happened, the child would have starved. William has to accept that his son is gone. He must submit to the will of God. He now recognizes that the loss of Samuel is a divine retribution for his sin of pride and failure to submit to the church doctrine.

In the Puritan society, William's loss appears as a deserved divine retribution. He placed himself against the Church for his own religious beliefs; but, because he is wrong, he has then placed himself against God and must be punished. The second chapter takes up the psychological aspects of this divine emasculation, which will justify William as a failed Puritan man. His family no longer views him as the successful patriarch. The loss of Samuel furthers William's spiritual and psychological emasculation as it illustrates a father who cannot protect his family. Yet, he believes this event is God acting out his punishment on the family for his failures. He has failed by leading them down the path God does not want, so they must all suffer. This suffering demotes William as the successful father and husband. Because of his cultural masculine obligations, William must wallow and accept God's divine punishment. Perry Miller in *Errand Into the Wilderness* addresses the religious beliefs of Puritans and that they believed if they defied or did not perform God's terms they "may expect divine wrath" (6). In essence, God acts

as a parent to the figure head of the family. The family must submit to God's will otherwise they will be punished. William has already been exiled; he must consider the possibility that he has failed to humble himself toward God. Miller states that: "[Puritans] recite a long list of afflictions an angry God had rained upon them, surely enough to prove how abysmally they had deserted the covenant: crop failures, epidemics, grasshoppers, caterpillars, torrid summers, arctic winters, Indian wars, hurricanes, shipwrecks, accidents, and (most grievous of all) unsatisfactory children" (6). In this case, William has "deserted the covenant," had "crop failures," "accidents," "unsatisfactory children," and even a missing child. All of the signs available to William read that God is punishing him for not serving as demanded. These signs not only signal an angry God or failures as a man, but also that William, and possibly his family, may not be predestined to heaven, furthering his question in his religious belief.

William's exiled status ruptures traditional Puritan manhood organized through community relationships. As John Winthrop famously explains it in his "city on a hill" sermon, Puritans are a collective community body knit together in Christ; it is necessary for every man to work together to exist as a community. The man who exists on his own is not part of the community or covenant, leaving him apart from what it means to be both a man and a Puritan.

Miller discusses the need for men to be individuals, but to also part of the community:

There was, it is true, a strong element of individualism in the Puritan creed; every man had to work out his own salvation, each soul had to face his maker alone. But at the same time, the Puritan philosophy demanded that in society all men, at least all regenerate men, be marshaled into one united array. The lone horseman, the single trapper, the solitary hunter was not a figure of the Puritan frontier; Puritans moved in groups and towns, settled in whole communities, and maintained firm governments over all units. (143)

Miller states that the entire idea of being a Puritan is to exist within the community and to work together. If that is so, then William is no longer by this definition a Puritan. In this new life,

William is a frontiersman who practices his belief in a similar manner to a Puritan. Instead of living in town and exchanging in commerce, he exists in the woods where he hunts, traps, and lives in isolation with his family. He hopes God has come with him. But because of his plague of misfortunes, he questions if God has either abandoned or punished him. The isolation leaves him with little recourse beyond praying for forgiveness. Until God forgives William, he must continue living and suffering. The level of existence that William is reduced to further demonstrates his removal from society. He attempts success as a farmer but fails and must resort to more primitive measures such as hunting and trapping.

Forced into what he might perceive as a lower level of existence and masculinity, William must still find a way to exude some masculine prowess and power. To do so, he uses Caleb as another man he can exert power over. William has Caleb take part in activity that is clearly too much for his adolescent body: holding a giant rifle or setting a large high-tension trap, for example. These tasks are much easier for the full-grown William; but, by forcing his son to do it, he attains a feeling of dominance and power. Although the experience makes William feel stronger for being able to exert power over another, it is, in fact, his duty as a Puritan father to do so. The father's role is to make the son grow up strong and to let it be known that "there was no idea of equality of all men," that Caleb will have to be pious and righteous for himself, since he too is exiled (Miller 143). William acknowledges his failure as a Puritan man may have jeopardized Caleb's chances of success since the community of men will not have their input on how he is raised. As a father, he is doing the best he can; but, as a man whose faith in salvation is shaken, he can only do so much. In the not uncommon case where a boy possesses skills superior to the father, Morgan states that "within the family his father remained superior" (19). So to illustrate dominance as a father, William must reinforce the patriarchal relationship even though

Caleb is a more successful hunter. Another way William attempts to instill an imprint of his own morals onto Caleb is through prayer. William relies heavily on prayer as part of his spiritual belief and hope for survival. This is added into Caleb's education by his father where William forcibly makes Caleb learn prayer by heart. The prayer recital is to reinforce the belief in God and power of the father figure.

William's masculinity is also undercut throughout the film by his own actions and perverse sense of reasoning. The sale of his wife's chalice without her knowledge is a prime example. William must take a prized possession (that through marriage is his) and sell it in secret because he cannot admit to his wife or family that he has failed so miserably to provide. William must then rely on the goods or items of others to provide for the family at all. However, considering the family appears to be poor, this is his only chance at providing; so, he takes it. He more than likely takes great pride in providing for his family. Even so, he still is emasculated since the sweat from his brow did not provide the goods nor the funds to buy the items his family so desperately needs. The sale of the cup establishes that pride and piety are not enough for a family's survival. William attempts to be a provider for his family without the support of his village, but he is insufficient, illustrating his failure as a man. William's sale of the silver cup also plagues him with possible divine punishment. The chalice is likely used in his as a vessel for the Eucharist. Now, not only is William preaching his own gospel, but he has sold a connection to God. In an attempt to provide for his family, William has created a possible divine punishment from an angry God.

The silver chalice becomes a point of tension throughout the film because of William's secrecy. The chalice continues to cause problems because Katherine wants to know where it is. Instead of telling her, William allows the cup to remain a mystery. William lies by omission and

allows Thomasin to become the scapegoat for the missing item. As a husband and as a man, William is the one who makes decisions in the family and he does not need approval from the rest of the family, including Katherine. Edmund Morgan discusses the home and social life in reference to the laws dealing with gender and property stating: “[b]y the laws of Massachusetts as by those of England a married woman could hold no property of her own. When she became a wife, she gave up everything to her husband and devoted herself exclusively to managing his household.” (42). William plans on telling his wife about selling the chalice; but, it is not until he can no longer bear Katherine berating Thomasin that he finally admits he sold it. It is clear he wants to be a good man, but he finds himself failing as a husband, father, and provider. William wants to do what he can for his family, even if it means selling an heirloom from England. The need to sell the cup further emasculates William because of its origin. The cup is Katherine’s father’s, so by selling the cup, in essence another man has had to support the family for William. William’s inability to provide makes him begin to question his faith and his choices in life. Without the support of God, he cannot support his family. And if he does not support his family, he is a failure as a Puritan man.

William has not only failed in the eyes of God, but he is losing his male authority as both father and husband. He is shown having little control over his home life. Whenever his children fight, they look to him for resolve; but, his wife Katherine is always the one who answers. It is only after she has spoken that William will nod or mutter in agreement. He never issues orders himself. Alex Shepard in “Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen” addresses the Puritan man’s quest for a feeling of superiority. Obviously not all men can be superior to another, but at home they are superior to the rest of their household. Shepard states: “although male superiority might have been secure as a cultural norm, not all men benefited as a result or benefited equally”

(289). William is an instance of the latter. He began the film with vigor and fervor as he defied the court; but, as his life begins to fall apart, he no longer has the strength to be superior. He is devoted to his Lord and is unquestioning. When it comes to his family, however, he allows his wife to be the strongest member. William is questioning his life choices which distracts him from the family; this makes Katherine step in as the dominant parental figure. Although it appears William has “superiority,” he yields it during this time of crisis. It is rare to see him disagree or even put up a strong argument. Often he gives the look of a shunned dog, rather than voice his opinion, which should carry the most weight in the house.

William’s final emasculation is when he must act as a father and as a man but cannot. William’s son Caleb returns home bewitched after being lost in the woods. Although William immediately rises to action by bringing his son inside, he soon becomes useless. His wife and daughter take over by wrapping Caleb’s wounds and chest. The women are even the ones who do the bloodletting. William is finally forced to act when he is needed to pry Caleb’s mouth open when he is choking. However, as soon as this event passes, Caleb becomes delirious and soon dies. William does not even comfort his wife. Instead he stands across the room, and eventually leaves only to accuse his daughter, Thomasin, of witchcraft. William’s hysterical act turns the typical Puritan gendered assumption of women being the irrational accusers onto its head. William is acting irrationally out of fear and panic, a trait often associated with women during the witch trials. In his accusation, William is displacing his failures as a father and as a man upon his daughter. He hopes she is involved in the supernatural, which, if confirmed, would reaffirm his masculinity. However, this is not the case. Both his wife and now Thomasin, the loathed daughter, have become “superior” in the home over the supposedly patriarchal father. His response to this failure comes in the form of aggression; he locks all of those he assumes may be

witches into the goat barn. The untrusted family members include: Thomasin, Jonas, Mercy, and Black Phillip. In doing so, William has reaffirmed he cannot control his home or the actions that take place within. To compensate, he yet again goes out to cut firewood, which appears to be the only thing he can do properly. William's rash retaliation in the face of his repeated failure is the inevitable result of his paranoid spiritual crisis and psychological emasculation within the family.

Unfortunately, William's display of dominance has fatal consequences. Throughout the film William has been blaming his failures on others and on the possibility of witchcraft. As he falls deeper in this occult hysteria William locks onto Thomasin as the probable witch in the family; leaving her to blame for God turning away from them. In an attempt to finally right his failures, he locks his family in the barn, which seals his and his family's fate. The twins are killed, his goats are slaughtered, he is killed by Satan (in the form of Black Phillip, the goat), and his daughter who he believes to have been a witch the entire time, becomes a witch by the hands of the devil himself. William's insecurities and failures lead directly to the corruption and death he has feared all along.

A by-product of William's failed masculinity are the failures seen in his son, Caleb. Caleb differs from his father in that he shows some elements of success as a man. When he and Thomasin sneak off before their parents are awake, it shows he is willing to take control of a situation in order to provide for his family regardless of the risk. He also checks one of the traps he set with his father and has caught a muskrat and other small game, demonstrating his hunting skills. Caleb exemplifies the New World masculine values as well as Puritan failures. As Caleb attempts to emulate his father, he forges a new and more successful path; still, he cannot avoid his father's failures. Although Caleb is seen as a failed man in the film, it is not directly his fault. Puritan boys look to their fathers and the community for role models. Caleb's failure cannot be

blamed on the community because he has been removed from the plantation by his father's differences with the congregation. The absence of community means that the father is to blame. Rotundo argues, "The shortcomings of a youth were charged directly to the father who brought him forth into the community. The line between public and private barely existed in eighteenth-century towns and villages, and that social fact had a profound influence on the way people conceived of manhood" (3). Caleb fails both publicly and privately as a man. In public he cannot defend himself or his family from the witch, while in private it is seen that he has a sinful incestual sexual curiosity.

Rather than an ideological failure, Caleb is subject to a failure of sexuality. Caleb is twice seen looking down his sister's blouse in an attempt to see her breasts, a situation he finds awkward and embarrassing. Caleb is embarrassed by his sexual interests because of both his religious beliefs and his incestual arousal. He only looks at Thomasin when he believes she is not looking. The first time is when she is sleeping, while the second she is scrubbing her father's clothes at the brook. At the stream he becomes bashful with a hint of anger when he believes he has been caught staring at his sister's chest. This early sexual interest in breasts is important to Caleb's character as they are the main feature of the witch who abducts him. The witch of the wood is corseted which enhances her sexual features. The breasts are now a key feature of attraction and sexual deviation. Though trembling, Caleb is focused on the sexual markers of womanhood up until the moment he is kissed and taken.

Caleb's return illustrates a further failure of sexual competence and female dominance. He comes back in the rain naked and delirious. He eventually coughs up an apple that holds two significances. The first is that he lied to his mother about searching for apples in the valley when he and his father were hunting in the woods. The second implies that the witch takes sexual

advantage of Caleb in the woods. When the apple is coughed up he soon recites John Winthrop's hypersexual Christian diary entry about a love for Jesus, a copy of this prayer is found in *John*

Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father by Francis Bremer:

O my lord, my love, how wholly delectable art thou! Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is sweeter than wine. How lovely is thy countenance! How pleasant are thy embraces! My heart leaps within me for joy when I hear the voice of thee, my Lord, when thou say to my soul thou art her salvation. O my God, my king, what am I but dust!—a worm, a revel & thine enemy was I, wallowing in the blood & filth of my sins, when thou did cast the light of thy countenance upon me, when thou spreadest over me the lap of thy love, & say that I should live. Then did thou wash me in the ever flowing fountain of thy good. Thou did trum me as a bride prepared for her husband . . . Wholly thine I am (my sweet Lord Jesus), unworthy (I acknowledge) so much honor as to wipe the dust off the feet of my Lord . . ., yet wilt thou honor me with the society of thy marriage chamber. Behold, all ye of the Lord, know & embrace with joy this unspeakable love of his towards you. God is love, assuredly. (110)

The entry is very similar to what Caleb cries out, a bastardized form of Winthrop's love:

My Lord, My Jesus! Save me! She sends her Devils . . . I am thine enemy, wallowing in the blood and filth of my sins. I am thine enemy, wallowing in the blood and filth of my sins. For thou art with me. Cast the light of thy Countenance upon me. Spread over me the lap of thy love. Wash me in the ever-flowing fountains of thy blood. Let me ever be with thee. Wholly thine I am, my sweet Lord Jesus. O my Lord, my love! Kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, how lovely art thou! . . . thy embrace! My Lord, my love, my soul's salvation, take me to thy lap!

This scene is an allusion to Adam and Eve with the apple representing sin and man's fall from God's grace. Caleb's failure is then depicted symbolically through Biblical and Puritan allusions.

Richard Godbeer's *Sexual Revolution in Early America* investigates the Puritan preachers and their views on sex. Godbeer observes:

on the one hand, they had warned against the dangers of "youthful lust" and sought to convince their flocks that even seemingly harmless sexual experimentation had a corrupting and cumulative impact that could lead to spiritual catastrophe. On the other, they sought to seduce the youth of New England into the covenanted community by stressing the voluptuous pleasures that awaited them in the form of a devastatingly handsome and loving savior. (56)

Stripped of community and fellowship, Caleb's father takes on outsized influence over his son as William forces Caleb to recite his prayers on a daily basis. William more than likely is their only source of religious information, making him the priest who must "convince [his] flock" of religious seductions and sexual corruption. Caleb dies through an ownership of sin and religion.

After exploring the failures of the two prominent men in *The Witch*, the final male character, Black Phillip/Satan, is surprisingly successful. Satan represents an inversion of Puritan masculinity and success. He does not sow the fields or work a craft; rather, he whispers in the shadows to the dispossessed in colonial America, creating an invisible and corrupt army to do his bidding. He provides anything they ask for, so long as they sign his book. Black Phillip does not need to demonstrate his masculinity in a physical display. Rather, all he needs is to be convincing and cunning, which plays off the Puritanical belief that intellect and scholarship are an attribute of masculinity (Preston 355). Black Phillip is never seen truly acting his will upon the twins in the film, but his influences are felt in the outcomes. Although discrete, Black Phillip demonstrates two of the most masculine attributes possible in the film—seduction and violence. Black Phillip kills William by stabbing him with his horns and ramming him under all the cut wood. Secondly, Black Phillip seduces Thomasin with the promise to "live deliciously" with items like "butter" and "a pretty dress." All she has to do is remove "thy shift" and sign the book that appears before her. All of this is relayed in a sultry voice, and while Thomasin cannot sign her name, Satan guides her hand. Through whispers and a few choice actions Black Phillip has achieved more with limited screen agency than both men in the family.

Satan, in the Calvinist religion, is a tangible being, one who walks among man in the world. As the New World is also believed to be the only place God has yet to touch, Puritans consider it a devil's playground. Richard Godbeer's *The Devil's Dominion* gives an inside look

at Puritans' belief of a physical devil living among them. Godbeer explores the tangible devil, noting that: "[t]he ministers taught that Satan was an actual being. He was leader of the fallen angels 'a numberlesse of those invisible Immortal created spirits the Angels made by God in a good estate,' who had rebelled against God and, as a consequence, were driven out of Heaven" (86-87). As the rebellious Angel against God, Satan then must go after God's creation, man, to corrupt him. Also, as a leader, he is looking to recruit and build up resistance against heaven, much like Black Phillip's recruitment of Thomasin and the other witches, who have turned their backs on traditional Puritan society. Satan corrupts by infiltrating the society of man and seducing the faithful from God. Satan also rarely physically acts out his corruption. Instead, he allows his evil to influence others, leading to violence among men. Black Phillip never physically attacks anyone except William. Excluding Black Phillip's one murder, he merely influences and whispers. In contrast to Black Phillip, William barks at his family; his outspokenness leads to public exile. Satan works more patiently talking to the twins, tricking Katherine, speaking to Thomasin only after being demanded to do so.

If Satan is a successful masculine figure in the film, one could argue, nevertheless, that his success is foreordained. As Godbeer explains, "the Devil was not actually responsible for human sin: he tempted particular men and women because they were already inclined toward sin and therefore fit candidates for his service; those who gave way to his temptations were impelled by their own corruption, not by Satan himself" (92). William's differences with the church have taken him and his family away from the communal strength and joint belief in God, leaving him vulnerable and open to attack from all sides by Satan and witchcraft. These attacks are not purely external; the most devastating are internal. Black Philip's infiltration allows the slow corruption

from within, directly contrasting the external influence of God on the family. Though characters are being shown how to love God, they never need be shown how to fall for Satan.

Black Phillip acts as a foil to Caleb and William. Although much of his time is spent off screen or in the barn, he is their binary opposite nonetheless. Black Philip is patient, while the men are in a hurry. The evil that exudes from the goat slowly corrupts the family pushing them into an ever-deepening state of paranoia. The deceit and confusion spread by Black Phillip drives the family into hysteria and further from God: “the devil was always at their side, studying their personal weaknesses, and exploiting every opportunity to lead them astray” (Godbeer 92). Black Phillip’s inversion of actions and morals ironically leads to a victory over God and man because he is able to patiently corrupt instead of act in masculine haste.

While *The Witch* explores issues of female agency and liberation in a rigid patriarchal world, the flawed masculine characters of William and Caleb offer new avenues of inquiry into the surprisingly neglected terrain of Puritan masculinity studies. Eggers represents William as a man bound to fail spiritually, socially, and psychologically. Within the diegesis of the film, the true source of William’s failure is located in the physical and external presence of the occult; however, the crisis of masculinity left by William’s shaken faith is firmly rooted in Hawthorne’s influential nineteenth-century depictions of masculine failure. I take up this psychological, secular recasting of masculine failure in relation to the occult in Chapter Two.

AMBIGUOUS AND ANXIOUS MEN

Nineteenth-century American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne is well known for his historically-based fictional representations of Puritans, most notably in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). This project, however, will focus on the short stories “Young Goodman Brown” and “The Minister’s Black Veil,” both of which center on male Puritan protagonists obsessed with the possibility of exile. Much like *The Witch*, these characters exist in a world that blends historical realism with the occult; however, Hawthorne’s short stories differ from the film in that they focus on themes of ambiguity, a term I use to describe Hawthorne’s exploration of the unknown, unclear, or unexplainable. Ironically, *The Witch* leaves little room for questions; the viewer knows that magic, witches, and Satan exist in that film’s diegesis. In contrast, Hawthorne makes almost nothing known for certain and his protagonists experience devastating social exile as a direct result of such spiritual and secular crises. Masculinity scholars Michael Kimmel and David Leverenz identify elements of the unknown—such as ambiguity, the occult, shifting social and gender spheres—as a source of masculine anxiety in the nineteenth century. The crises felt by men of the nineteenth century is exemplified in Hawthorne’s men. These fictionalized Puritans are embedded with an anxiety that does not belong to their time; yet, their masculine suffering leads to a demonstration of failed maleness in the form of exile. Reading Hawthorne’s anxious and ambiguous Puritan male characters as precursors to Eggers’s representations in *The Witch*, this chapter highlights Hawthorne’s aesthetic commitment to representing Puritan uncertainty and ambiguity as central to experiences of social exile and resulting crises of masculinity in these

texts. If Hawthorne emphasizes the fantastic and unknowable in his work, Eggers literalizes such uncertainty by amplifying its horrifying effects.

Years before Hawthorne published his masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*, he was experimenting with similar themes of Puritan guilt, crises of faith, and relations between the individual and the community. One of Hawthorne's earliest Puritan-based romances, "The Minister's Black Veil," was published in the 1832 edition of *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir*, which also appeared in Hawthorne's 1837 collection of short stories *Twice-Told Tales*. "The Minister's Black Veil" focuses on Reverend Hooper, the minister of the Puritan village of Milford who enters the story wearing a black veil that obscures his face. Hooper's refusal to remove it for anyone, including his fiancé, creates a great sense of unease in the town; however, the villagers slowly accept the eccentric veil. Although socially exiled by the gloomy veil, the Reverend nevertheless becomes a keystone in the community due to his church services, mystique (as clergy from other villages travel to see him), and care of ill or dying community members. Just three years later, Hawthorne publishes "Young Goodman Brown" in *New England Magazine* in 1835, and again in his short story collection *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). The story follows an anxious Young Goodman Brown who travels into the woods at night only to believe that he has stumbled upon a satanic and witch-filled black mass. At the occult meeting, he sees many members from the community including his own wife. He soon finds out he and his wife are the only ones not initiated into the cult. As they attempt to get him to join, he cries out and the scene vanishes. He awakens the next day and lives out his life in paranoia. Brown is unsure if the events from the night prior actually transpired and no one hints that they had. However, he can no longer trust anyone. He becomes a cynic and eventually a

social exile. Because of their frequent inclusion in American literature classes, both texts serve as cultural touchstones of American male identity, especially masculinity in crisis.

Reverend Hooper and Goodman Brown exist in a crisis of ambiguity that causes them to live apart from their respective communities in eventual social exile. Their isolation produces extreme anxiety about their loss of status and the security they once had within their homogenous communities. In “Ambivalence in ‘Young Goodman Brown,’” Walter Paulits addresses obscure meaning when dealing with the occult: “Ambiguity is concerned with intermingled meanings—double meanings in the witches’ prophecies to Macbeth or Fedallah’s to Ahab, . . . Ambivalence is concerned with opposed feelings within the same person with a value or values” (577). Hawthorne’s Puritan men certainly possess “opposed feelings.” Reverend Hooper is, himself, the source of ambiguity or opposed feelings within his community. The minister’s veil makes him the center of ambiguity and anxiety, while simultaneously acting as a visualization of the town’s crises. His unknown qualities make the villagers anxious to be around him. In his town, his veil becomes a representation of sin, but to the onlooker, the sin is dependent upon the viewer. On their own, the minister and the veil do not represent a single sin or crisis, but through individual interpretations, the combination of Reverend and cloth are a public reminder of each person’s private sin. The veil’s unknowability, its demand that each person act as interpreter, generates an anxiety-producing distance between the townspeople and their minister. As he is distanced, Hooper slowly becomes an exile within his own community.

In an inverse fashion to Hooper, Goodman Brown takes the role of interpreter rather than source of ambiguity. He does not know what to believe about the townspeople and subsequently distances himself from his community. Brown’s “opposed feelings” come from his view of the entire town as ostensibly godly by day and demonic by night. However, he is never certain of the

reality of the black mass in the woods. To err on the side of caution, he accepts his paranoia and lives in an uncertain and anxious state. Brown distances himself from the community because any individual, even his own wife, could be a member of the occult; so he must remain constantly vigilant. In each case, the protagonist's distancing from the community is a self-imposed exile, creating tension between their private selves and public communities. However, as Rotundo observes, "the line between public and private barely existed" (3). This public/private divide reflects a newer nineteenth-century gender sensibility.

Hawthorne's Puritans express a heightened anxiety when ambiguity becomes a focal point of their daily lives. For example, the veil in "The Minister's Black Veil," is a textual and visual representation of sin. The veil clearly represents a sin or penance to the people of the town and to the Reverend himself, but Hawthorne never cues the audience in on what the cause of the veil is. He does not even leave plausible evidence for a hypothesis on why the cloth is donned. All that can be taken from the veil is that it carries a great significance and is a symbol of sin. The unrelenting ambiguous symbol of the veil drives the townsfolk mad and changes the functionality of the town. Before the veil is worn, the town is a rather gay setting. The town is described by the narrator early in the story, where he observes:

The sexton stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house, pulling busily at the bellrope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children, with bright faces, tripped merrily beside their parents, or mimicked a graver gait, in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week days. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper's door. The first glimpse of the clergyman's figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons. ("The Minister's Black Veil" 872-3)

The narrator describes "Children with bright faces," who are "merrily" traveling with their parents and bachelors gazing at the "pretty maidens" dressed up for the Sabbath. The town

appears to be happy, yet, once the Reverend opens his door, everything ceases. The veil comes into view and the town is visually reminded of its sins. The implication from the opening scene is that their sins are lust. The sexton is “pulling busily at the bellrope¹,” which generates a masturbatory image. Simultaneously, the bachelors are falling into lust as they stare at the maidens in their best Sunday dresses. The veil, in juxtaposition to its intended use to obscure, actually highlights the personal sins of the villagers as Hooper enters the scene. Godbeer writes that Puritans “had warned against the dangers of ‘youthful lust’ and sought to convince their flocks that even seemingly harmless sexual experimentation had a corrupting and cumulative impact that could lead to spiritual catastrophe” (56). While none of the townsfolk are actively acting against the Lord, the minister’s veil reminds them of their visually lusting after one another. The veil obscures the minister’s face, but his watchful eyes, like those of God, nevertheless, see into their voyeuristic, lustful hearts.

The ever-present reminder of sin changes the dynamic of the town to the point of exiling Reverend Hooper. As an exile, Hooper is unable to execute his duties as a Puritan man. To operate as a man within the community, specifically as a godly man, he must be involved socially. Rotundo notes that “a man’s identity was inseparable from the duties he owed to his community” (2). By self-appointing the need to wear a veil, it may appear that Hooper has imposed exile upon himself; however, he never stops engaging the community. The Reverend does not allow the veil to keep him “from the duties he owe[s] to his community.” In fact, he becomes a more efficient clergyman because of the isolation from the veil. Nevertheless, the village refuses to welcome their minister on a personal level. As a minister, he is welcome; but

¹ The original publication (1832) used the line “pulling lustily at the bellrope,” and was changed in *Twice Told Tales* (1837) to “busily.”

as a man, he is socially exiled. If his community has exiled him, they have caused his masculine crisis. The once friendly people's exclusion of Hooper is directly related to the veil:

At the close of the services, the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the centre; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper's eyes were so weakened by the midnight lamp, as to require a shade. . . . None; as on former occasions, aspired to the honor of walking by their pastor's side. Old Squire Saunders, doubtless by an accidental lapse of memory, neglected to invite Mr. Hooper to his table, where the good clergyman had been wont to bless the food, almost every Sunday since his settlement. ("The Minister's Black Veil" 874-5)

The physical and visual representation of sin demonstrated by the ominous veil brings a variety of changes to the town. Some people go from being open and freely speaking to "huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering," as they attempt to decipher the meaning. Some focus on "meditation" of the veil, while others mock the symbol. Yet, the biggest change is that no one will stand with the minister. He has not only separated himself from the community through his veil, but because of the veil and the symbolism behind it, the community have separated from him. As he has brought his sin out into the open, the people of the town wish to distance themselves from him. They are fearful that "walking by the pastor's side" may expose their own sin. The fear of sin disassociates those who were close followers of the minister and God. Within the structure of the town, the keystone of the community—Reverend Hooper—is socially exiled because of his obscurity.

The disassociation with a public representation of sin is common in Puritan culture; however, it was not quite as extreme as it is with Hooper. Michael Kaufman addresses the Puritan disassociation in *Institutional Individualism*. Kaufman claims that, Roger Williams

believed there is no possibility for a person to fully convert to a new religion: “Williams relies on a difference between accidentals and essentials. Just as the drunk who appears sober remains essentially a drunk, so too the ‘convert’ who appears saved in the accidentals—how he talks, how he dresses, how he thinks of himself in relation to other people—does not indicate actual salvation” (55). The lack of faith in “convert[s]” is an interesting link to Reverend Hooper. Roger Williams and Hooper both become exiles from Puritan communities because their religious beliefs take precedence over normal interaction with their society. Hooper is still seen as the Reverend, but others see something more as well. The distancing of the veil alleviates the pressure of non-believers to seek him out, while simultaneously bringing out a stronger faith in his flock once they have acclimatized to his eccentric veil. Although a dissociative symbol, the veil both supports and clarifies true faith in the congregation. Troublesomely, the veil’s ability is not fully described, leaving it in a realm of ambiguity. In serving others at their deathbed, the minister becomes more effective because of the veil, but in his day-to-day life, he is left apart from the community. Here, Hawthorne makes the veil’s power both more and less effective for the Reverend. Even though this cloth alienates, he still does his best to serve God in the fullest. In doing so, he can, in fact, “indicate actual salvation,” to those who see past the veil in times of need, but the ambiguity of the veil makes the townsfolk question their allegiance to their minister.

The ambiguity created by the veil in “The Minister’s Black Veil,” creates a sense of the unknown while also hinting at a relation to the occult. Hooper “had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features, except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight, further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things” (“The Minister’s Black Veil” 872). Concealing the protagonist’s

face creates an immediate barrier between him and the reader, generating distance and less empathy for the minister. Also, the veil acts as a symbol that “darken[s]” the minister, perhaps even hinting at an association with the occult. The obscurity of both the minister and his veil are further elevated in significance later in the story concerning both life and death in regards to the community. At a wake, the veil becomes slightly removed from the minister’s face as he leans over the body of a young maiden. A superstitious townswoman reported that the maiden’s corpse “slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap” (“The Minister’s Black Veil” 876). Even in death, a glimpse of Hooper’s face produces ambiguity; driving him further into the obscure. The rumor of the power that lies beneath the veil spreads around town, further ostracizing the Reverend. Hooper now has a connection to the occult to events such as the Salem witch trials. His face has a level of occult or fantastic to it as it is able to make a corpse “slightly shudde[r],” and “rustl[ed].” This connection creates a paranoia and mysticism around him. Furthermore, Hooper’s connection to the obscure and the occult does not always involve how he is perceived by others. An incident at a wedding creates fear in Hooper himself. Hooper, in a cup of wine, sees “a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered, his lips grew white, he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness” (“The Minister’s Black Veil” 876). In this context, the veil reflects what lays beneath it for the minister to see. Hooper has now been forced to observe what he has been attempting to hide. A layer of mysticism is added to the scene once more as it is unknown what makes Hooper reel from his own obscured face. The reflection may hold two meanings; the first is that it reflects a symbol of sin back onto the minister, while the second is that his face is connected to the fantastic, which further implies a connection to the occult. Either assumption is valid in the context of the

ambiguous story; however, it is the outcome that is more important than the reason. Hooper, from these two incidents, now has an element of supernatural and sin imparted on him from the town, rather than his veil solely reminding them of sin. They have observed or heard about what happens when both the living and dead see what is behind the veil. The veil, which initially and ultimately hides Hooper's face and detracts from what makes him both human and a man, creates such interest that he becomes more of a cultural symbol of ambiguity. The minister's established ambiguity is now compounded as rumors of the occult surround him. The simultaneous infatuation and distancing of the Reverend work in conjunction to ensure he remains a social exile.

The tensions between private sin and public judgement are further explored in "Young Goodman Brown." Brown witnesses' townsfolk practice secret witchcraft in the woods, ultimately rejecting participation. After viewing the private black mass from afar, Goodman Brown calls out for his wife only to awaken:

The next morning, Young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard, to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint, as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. "What God doth the wizard pray to?" quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine, at her own lattice, catechising a little girl, who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child, as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him, that she skipt along the street, and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting. ("Young Goodman Brown" 1042)

In public, Goodman Brown is evaluating the reality of the possibility of private sin. The effects of the sins he believes he has seen in private are taking place in the public. For example, the

town is acting as if everything is normal, yet, Goodman Brown “snatched away the child” from “the excellent Old Christian,” who Brown believed to be a “fiend.” Those he saw take part in the black mass as witches are no longer to be trusted. Brown’s paranoid actions can be understood through Kimmel’s examination of nineteenth-century masculinity, where “the proving ground was the public sphere” (19). Goodman Brown is still trying to prove himself a good and godly man; he resists the occult’s take over and attempts to protect those he views as innocent against “fiends.” The scene, however, demonstrates more of an anxiety from Goodman Brown and insecurity because of his belief in the occult.

Goodman Brown subjects his own wife to this paranoid fear of sin. When Goodman Brown left for his adventure in the woods Faith was the one thing he could count on being pure and godly, but now she has been corrupted by Satan. The events in which he sees his wife participate forever taint his view of her. Upon arriving home, he cannot bring himself to kiss or even acknowledge her. Faith is standing in the street and “almost kissed her husband,” but he “looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed without a greeting” (“Young Goodman Brown” 1042). He cannot associate with her out of fear of his own life and his spirit in the next world. This fear makes Goodman Brown “A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man,” to the rest of the town (“Young Goodman Brown” 1042). Their dislike and social exile of Brown made them feel he was unworthy of even a proper headstone, “they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone; for his dying hour was gloom” (“Young Goodman Brown” 1042). The paranoid fear felt by Goodman Brown is the reason he has become an exile. This removal furthers the male anxiety of not fulfilling his duties to the public, which then reinforces the town’s exile of the Puritan man. Brown is essentially left in a masochistic cyclical exile fueled by social pressure and paranoia.

The belief in the occult has made Brown's life, both as a male and as a Puritan, eternally covered in "gloom." As in Salem, fears of the occult, although irrational, seem to justify these hysterical beliefs. In "Satan's War Against the Covenant in Salem Village, 1692," Benjamin Ray explores the rationality and communal relations of Puritans during these trying times. A fictional Puritan who believes the town is thick with witches fits a Salem-style analysis because of the heightened levels of paranoia and fear; Ray discusses that in the Salem congregation "members initially directed their fears against those who were not members—the many 'outsiders living among them—a classic opposition between 'us' and 'them' with a bonded community" (91). The fear of outsiders as members of the occult is well founded in "Young Goodman Brown."

Although the community of witches exists inside of the congregation and village, the actual event Goodman Brown witnessed occurs deep in the woods. The woods create a sense of "Othering" or "them" by removing the supposed faithful Puritans and placing them in a godless environment. This alienation of faith allows for Goodman Brown's paranoia to grow. Once he returns to town, the congregation is never again described outside of the village, leaving an ambiguous, yet focused paranoia. Rather, Goodman Brown lives with the knowledge that there may be a "them" and no "us," only an "I." Regardless of if the town truly is one with Satan, Goodman Brown carries the anxiety of the occult and an enemy society, reinforcing his eternal "gloom."

Goodman Brown's focus on the Other makes him anxious in the public sphere. He does not have a reliable source to depend on or confide in; his displacement and lack of power in the public makes him an exiled man. Although his fears are possibly irrational, Goodman Brown may not be fully discredited. Regardless of the truth in the supernatural events, the consequences

of the believed events have a permanent effect on his life. The belief in what he saw makes Goodman Brown an outsider in his society.

The first observation Goodman Brown assumes is otherworldly (or of the occult) is the walking staff of the traveler he meets at the road, that he describes as “the only thing about him, that could be fixed upon as remarkable, was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought, that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent” (1034). Although this claim does not immediately establish a belief in the occult, it is demonstrating Brown’s fear and paranoia of both forest and the occult. He is fixated on the staff, giving himself and the audience the description of a physical “wriggl[ing]” serpent. The narration of Brown’s thoughts continue, “This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light,” (1034). Here, the possibility of Goodman Brown being deceived becomes plausible. The staff has not been explicitly described as physically wriggling, but then the text comes back to say that the “ocular deception” or lighting played a part in Goodman Brown’s thinking the staff was part of the occult. In this instance, the ambiguity is highlighted as it is altering Goodman Brown’s perception of the staff, much like Hooper, who has the veil; Goodman Brown may too have an “ocular deception,” that changes how both he and the reader digest what is occurring.

Both texts obscure details, leaving conjecture and ambiguity or a crisis of psychological doubt as primary features of the fictional Puritan world. Reverend Hooper is an actively obscured protagonist, while Goodman Brown acts as an agent who portrays an ambiguous world. The first instance of Goodman Brown’s ambiguity discussed the possibility of the occult through the staff. The second instance is as he travels down the path and eventually becomes an observer of the black mass; essentially, he acts as a hidden eye that transmits the images back to the

reader. Goodman Brown sees the entirety of the town, including his wife, involved in the black mass. To add to the suspense, Hawthorne uses ambiguous statements to describe the scene, all the reader truly gets is that the scene is “[u]nfathomable to mere mortals [as] the lore of fiends” (1040). The mass is left described in vague shapes, giving it a dream-like quality; the vagueness and uncertainty of the event lends credence to the occult. Goodman Brown falls asleep and wakes up back in town, unsure of what he saw before. The lack of detail suggests he did dream the event, while his strong belief and paranoia add to the plausibility of reality, reinforcing his withdrawal of presence from the public sphere.

Hawthorne’s stories emphasize Reverend Hooper’s and Goodman Brown’s anxiety in relation to their social peers’ observation and judgement. His Puritan men express an anachronistic concern with public and private spheres and how others in the community, specifically their wives and other men, perceive them. The men in these two short stories experience anxiety in relation to these spheres that is not typically present in Puritan literature (mostly diaries²) from the seventeenth century. The diaries examined do not demonstrate enough evidence to support similar masculine anxieties to that of nineteenth-century men. Hawthorne’s men base their masculinity on the amount of power they have within the community, their social standing, and how others perceive them. Instead, the diaries of Puritans are a window into the private lives of men. Here, they open up about inadequacies, self-scrutinies, or attempts to read God’s divine judgment. Although Hawthorne’s Puritans are without diaries, his narrative gives us a glimpse into their private selves. This narrative style is essential because it shows nineteenth-century influences on seventeenth-century characters. The actual Puritan diaries are a reflection of self and servitude toward God. In comparison, Hawthorne’s Puritans place their

² Such as *Diary of Cotton Mather, 1681-1724* (1911) and *The Diary and Life of Samuel Sewall* (1878).

concerns more on self, especially self in relation to others, than servitude to God. This difference imparts a more secularized and gendered masculine anxiety onto Hawthorne's fictional Puritans. An anachronistic gendered reading of the masculine crises of Hawthorne's romantic Puritan men alters the Puritan male representation. No longer are the Puritans concerned strictly with God. They also face anxieties in relation to public and private spheres. Within these spheres, men have a need to appear strong, powerful, and dominant. The ambiguity presented by the occult challenges the ability of the men to maintain or attain these features. Traditional Puritans recorded their lives and crises in diaries that typically reflected on their relation to God (and His impending potential wrath). In addition to their fears of God's wrath and exile from His divine affection and salvation, these men worry over social exile, producing an anachronistic source for this anxious masculinity.

Concerns over the occult fuel paranoia and fears in the Puritan community in these narratives. Hawthorne's fictionalizing of these concerns with the occult exacerbates otherwise "normal" anxieties about social relations to the point of crisis. To live up to the ideal of their communities, these men must adhere to strict religious convictions and devout behavior and demand the same of others. As exiles, these characters experience difficulties in social interactions, increasing their ostracization in the community. The uncertainty of knowing who exactly is a godly Christian—perhaps Hooper's veil obscures his demonic mark, perhaps Brown's entire village is practicing witchcraft in the woods at night—reveals a thematic necessity of individual interpretation and the ultimate fallibility of our perceptions of others. If the Puritans were concerned with their own inability to know God's divine will with certainty, Hawthorne's Puritans are additionally concerned with their inability to know their neighbors, an

anxiety that strangely straddles nineteenth and seventeenth-century anxieties about faith and community.

Hawthorne imposes anachronistic depictions of the male crises experienced during the nineteenth century onto his fantasized Puritans to consider how men may act in a more socially restricted period. For instance, James Kell addresses the cross-pollination of Puritan gender and social conflict with that of the nineteenth century in his article “Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown’: Early Nineteenth-Century and Puritan Constructions of Gender.” In the article, Kell addresses the discourse and relation between Puritans and nineteenth-century men and women.

In his observation of gender and culture, Kell claims:

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, a discourse developed that sought to divide the world into public and private spheres based on gender. Men and women had lived socially, economically, and politically distinct lives in the Puritan period, but what is significant about the new nineteenth-century-gender ideology is that it constructed a “male” world that was even more and decidedly self-consciously distinct from the “female.” (35)

The distinct male world existed in its dominance outside of the home in the nineteenth century. Men carried themselves with pride, with their masculinity on display in the public sphere. In this sphere, men interacted with one another and needed to not show any weakness for fear of being dominated by other men. The private sphere is then engaged as the home, where women reside. Although men still have dominance in the home, this is women’s sphere of influence. Hooper and Goodman Brown are both seen interacting within these gendered spheres, and in both spheres demonstrate an anxiety. Goodman Brown is introduced in the doorway of his home with his wife, Faith. He is so concerned with his impending trip to the woods that he forgets to kiss his wife. Even before venturing into the public, he shows anxiety in the private; although, once in public, he remains calm and acts as a man should, without outward fear. As Goodman Brown

enters the woods thinking about his future with his wife, the narrator describes: “With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose,” of traveling through the woods at night (“Young Goodman Brown” 1033). His actions are brave because of what he believes he is facing. For Puritans, the forest is the only place where the word of God has not been spread, so Brown is entering what he believed to be Satan’s last dominion. However, Goodman Brown’s anxiety over the devil and his followers is soon revealed in a nineteenth-century masculine context.

In comparison to Goodman Brown’s anxiety about his neighbors’ behavior, Hooper is unconcerned with public opinion. Hooper does not acknowledge the townspeople’s curiosity; however, in the private sphere, his fiancé Elizabeth confronts him. She asks him why he has donned the veil, but he refuses to answer. She then begs him to remove it, but he cannot and breaks down because he is unable to show his face to anyone, including her. The minister’s masculine crisis is shown in the private sphere by his inability to show his face to Elizabeth. His response when she says she will leave if he does not remove the veil is: “Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil — it is not for eternity! O! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened, to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity forever!” (“The Minister’s Black Veil” 878). Hooper is shown as a desperate man, not just for his life, but for his soul. He is frightened, a trait not commonly associated with men of either the nineteenth or seventeenth century. Within the private sphere, where he is alone in the house with his fiancé, Hooper is able to demonstrate inner emotions about the fear of judgment by other men. Although Hooper is able to emote within the home, in doing so, he gives more power to Elizabeth. He begs for her not to leave. He

expresses his inner anguish and relies on her compassion for his crises. Instead of empathy, Elizabeth embraces the power she has in the situation and leaves. The correlation with women in the private sphere or “within the house—a structure that during this period became known as the home and became identified primarily with women and their children” solidifies that a realm exists where men may not be the definite power (Kell 35). The nineteenth-century gendering of sphere-based power now displaces men within the home compared to prior centuries. Nineteenth-century men found that they could not dominate the domestic sphere, thus creating a feeling of crisis. The removal of power in the private sphere leads to a desire to claim power within the public sphere. This correlation further demonstrates masculine anxiety as both of the short story protagonists remain in the public sphere, an area where they should be most comfortable and confident; instead, both men are anxious. Hawthorne’s Puritan protagonists demonstrate the effect on masculinity when they are either the focal point of ambiguity and anxiety or an observer of such. Through these two representations, Hooper and Brown, a collective image of nineteenth-century male concerns in relation to spheres can be observed. The masculine crises in their dominant social spheres lead Hooper and Goodman Brown to social exile. To heighten the anxiety felt in public spheres, Goodman Brown and Reverend Hooper must deal with elements of the occult, witchcraft or fantasy. These fantasy additions to gendered sphere concerns become a major focal point for the fictional characters.

While masculinity may appear constant and timeless, it is constantly changing. Goodman Brown and Hooper face nineteenth-century gender anxieties rather than strictly seventeenth-century Puritan crises. In the nineteenth century, men are concerned with ideas of power, domination, and humiliation, qualities central to depictions of both Hooper and Goodman Brown. David Leverenz argues that nineteenth-century masculine anxiety stems from the

“emotional roots [that] lie in a man’s fear that other men will see him as weak and therefore vulnerable to attack” (73). Vulnerability drives the plot in both Hawthorne’s stories as Reverend Hooper’s veil renders him vulnerable to suspicions of the occult, while Goodman Brown’s paranoia prevents him from interacting with his community.

As Hawthorne’s uncertain protagonists isolate themselves from their communities, they fail to achieve the ideal standard of masculine success for their time. As Leverenz notes of Hawthorne’s era: “[m]anhood functions to preserve self-control and, more profoundly, to transform fears of vulnerability or inadequacy into a desire for dominance” (73). Although they are vulnerable, “self-control” is demonstrated by both men. They held to their convictions until death; yet, they have no transformative quality to them. They are not able to “transform fears” into anything that resembles “dominance” within their community. The veil of the minister hides his sin or failings, eventually gaining him respect in the community, even though he never justifies his reason for obscurity. The same stagnation is seen in Goodman Brown, who never leaves the community or approaches the townsfolk he believes to be evil. Instead, he decides to live in fear for the rest of his life. The unchanging nature leaves the men stagnant and stunted in their communities. Rather than men who lead, they are exiled.

The unwillingness to change or adapt to new social surroundings leaves Goodman Brown and Hooper without power in their public and private spheres. Hooper lives the rest of his life behind the veil, while Goodman Brown lives in perpetual paranoia. Rather than adapt, these men allow the ambiguity faced in life to dictate how they live and are perceived in the community. The effect of this psychological uncertainty is demonstrated through these two nineteenth-century representations of Puritan men. Hawthorne introduces nineteenth-century public and private boundaries into the Puritan lifestyle reflecting gendered anxiety experienced by men

during his time. This psychological drama fuels the stories' paranoia and hysteria surrounding sin, layering and exaggerating nineteenth-century ideas onto seventeenth-century colonists.

Hawthorne's Puritan men exist in a world of ambiguity; in contrast, Eggers literalizes the fantastic occult in *The Witch*. Goodman Brown and Hooper are forced to live in a world of uncertainty, where they err on the side of caution as to not risk dealings with the occult. William, however, must face the reality of witchcraft and Satan. Surprisingly, the actualization of the fantastic does not differ much from living with a paranoid hysteria. Hooper, Brown, and William all face a crisis and exile. The occult is able to take communal men and disassociate them from their villages. The occult pressures the men to the point of a masculine crisis. Michael Kimmel addresses manhood as: "[being] less about the drive for domination and more about the fear of others dominating us, having power or control over us" (4). The "fear of others dominating" paralyzes these Puritan men. All three face a fear of domination; although, William is the only one who has it actualized. Hooper and Brown live in fear of domination, while William has oppressive real dark forces impact his life. The impact of the fantastic, fact or fiction in the diegesis, has the profound effect of exile. In these examples, Puritan men focused on the occult, live on the fringe of society. The community casts out those they believe to be different; and, men who are fearful of the occult exacerbate their differences because of their hysteria.

FAILED MEN (OR RIGHTEOUS FAILURES)

This chapter uses a historical lens to consider two iconic Puritan men, Roger Williams (1603-1683) and Samuel Sewall (1652-1730), who were influential religious thinkers and community leaders in their own times and whose legacies persist in the later work of Hawthorne and Eggers. Although Williams and Sewall found considerable success in life, their distinct approaches to exercising individual conscience in important moments of ethical crisis separate them from others in their community, drawing a shadow over their reputations in their own time as well as in later accounts. This divide between the men and their community locates Williams and Sewall in the by now familiar role of outcast and exile, outside the ideal standard of godly Puritan man. This divide between the self and community, a crisis where private conscience eventually supercedes conformity to public practice or opinion, interestingly harkens to a more Hawthornian model of nineteenth-century gender identity. As I have traced it in previous chapters, the central role of the Puritan man in relation to his community is broken through Williams's official exile and Sewall's public apology for his role in the Salem witch trials. While their experiences of conscience-produced social exile are different, both men find themselves estranged from their communities in ways that reflect on their expected patriarchal leadership role in their community and individual family. Standing outside the ideal standard of a Puritan community knit together through Christ, Williams and Sewall are figured as social exiles and, even, failures. Their crises of conscience becomes a source of conflict and tension that later artists such as Hawthorne and Eggers draw on in their representations of anxious, failed, and even horrific Puritan masculinity.

Roger Williams becomes an exile because his opposing religious and moral ideology place him in conflict with his fellow Puritans. According to biographer Edwin Gaustad, Williams immigrated to Nantasket, Massachusetts on February 5, 1631 on the ship called the Lyon (5). On leaving the ship, Williams appears to have a job lined up with “A new colony eager to receive a ‘godly minister’ into its midst, a land of boundless opportunity and promise, a warm welcome from John Winthrop; all this would certainly have worked in William’s favor” (6). It seems then, upon his arrival in the New World, Williams escapes persecution to begin preaching the word of God. Although Williams desires a simple life of worshipping God, it is not easy for him to accomplish in the New World. He finds himself almost immediately in conflict with local Puritans, and even communal authorities as he disagrees with much of the primary political and religious doctrine. Williams proposes a separation of church and state, believes that all other religions (including Jews, Catholics, Islam, and Quakers) are false, and takes deep issue with converted followers. Williams’s disagreement with the dominant form of thought in the colony causes conflict in the devout life he seeks.

Williams’s “warm welcome” soon dissipates when he begins to practice his own doctrine. While in Massachusetts Williams is offered the resident minister position at the Boston church; however, he turns it down “because this Puritan church had not clearly, cleanly separated itself from the Church of England. Boston’s Puritans still clung to the idea that they could reform the national church from within that it was not necessary to separate from or reject that nurturing mother” (Gaustad 6-7). Even though Williams had no other financial support, he refused to change his stance. To align himself with the Church of England, the very people who chased the Puritans out of their home country, proved too much for Williams, who protested by removing himself from the “unseparated people.” Rejecting the job offer, he moves to Salem in hopes of

being minister there. When he arrives in Salem Williams is welcomed warmly; however, as letters from Nantasket arrive, they soon reject Williams, not wanting to upset other regions. Williams finally finds a warm home and employment as a minister in Plymouth in 1631; yet, it only lasts until 1633 (Gaustad 7). Once again, Williams falls into political disfavor for his ‘extreme’ views: “Plymouth governor, William Bradford, reports in his valuable history *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Williams ‘began to fall into some strange opinions, and from opinions to practice’” (7). Upon falling out of favor with the political leaders of Plymouth, Williams and his wife once again moved back to Salem where troubles resume again. This time Williams receives charges for his opinions and is brought to court:

Williams raised serious charges concerning the legal title--a grant or ‘patent’-- of the land given by King Charles I to the Bay Colony. In doing this, Williams questioned the very foundation of the colony’s government and legitimacy. Williams was especially troubled by the use of the Christian religion to do a very un-Christian deed: namely depriving the Indians of their own property without due compensation or negotiation. While in Plymouth, Williams had spent time among the Native Americans and had learned some of their languages and much of their culture. And he realized that they too had rights. (Gaustad 9)

Williams’s challenges to standard doctrine and practice ended with him in court; however, no charges ever came upon him. One benefit of this ordeal is that he did in fact upset the common people who began to question if the land was truly theirs. Williams’s conscientious behavior, by modern standards, makes him both a success and a revolutionary. But for Puritan political leaders, he is acting in dissent and must be dealt with. The very leaders that once welcomed the “godly minister” into their colonies are now in utter uproar over his claims of Indian land rights. Men like John Winthrop and John Cotton try to dismiss his claims out right:

Governor John Winthrop responded that the land that ‘lies common, and hath never been replenished or subdued is free to any that possess or improve it.’ He added that, with respect to the Indians, ‘if we leave them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them and us.’ And pastor John Cotton declared

with some wonderment, 'We did not conceive that it is just a title to so vast a continent, to make no other improvement on millions of acres in it, but only to burn it up for pastime.' (Gaustad 10)

These men believe themselves to be above Native Americans, which is not uncommon at the time. They view the original owners as savages who did not need nor deserve the land.

Moreover, the English provide settlers with the legal justification of *vacuum domicilium*, which gave colonizers the rights to any land not currently being used. However, some men, John Winthrop and pastor John Cotton for example, thought Native peoples were less civilized and, so, felt justified in taking the used land too (10). A common thought process was that there was so much land that taking some at a low cost was of no real loss. However, Williams did not believe in this philosophy. He was able to see the flawed logic in the current theft of land and the potential problems that may be instilled in the future. He saw that Native peoples did not fully understand how little they were receiving for extremely valuable land. Anne Lombard in *Making Manhood* argues, "Although Native American peoples already lived on the land, the colonial governments never fully acknowledged their presence or their right to remain" (6). Challenging this, Williams contradicts not only his own people, but God, who has supposedly endorsed their colonial endeavors. The Puritans (especially political and religious leaders) believed they were doing nothing wrong and acting as God intended, but in challenging this idea other Puritans found that Williams controverted the layman, the town, and God himself; however, Williams believed he was serving God as best he could by pointing out this hypocrisy. When he called the Puritan leaders out for land theft, they denounced him as a liar, much like Winthrop. Williams once again proves he is willing to remove himself from the community in an effort to do what he believes is right, even if it means charges of ungodliness.

After a great deal of arguing about land, Williams fell into further disfavor from the elders of the colonies when he thought it immoral to require all males sixteen years or older “to swear an oath of allegiance to the colony and the crown, concluding with the words, ‘so help me God’ (Gaustad 10). Williams calls this practice into question because he is aware that not everyone believes in God or even the same god. Williams’s removal of the oath to God would allow young men to not be forced to commit blasphemy out of the convenience for the Puritan leaders in the Bay Colony. In this effort, Williams convinces very few and failed. A similar argument that fails at this time too was for the separation of church and state. However, the leaders of the colonies see little need for this and began once more to pressure Williams for his radical beliefs. These crises of conscience bring Williams to court once more on July 8, 1635, where he is warned that his opinions were “erroneous and very dangerous” (Gaustad 11).

Williams’s “dangerous opinions” do not end there, as it is soon found that he has written a shocking essay entitled *Treatise*. Unfortunately, the document is lost and was never dated, but there is still record of some of its contents. In Roger Williams’s *Treatise* he faults King James and King Charles with errors. When Governor Winthrop found out, he wanted a copy for himself and the Council to read. The recovered text is from some of the judicial members of Williams’s community, stating he was:

To have ‘faulted King James’ for granting land to Massachusetts and to have made ‘other reflections on him and his successor Charles I’ was a very serious matter. Unfortunately the text of the original *Treatise* is lost but from John Winthrop’s brief record of the Council’s deliberations it appears that Roger Williams’s contention that the colonists had no right to New England lands except as they ‘compounded with the natives’ was not all of this matter. His more serious offence in the Council’s eyes lay in his ‘reflections,’ more properly labelled blunt accusations, of both King James and King Charles. King James, he had asserted was guilty ‘of telling a solemn public lie’ in claiming to be the ‘first Christian prince’ who had discovered these lands. He was also guilty of blasphemy ‘in calling Europe Christendom or the Christian world.’ The accusation against King Charles was expressed in three uncomplimentary passages from the Book of Revelation:

interpreted to mean that Charles had received the spirit of devils: that he was on the side of anti-Christ; and that he had drunk of the whore's cup. (Winslow 107-108)

The council and John Winthrop were “deeply offended” by these accusations (108). As the political and religious leaders of Boston at this time had not yet separated from the English Church, Williams is criticizing and defaming Puritan leaders by association. Williams's accusations of the crown, although just, deeply offend and wound those around him. Williams's opening their eyes to these issues creates great tension; this public, printed dispute marks the beginnings of his exile from the Puritan community. According to Williams's strict understanding of the Bible, the leaders who have violated the rules and codes of conduct within the sacred text must be held accountable, no matter the cost to Williams himself. Secondly, he challenges the authority of the magistrates when he argues that offenses of the First Table should not be punishable. He believes it a waste of time to punish swearers and Sabbath breakers; however, considering this is a source of power and income, the Boston officials disagreed (117). Finally, he purposes to separate the church and state. He fears that giving the church too much power would limit individual free-will and corrupt church officials with power.

Williams's continual attempts at altering common seventeenth-century Puritan thought creates a reaction from the community. Williams is called before the court one final time. This court hearing is Boston in the fall of 1635:

The court decided to give Williams a final chance to recant, to take back what he had preached or written. . . . But Williams could not be persuaded that he was wrong. And so he went back to the court the next morning, October 9, the same mind and heart. Similarly, the court began: ‘Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church at Salem, hath broached & divulged diverse new & dangerous opinions . . .’ This ‘whereas’ was followed by several others that charged him with defying and demanding both the clergy and the magistrates. From there the court moved to the inevitable climax: ‘It is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks.’ (Gaustad 12-13)

He is allowed the six weeks to prepare for exile if he promises not to preach his “dangerous opinions,” which he does not do. Williams refuses to have his mind changed on his religious and political opinions. So, Williams continues to preach his ideology in a colony that no longer wants him, and he also shows no sign of leaving in the given time slot. By January, he is still at home and does not offer any repentance to the community for his thoughts and actions. To finally rid themselves of Williams the colony hatches a plan that involves placing Williams on a boat and sending him back to England (14). Once Williams finds out that he would be forcibly removed from his home and country, he finally decides to leave. During “his escape, he wandered in the wintry woods for 14 weeks, befriended Indians, eventually buying land from them and founded a settlement he titled ‘Providence’” (14). In his founding of a new colony, Williams becomes successful as a New World man; however, he fails as a Puritan man because his “dangerous opinions” have fostered social division and exile. Williams is accepting of new people and new ideas, rather than following the established set of rules and sociopolitical boundaries.

Although a Puritan, Williams acts in a self-aware and undeterred manner, ruled by his own conscious objections to Puritan dogma. One of the main reasons Williams stands out as a righteous man is that he not only holds to behind his beliefs, but he is vocal about them. He does not allow the colonial authorities to stifle his movement for equality and justice. Yet, these values that make him righteous eventually make him an exile within the community and, by Puritan standards, a failure. Within the community, the judicial council describe his initial exile as the result of “diverse new & dangerous opinions” (12-13). Williams’s stubbornness and resilience is further demonstrated to the Puritan community because in his court ruling he is also granted “six weeks” to leave on October 9, 1635. He waits until past January to leave and finally left when he wanted to, not when he is ordered to (13). These details about the court hearing

discuss Williams as a threat to the rest of the community as he has “dangerous opinions,” a term, even in his own time, that was commonly associated with him. The Puritan community finds Williams dangerous toward their way of life. As a Puritan, he questions if there is a better, more inclusive and moral way to live. The others in the community view him as a radical with impractical ideals such as: treating Native Americans with fair and equal respect (both as people and with regard to their land), distancing himself and others from the Church of England (from which they all fled to America), and relaxing some biblical interpretations. These ideas were too extreme for the Puritans where he lived. Each Puritan colony Williams lived in was eventually disturbed by his ‘dangerous’ ideas. His untraditional religious views eventually worked up the public so much that he was repeatedly cast out. Not only did he create unrest with the general townsfolk, but the religious and political leaders felt anxiety and even hatred toward him. This hatred for Williams leads to his eventual exile. Although exiled from his community for religious differences, Williams is able to find success without communal religious backing. In his absence from Puritan society, Williams founds Providence, Rhode Island and treats others outside of his community with respect (not just white Puritan males).

Although a successful man in the context as a founder of Providence, Rhode Island and pioneer of social awareness and acceptance, Roger Williams fails as a Puritan man. Through social, political, and religious dissent and disobedience, Williams fails every opportunity to conform to his society’s expectations for a godly man. Williams’s civil disobedience resulted in his exile from the community, a shocking abnegation of his patriarchal role to lead others in the true path. Samuel Sewall similarly makes a public display of conscience; however, his later public apology for his participation in the Salem witch trials is not a righteous defense of principles, but an expression of regret for conforming. Unlike other Puritan men in this study,

Sewall humbles himself and, in the process, restores himself to the community through public apology.

Samuel Sewall was one of the nine Salem witch trial judges, but what makes him unique is his public apology for his part in the hysteria. Sewall was born in Bishopstoke, United Kingdom on March 28, 1652 and was a prominent authority figure in early Salem. As an immigrant he initially landed in Newbury, but upon his first marriage he moved to Boston in 1676. He also received a Harvard education as a linguist and mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, while taking a fascination in scholastic Renaissance lore (Sewall VI). Furthermore, his main importance in Salem and in this context is his time as a judge, especially presiding over the witch trials in 1692. His first mention of his belief in the occult comes from his diary on April 11, 1692 where he remarks:

Went to Salem, where, in the Meeting-house, the persons accused of Witchcraft were examined; was a very great Assembly; 'twas awfull to see how the afflicted persons were agitated. Mr. Noyes pray'd at the beginning, and Mr. Higginson concluded [in the margin] Vae, Vae, Vae, Witchcraft. (Sewall 289)

In his diary, this is the first time Sewall acknowledges his belief in witchcraft. Sewall's marginalia marks his dismay where "Vae," translates to "woe," concluding this passage with a personal tone. This entry also allows a window into his perspective of witchcraft. Sewall appears to find no great interest or thrill in the trials; rather, he wishes the trials never existed. He describes the event as "awfull." This is not the blood thirsty or witchcraft-obsessed Puritan known to modern society. Sewall is a man faced with a situation that he wishes never occurred. However, N.H. Chamberland, a nineteenth-century reverend, feels Sewall had no choice but to believe the evidence of witchcraft he was being presented; his text, *Samuel Sewall and the World He Lived In* (1897) discusses Sewall in both belief and action. Chamberland believes that "He

[Sewall], and most men about him, thought that any man who disbelieved in witches would disbelieve in the Devil; and that he would disbelieve in the Devil would speedily come to disbelieve in God” (Chamberland 160). As a Puritan Sewall cannot possibly abandon his belief in God, which, by extension, means that he cannot fail to publicly proclaim his belief in witchcraft and the devil. If he does not, he will become ungodly, a regret he would not be able to recant through public apology.

Sewall’s regret as a judge and participant in the hysteria demonstrates a failure of social duty. Sewall feels he failed his society as he reflects upon his actions in the witch trials. Rotundo explicitly ties Puritan maleness to social duty:

. . . *communal manhood*, developed in the densely woven social world of colonial New England. There, a man’s identity was inseparable from the duties he owed to his community. He fulfilled himself through public usefulness more than his economic success, and the social status of the family into which he was born gave him his place in the community more than his individual achievements did. (2)

Furthermore, Jo Anne Preston elaborates on Puritan masculinity, stating “Moreover, in the seventeenth-century New England, as well as in Europe, men were believed to have superior intellects, a consequence of their moral superiority: only those capable of self-control had a capacity for rationality” (355). As these two definitions combine to form a sense of seventeenth-century maleness, Sewall struggles with them. He attempted to provide his usefulness to the community as a judge, yet he poorly exercises judgements of his “moral superiority” or “capacity for rationality.” Sewall’s regret, in and of itself, does not make him a failure; but, as he reflects on his actions he acknowledges that he (and by extension his fellow judges) have failed the community. Sewall’s failure of civic duty forces him to reflect on possible divine punishment. In the years following the trials Sewall faced great family strife. According to David Lovejoy in “Between Hell and Plumb Island,” Sewall faced a great deal of humiliation and

divine wraith in the years following the trials. He had two daughters, Jane and Sarah, who both died, his mother-in-law died, and his wife gave birth to a still born son (358-59). All of these misfortunes point Sewall to the conclusion of divine punishment from God. He wishes to apologize and redeem himself from actions that condemned people to death. Marked in the margins of Sewall's diary titled *The Diary of Samuel Sewall: 1674-1729*, Sewall remarks in third person:

Samuel Sewall, sensible of the reiterate strokes of God upon himself and family; and sensible being, that as to the Guilt contracted upon the opening of the late Commission of Oyer and Terminer at Salem (to which the order for this Day relates) he is, upon many accounts, more concerned than any that he knows of, Desires to take the Blame and Shame of it, Asking pardon of Men, And especially desiring prayers that God, who has an Unlimited Authority, would pardon that Sin and all other his Sins; personal and Relative: And according to his infinite Benignity, and Sovereignty, Not Visit the Sin of him, or of any other, upon himself or any of his, nor upon the Land: But that He would powerfully defend him against all Temptations to Sin, for the future; and vouchsafe him the Efficacious, Saving Conduct of his Word and Spirit. (367)

The entry, made on a fast-day on January 14, 1696/7, is made public by his minister, who reads it to the entire congregation. Sewall must acknowledge his “Blame and Shame,” words often unassociated with masculinity, as part of his apology, and rightfully so. Sewall was one of nine who decided who lived or died during the trials. He is to “Blame,” but he is also coming forth with a public apology where he can accept his “Shame,” in an attempt to capture public forgiveness. The third person places Sewall at a distance from this as he attempts to figure out a way to right the wrongs he has perpetuated in his community. As a public male figure, he needs to hold fast to his decisions; however, in private he examines his heart and soul (essentially his “self”) where he finds he wrongly served the community. The “Guilt” felt by Sewall appears to affect his maleness in the private sphere while holding face in the public. Yet, as a Puritan, this is still a failure by straying from his prior morals and religious beliefs. All he can do at this moment

is to pray to God to “pardon” his “Sin” and also pardon his relatives. Sewall hopes he can be forgiven by the mighty Puritan God; he also prays for his family to be excused from his actions. Sewall’s recanting of public action makes him a “failed man” for the purposes of this study. Although it must be acknowledged that, unlike the other Puritan men examined, Sewall does, in fact, apologize. His apology restores his status as a godly man. The admittance of wrong is not only a Christian trait, but must be accounted for in his masculinity. Sewall is able to humble himself, rather than fall to the sin of pride. Sewall continues to lament his actions during the trial and enters them in a state of woe into his diary. His apologetic tone in the diary is a stand in for a direct admittance to communal failure. These feelings are further recorded as he notes that he did not want to put people to death, witch or not. These events lay heavy on him and he first deals with them internally in the private, before presenting a public apology.

At the time of the trials, the fear of bringing Sewall’s concerns to light is just. He may be considered a witch or a man not fit for a position of authority. The Puritans respect consistency and education, both of which Sewall has; however, if he deviates, he may face exile, death, or at best loss of social standing. As the trials move forward and the executions continue, Sewall on August 19, 1692 records:

This day [*in the margin* Doleful! Witchcraft!] George Burrough, John Willard, Jn^o Procter, Martha Carrier and George Jacobs were executed at Salem, a very great number of spectators being present. Mr Cotton Mather was there, Mr. Sims, Hale, Noyes, Chiever, &c. All of them said they were innocent, Carrier and all. Mr. Mather says they all died by a Righteous Sentence. Mr Burrough by his Speech, Prayer, protestation of his Innocence, did much move unthinking persons, which occasions their speaking hardly concerning his being executed. (Sewall 294)

Sewall’s mention of the “Innocence” and “protestation” allow for the possibility of regret or uncertainty within the community, even in the mass hysterics of Salem at this time. The notions of uncertainty or the unknown bring Hawthorne back in the dialogue, as we saw his paranoid

Puritans in the public sphere. This entry demonstrates conflicting emotions and understanding in the public. Here, Sewall appears conflicted in having to be involved with the trials. He does not appear to enjoy the proceedings, but he does not protest them either. Rather, he continues with his civic duty, something he will soon regret. Sewall eventually turns against his actions and the actions of the court in the Salem witch trials of 1692 and must make a public apology to return from a self-imposed exile by the surviving Salem Puritans.

Sewall's apology brings him back into the community because he is able to humble himself and acknowledge his mistakes. He has stumbled and led his community astray. He may have needed a few years of private reflection and what he believed to be divine punishment from God, but Sewall is able to make his recant of action public knowledge. He is willing to accept both blame and shame to right himself in the community. Here, Sewall contrasts strongly with Williams. Williams was unwavering in action and did not apologize to those who believed they were wronged. Without humility, Williams was never able to return as a Massachusetts Puritan.

The evidence from diaries and personal encounters of both Samuel Sewall and Roger Williams demonstrates a level of success as men; however, they do not demonstrate successful masculinity in the eyes of their peers during their time. The failure to demonstrate the community's definition of godly maleness makes Williams a failed Puritan; however, Sewall fails too, but his public apology enables his communal restoration. In the context of banishment, the exiled man is a failed Puritan. However, as demonstrated, succeeding as a seventeenth-century masculine male may not be what was required for success and historic merit. Both of these men are still in discussion as early American founders; they stand out for their commitment to exercise conscience in the face of community demands for conformity. Acting outside of the Puritan norm, these men created their own set of morals and values to live by, thus creating and

redefining what it means to be a “man” in the New World. These historical Puritans create their own parameters where they can thrive. In comparison, Hawthorne’s men refuse to leave the society that exiles and oppresses them. Furthermore, William from *The Witch*, is unable to establish anything of merit. Every attempt at finding self or success, ends in ruin. So rather than live by a strict social code and acting as all other men do, Williams and Sewall find methods to become successes. These “failed” men become successful in the endeavors into which they put effort and time. Sewall demonstrates that blindly following others and acting out public male expectations can lead to death and destruction. He must be humble to recant his previous actions. Earlier still, Williams defies entire colonies to do what he believes to be right for religion, politics, and human beings. These examples of seventeenth-century “failure” reflect on the limited options for William in *The Witch*. Williams and Sewall have success in their own way as men; however, success with William is never truly seen.

CONCLUSION

Masculine failure and exile are an opportunity for redemption as demonstrated through the Puritan men examined. The historic Puritans, Williams and Sewall are both able to find paths to success in their exile, but not as typical Puritan men. Williams throws off the conventions of English Puritanism and founds his own colony that is governed under his religious conviction, rather than the standards set by other Puritans. Without exile, Williams may never have created such a lasting mark on American masculinity. Sewall too finds success, but in overcoming an internal struggle rather than an external attack. Sewall's apology demonstrates the need for humility among men. It is not until Puritans become fictionalized in later centuries that the representatives become "failed men." The application of seventeenth-century male norms onto nineteenth and twenty-first century gender and sphere dynamics creates a male crisis. These men are also never allowed to find a path to redemption; instead they are consumed in their unrelenting paranoia, fear, or self-imposed ostracization which leads to the men's failure to contribute to civic duties and ends in their eventual deaths. The masculine humiliation seen in William, Hooper, Brown, Williams, and Sewall strikes a firm blow to the male ego; however, it is how the men react to this loss of male autonomy that determines if they will live or die as a failed man.

Puritan men's success is built upon their civic duties, religious piety, and intellect. All of these attributes work together to create a standard of masculinity in the community. Without a sense of godly and communally-oriented maleness, as exemplified, it is difficult for Puritan men to succeed. All prior examples of Puritan maleness and their "failures" have stemmed from

religious dissent and social exile. A failure to commit to the structured norms and power dynamics in both public and private spheres results in the casting out from society of non-standard Puritan men, displacing them from their traditional role and leaving them isolated in a possible crisis. These male crises have been seen in William, Hooper, Brown, Williams, and Sewall. Yet, not all men handle their societal banishment the same. Puritan men's ability to adapt is a key factor in determining how they respond in exile. Roger Williams and Samuel Sewall are able to make great accomplishments in their time of social exile or find restoration in regret. In contrast, Hooper and Brown die as men who have been alienated from their communities. Furthermore, William dies in exile without any worthy achievement. William as a twenty-first-century reimagined Puritan captures an element of each male examined. Eggers has used the fiction and non-fiction of Puritan men's lives and the struggles they faced to create the ideal exile, William.

William's failures as a man are truly horrifying. Not because of the supernatural and horror elements of the film, but because of his likeness to successful men. William has a strong will and an even stronger faith, but something always keeps success just outside of his reach. He embodies all of the attributes of the men examined through Eggers's adaptation of a Puritan man; however, he is unable to find redemption. In this case, the best determination for his failures are a combination of divine punishment and occult interference (which may be his divine punishment). Every attempt to succeed in exile such as harvesting corn, hunting, raising a family, ridding his family of the occult, all lead to outright failure and eventual death. None of his righteous acts as a Puritan man are rewarded.

William shares many commonalities with the seventeenth-century Puritans. First off, William has a similar name to Roger Williams, one of America's most famous Puritan men.

Furthermore, the two men share an unrelenting belief in their own piety. A trial by their own peers cast out both men, and while Williams waits to see if he was actually to be thrown out, William attacks his judges stating: "I cannot be judged by false Christians, for I have done nothing . . . say preach Christ's true Gospel." The very next scene shows William and his family forced out of town while even the Native Americans are allowed in. Both William's and Williams's piety costs them and their families their place within the community, creating social exiles because of religious dissent. Although, for William, the exile is where the commonalities end. Williams is able to found a city in his exile, William is not even able to provide for his family. The social exile then appears to have more dire consequences for the reimagined twenty-first century Puritan man. These life and death consequences make William question his faith, in that, he may not be sure if his strongly held belief in his variation is "Christ's true gospel," anymore. The questioning of self might be a time that William could humble himself and assess his civic duty and actions.

Samuel Sewall demonstrates of a failure of civic duty. William too exemplifies this failure. While Sewall regrets his involvement in the witch trials and believes he is being divinely punished for his involvement, William believes he is facing divine wrath for possibly misinterpreting the Bible. Both men fear for their immortal souls; society has rejected them for their belief and actions take with that belief in mind. Also, the largest fear is that they believe God will punish them too. At first, the men take a hiatus from their civic duties for reflection. Here, they diverge. Sewall allows himself to be humbled and makes a public apology, where he throws himself at the mercy of God and the community. In doing so, he is no longer exiled from his peers. In contrast, William never allows for himself to be humbled. He remains steadfast like Roger Williams, but without the founding success. This unrelenting will keeps William removed

from society and removed from civic duty. Part of the Puritans social expectations is to be engaged in the community, to assist in daily tasks; as an exile, William cannot participate. Because of his religious dissent and social exile, William is failing as a Puritan man.

To transform hysteria and ambiguity into anxiety, Goodman Brown and Reverend Hooper work in conjunction with William. The fictional Puritans are unaware of the exact magnitude that the occult exists around them. William is living in a similar crisis. The woods surround him and his family, but they wish to put off all odd occurrences to nature or divine punishment, never Satan or witches. The desire to disbelieve that the occult exists while simultaneously having an inherent belief that something otherworldly may be inflicting misfortune is a clearly Hawthornean trope seen in William. All of these men allow their fears to dominate their lives.

The definitive fears of the occult are thoroughly demonstrated with influence from fictional Puritans Hooper and Brown in *The Witch*; these elements of the obscure impact William and create anxiety. Hooper and Brown live in a world of uncertainties, much like William, and they all let these uncertainties haunt them until their death. The ambiguity of the occult curses the men to struggle and possibly question their faith in God, risking further punishment. Hawthorne romanticizes the male crisis with his use of sphere laden anxiety. Hawthorne's men have a public loss of face in each story, but more interestingly applied to William is the private sphere where men are dominated. Here, a correlation between the romantic Puritans and the filmic William is easier made. Faith, Elizabeth, and Katherine all challenge the men within the private sphere and obtain reactions that impact the male ego in relation to masculinity. Faith betrays Brown through her possible ties to the occult, leaving him paranoid and alone. Elizabeth leaves because she cannot handle the Reverend's obscurity. Lastly, Katherine appears to

challenge William in a manner similar to both fictional Puritans' methods. She stays but has "grown cold" to William. She is non-reciprocal and only exists within the home, but her existence and unhappiness combined with William's failures disarms the haggard man, leaving the domicile as her place to dominate. The loss of power in the home is a precursor for all of these men's death while being shadowed by the occult.

William, as a Puritan layered over with multiple centuries of representations of witchcraft and evolving masculinity, was always doomed. Eggers's distilled a Puritan male crisis from fiction and non-fiction representations and placed these features into William. The twenty-first century's representation of the Puritan male is a hyper-masculine zealot with the drive and desire for success and in dire need of secular redemption, but no practical means to obtain it. Not only do the non-fantastic elements effect William and his family's lives, but so, too, do the secular and the occult. William is forced to attempt to survive communal exile, poverty, failing crops, an entire new and unexplored world, and, finally, witchcraft and Satan. God was not watching over William; if anything, He has left William to suffer for his religious dissent. Divine punishment may explain why William's world crashes around him and he is exiled and attacked. Fostering the desire for success and consequence of exile, the fictional romantic influences leave William to struggle. Throughout the film continuing strife and tragedy affect William's life; not once is an example of productive success shown, only suffering. Eggers has crafted William out of all the parts of Puritans that create their downfall and placed those features—piety, civil disobedience, masculine crises, ambiguity, and spherical displacement, into one man. The cumulative crisis leads to a strictly masculine Puritan anxiety, which results in his failure. William's failures lead to the eventual deaths of all members of the family (save Thomasin).

Because of William's inability to succeed in features represented from the seventeenth, nineteenth, and twenty-first century standards, he is a failed Puritan man.

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