

**RESEARCH PAPER****From Self Reliance to Spiritual Delusion: A Metaphorical Interpretation of Hawthorne's Short Stories****¹Fouzia Shaheen, ²Behzad Anwar* and ³Shamshad Rasool**

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***Corresponding Author** behzad.anwar@uog.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

Emerson's concept "Self-reliance" is an epitome of transcendental philosophy, in which he relates intellectual thought with mystic affluence. Hawthorne, too, in his short stories: "Young Goodman Brown", "The Minister's Black Veil", "The Man of Adamant," and "Ethan Brand," relates the intellectual struggle of his characters to a spiritual experience. These stories reflect the influence of Emerson's doctrine on the one hand, and indicate Hawthorne's anti-transcendental approach on the other hand. The objective of this research is to explore the metaphorical constructions of self-reliance in terms of spiritual delusion. Textual Analysis has been employed to explore the thematic pattern in the stories. Emerson's concept of self-reliance serves as a theoretical framework. The study explores that Hawthorne construes the philosophical inclinations of his age in metaphorical terms and brings home his own views about self-sufficiency and spirituality. The character's spiritual quest based on independent thinking proves to be fake. Their intuitive comprehension is neither accepted as reality nor adopted as a belief. Their independent thinking turns to be delusion, and they become victims of their immediate cognition. This study also finds that Hawthorne makes his readers careful about their insight without supporting any particular creed. Thus, through the genre of short story, the philosophy of his age has been translated into exotically new terms.

Keywords: Metaphor, Self-Reliance, Spiritual-Delusion, Transcendentalism**Introduction**

Hawthorne (1846 & 1851) addresses issues related to the American self. In his age, transcendental ideas were taking their roots in America, which emphasized the importance of self in spirituality (Carbone, 2010). These ideas influenced him, and he innovatively presented them in his works. He took Puritan themes of sin and guilt and presented them through characters who embodied Emersonian principles. This study includes stories from Hawthorne's major collections of short stories where transcendental themes are exposed strikingly: "Young Goodman Brown" (Mosses from an Old Manse, 1846), "The Ministers Black Veil" (Twice Told Tales, 1837), "The Man of Adamant" and "Ethan Brand" (The Snow Image and other Twice Told Tales, 1852). The stories are all about how and why characters rely on their vision and consider it authentic. The uniformity of characters' experiences contributes to their meaning as a whole. That is why they have been selected for this research.

The degree of the influence of Transcendentalism is not always detected because the movement does not offer definitions and categorizations (Rosa, 1980). Therefore, the influence of transcendental ideals on Hawthorne cannot lead to establish his position as a transcendentalist. He employs a satirical approach to dissociate himself from Emersonian optimism. His anti-transcendental approach toward transcendental themes offers a scope

for the present study. The impracticable perspectives of 'self-reliance' as perceived by Hawthorne pave the way for its metaphorical interpretation. This study aims to answer the following questions:

Research Questions

1. How do the metaphorical constructions of self-reliance lead the characters towards spiritual delusion?
2. How does the intellectual experience of self-reliance affect the behavior of the characters in Hawthorn's short stories?

Literature Review

Emerson has been favoured as well as convicted by various critics and researchers. Kateb (1995) comments that all forms of self-reliance except mental self-reliance are nebulous; one has to find his way of interpretation and understanding. The interpretations of Emerson's essay by Lindberg (1982) go deeper than Kateb's. He explores the questions about "Shape Shifting and Self-reliance" and perceives the relationship of the cultural sign with the confidence of man. He avers that "to be self-reliant is to ignore convention, habit, and outward pressure in order to be open to the impulses and laws that come from within" (p. 158). Robinson (1994) has pointed out the ethical weakness of transcendental thought and insists that "spiritless preaching was linked to a lifeless theology" (p. 14).

Besides the varied expressions of Emerson's doctrine discussed by the critics mentioned above, the stuff in the essay requires further study on a larger scale in the spiritual context of mindful meditation, private thought and intuitive perception.

Hawthorne's status as a transcendentalist and his attempt to challenge the philosophy of his age has also been acknowledged. Elder (1980) refuses to discover whether or not Hawthorne was a transcendental symbolist. Turner (1996) opines that transcendentalists discussed the same matter that interested Hawthorne, and "he paralleled both their ideas and phrasing but he can no longer be called a transcendentalist" (p. 87). Arpin (2009) discusses transcendental and anti-transcendental thoughts in Hawthorne's works and states that his views have some affinities with transcendentalists, but he was anti-transcendentalist. Hawthorne's works have been discussed in the light of the Transcendentalism movement by several writers. Mattix (2013), briefly discusses Hawthorne's characters Aylmer ("The Birth Mark") and Robin ("My Kinsman Major Molineux") as self-reliant and claims that "such characters ruin both themselves and society" (p. 1). Smith (2012) scrutinizes the spiritual struggle of Hawthorne's protagonists in these stories and concludes that they are typically engrossed with resolving the despicable desires and imperfections of human beings to exemplify particular spiritual values. Eberwin (2007) in "Young Goodman Brown and Puritan Conversion" raises the question of grace regarding spiritual struggle. He argues that the conversion without 'grace' is 'false'. An "apparent experience of grace" he thinks, "may be delusory" (p. 22).

Though critics have considered the search of his characters as spiritual, there is still a space to explore the causes that prove their struggle fake. Moreover, there is a space to scrutinize how Hawthorne preaches his own views about self-sufficiency, spirituality and religion. In the context of the fore-mentioned debates, the present study moves on.

Material and Method

As the present study explores the writer's approach towards philosophical trends of his age, it requires a close reading of the texts. So, the method of Textual Analysis has been used in this research. In the present study, it is used to look for meaning as it decodes the message inscribed in the language of a text (Bireus & Bergstrom, 2017). Interpretive textual

analysis, a technique for textual analysis has been used to highlight how the notion of 'self-reliance' has been taken metaphorically. Map analysis is used to extract both concepts, including self-reliance and spiritual delusion and to establish a relationship between them. The metaphorical interpretation of the Emersonian concept has been made keeping in view the genetic meaning given to metaphor and modern definitions and theories. The target domain in the context of this study is 'self-reliance' and spiritual-delusion, serving as a source domain, has amplified the former one.

The present study is qualitative research, and data consists of themes and ideas expressed in the selected short stories. The characters in Hawthorne's stories, the experiences they undertake, their discourses, the situations they come across, and narrators' comments serve as data. The expressions used by the author assist to make metaphorical interpretations. This research can help to arrive at a fresh way of looking at Emerson's idea and Hawthorne's views in this regard.

Theoretical Framework

Emerson's concept of "Self-reliance" (1954) is an essence of Transcendentalism; it has been associated with the American mind and religion. It comprises political, psychological, and spiritual intimations. He accentuates not only its materialistic aspects but spiritual features as well. He states that nothing is, at last, sanctified but the veracity of man's thought. The importance of the 'self' is also stressed. The 'self', however, has many dimensions; it refers to self-esteem, self-realization, and self-sufficiency.

Emerson's focus is on 'soul' as well. If man's soul is strong, he is not in a need to seek help from some external sources. He relates the notion of 'self-reliance' with a divine idea, "a man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind" (p. 53). He insists on sharing the divine idea with the world.

Emerson has discussed religion from his transcendental perspectives (Baily, 2004). He is against external commitments and forces of traditions. The philosophical beliefs of the Deists and of many Unitarians seemed to him a spiritless substitute for religion, not religion itself (Arvin, 1966). He emphasizes the worth of mystic experience instead of religious one. Religion or its dogmas are no longer required to attain spiritual heights. He preaches neither religion nor any morality. He gives preference to thought over tradition and materialism over morality. He is not in favour of prayers because "they look abroad" and seek "some foreign addition" (p. 67). Solitude, according to him, provides a chance to communicate divinity directly.

Results and Discussion

The selected stories, except "Ethan Brand" were written before the publication of Emerson's essay. However, the study of the texts makes it evident that the notion of self-reliance was very much alive in the 1830s. Bloom (1985) remarks that "the mind of America perhaps was Emersonian even before Emerson" (p. 121).

Emerson (1954) inspires that individuals must have confidence in one's thoughts. Davidson (1962) states that Hawthorne's works give us the signs of human thoughts. Brown, in "Young Goodman Brown", embarks on his journey with the thought that after an overnight errand, he will be on his way to heaven. In "Minister's Black Veil", he introduces a Minister who chooses to wear a black veil, thinking it would conceal his sin from God and humanity. In "The Man of Adamant", Digby follows the philosophy he thinks more perfect and secludes himself from his community with the thought that the meditative life spent in his cave will lead him to heaven. He holds this idea "with such an iron grasp that no other sentiment could reach his bosom" (p. 195).

Similarly, Brand, in "Ethan Brand", passes the lonely hours staring into the kiln's flames, contemplating the doctrine of the unpardonable sin. Hale (1970) remarks that Hawthorne contends with unveiling the movements of the inner thoughts and the growth of motive and reflection while the outward world is quiet or forgotten.

The 'self' is central to self-reliance. Brown is an incarnation of individualism. In the forest, when wind laughs at him, he shouts with individualism, believing in his own worth: "here comes Goodman Brown, you may as well fear him as he fears you" (p. 22).

In "Minister's Black Veil," Hawthorne demonstrates how transcendentalists perceive themselves as an individual in a non-individualist society (Tonic, 2007). Digby proclaims that he possesses individual peculiarity. During his venture into the wilderness, in sheer pride, he utters: "I alone have found it" (p. 195). Brand acts in the light of self-derived standards. He sets off on a journey to discover more about himself (Smith, 2012). The sin residing in his heart is his discovery, and his leap into the kiln is his final and personal decision (Turner, 1961).

Emerson emphasizes inward reflection. In "Young Goodman Brown", Hawthorne places the newlywed Puritan Brown upon the path which may or may not be an authentic conversion experience. The sudden realization comes from intuition, which Emerson calls instinct. Brown is portrayed moved by the same instinct. At the very outset of "The Minister's Black Veil", Mr. Hooper paces slowly in his meditative way. Digby's self-contemplation leads him to believe that he can get divine assistance through his cave, a place of meditation for him. Brand, too, always remains engaged in intense meditation.

Hawthorne's protagonists are nonconformists. Brown belongs to a Puritan community, yet he rejects its norms. When he decides to attend the meeting of the black Sabbath, his wife requests him to put off his journey, but he rejects her proposal. The exact relationship between individual and society is presented in "Minister's Black Veil". Hooper's face becomes a topic for discussion among people, but he does not bother with the misinterpretations regarding the veil and his personality. Digby, too, secludes himself from his community. Goffe asks him to return to humanity, but he rejects her suggestion, declaring that away from society, he can offer his prayers consistently. Brand has been a nonconformist in his community; that is why Bertram and Doctor find him crazy.

Brown, Hooper, Digby and Brand withdraw themselves from their fellow beings. Hooper claims that the dismal shade must separate him from the world, even from Elizabeth. Digby is confident that, isolated from society, he can offer acceptable prayers. In "Ethan Brand," the lime kiln has been mentioned as a "scene of Brand's solitary and meditative life" (p. 103).

Reliance on religion is an antithesis of Emerson's doctrine of self-reliance. Though Hawthorne's characters are Puritans, the way they tread on the religious path depicts their indifferent attitude toward religion. Levy (1975) holds that "Young Goodman Brown" is an inquiry to the problem of faith, and the basic thrust of the story is the deficiency of faith. Parson Hooper's interior soul searches for spiritual perfection rather than reliance on Puritan laws (Tonic, 2007). The narrator comments about the religious doctrine of Digby: "his creed was like no man's else" (p. 193). Instead of becoming a devoted Christian, he aims to become a hermit. Ethan Brand, too, thinks that his prolonged quest is spiritual. Turner (1961) comments, "in "Ethan Brand" the head has triumphed over the heart" (p. 55). To sum up, Hawthorne's characters claim to be Christian, but they interpret Christianity in their own way. They give importance to spirituality over religiosity.

Emerson advocates that reverence for past acts is an obstacle to self-sufficiency. Hawthorne's characters, too, show inconsistency in past beliefs and acts. Brown forgets the good name of his forefathers and believes in his present observations. Similarly, Parson Hooper thinks that the past sin can be corrected in the present. Digby emphasizes his new

ideals and invokes the curse on the meeting house, which he once regarded as a temple of heathen idolatry. Brand shuns his old moral values in favour of the philosophy he invents in the present. His search for unpardonable sin becomes a matter of the past. At present, he commits suicide without thinking about the nature of his sin. The characters are contented with their search, as discontent, according to Emerson, is "the want of self-reliance" (p. 67). The scrutiny of Hawthorne's stories indicates that the protagonists of these tales are self-reliant characters who carve out a spiritual peak for themselves.

Spiritual delusion in Hawthorne's Stories

Hawthorne, in his short stories, investigates how a spiritual quest based on independent thinking proves to be fake, and man becomes a victim of delusion. Davidson (1962) remarks that Hawthorne was a grand artist who pointed out the deceptive illusions by which men live comfortably and dully. The word 'delusion' has been used in "Ethan Brand," where the title character tries to interpret the matters of the soul privately. His "solitary meditation" is illustrated as "slow modes of thought" and "the whole question on which he had exhausted life, looked like a delusion" (p. 87). However, Brand with unshakeable belief says "it is no delusion" (p. 115).

The word 'delusion' has many psychological and philosophical interpretations. According to Bortolotti (2010), there is a relationship between delusion, obsession and induced beliefs. Brown, Hooper, Digby and Brand are obsessive characters. The obsession of Hooper and Brand with sin makes them think persistently about it. McWilliam (1984) holds that Goodman Brown, Digby and Father Hooper "all become obsessed to the verge of monomania with sinfulness, whether it be real or imagined" (p. 61).

Bortolotti (2010) claims that delusions can be monothematic or polythematic. They are monothematic when there is one theme and polythematic when the themes extend into more than one, which can be interrelated. The roots of polythematic delusions are in monothematic ones. In case of Hawthorne's characters, delusions are monothematic, as all protagonists are spiritually deluded; however, polythematic delusions— about their selves, about society and beliefs spring from the former kind.

In this study, delusion has been discussed in the context of deceptive spiritual experiences in which it is embedded. Delusions are self-referent; a deluded person constantly asserts "my religion" and "my spiritual belief" (Sims, 2012, p. 2). Sims's views about self-referent delusion echo Emerson's words in "self-reliance", where he instructs that instead of quoting some saints, one should say, "I think", or "I am" (p. 62). In "The Man of Adamant", Mary Goffe proposes Digby read the Bible with her and kneel down, but he, in abhorrence of the proposal, "casts the Bible at his feet" and exclaims with contempt, "what hast thou to do with my Bible? —what with my prayers? —what with my heaven?" (p. 200).

Sims (2012) relates delusion with an overvalued idea. He adds that spirituality is a core belief for most of the deluded people" (p. 4). Hawthorne's self-reliant characters consider their intuitive ideas as a divine spark and strongly hold that idea. Brown thinks he has taken a path leading to spiritual affluence, but the narrator comments, "he had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest" (p. 16). Brown's experience in the forest reminds Emerson's following lines from his essay "Illusion" (1857): "our conversation with Nature is not just what it seems" (p. 91). Brown is deceived by his perception; however, he is finally not convinced that he himself is a lost soul (Colacurcio, 1987). Parson Hooper thinks his quest is spiritual in one way or another, but he is not able to achieve spiritual transcendence for himself. In religious or spiritual delusion, eternity has come under person's control (Sims, 2012). Hooper is hopeful that in the hereafter, there shall be no veil over his face and no darkness between his and that of Elizabeth's soul. Marry Goffe, "a dream-like spirit", typifying pure religion", warns Digby against his stay in that evil den. However, he is unwilling to yield and continues with his delusion that the narrow portal where he sits leads to heaven.

The significance of a spiritual experience lies in its ability to purify man's soul and transform his life. However, the experiences of Brown, Hooper, Digby and Brand neither revitalize their souls nor irradiate their lives. Brown loses balance between his inner and outer self, Brand cannot find the equilibrium between his intellect and heart, and Hooper and Digby find no stability between reason and emotions. Instead of having an advanced state of grace, Hooper becomes dust in the soil of his grave after his death. Brand's inner vacuum indicates that his search for unpardonable sin is futile; his heart burns and disappears. This physical transformation suggests spiritual hollowness. Lyons (2014) relates Brand's spiritual search with the episode of the dog's vain pursuit of his tail. Just as the dog has a short tail that could never be caught, in the same way, Brand's spiritual quest proves futile. Unlike the dog, he lacks the common sense to abandon his obsession (Cummings, 2009).

The self-imposed mystic experiences of Hawthorne's protagonists have affected their attitude toward religion. It is not the Puritan Faith that stands at the center of Brown's experience, Hooper's practice, Digby's perception and Brand's search. Brown's midnight encounter with the devil results in the loss of Puritan faith as he confesses himself: "my faith is gone!" (p. 21). Digby in the time of religious gloom, is referred to as the gloomiest. His refusal to Marry Goffe's offer indicates his spiritual pride instead of mystic opulence. Brand's discovery of unpardonable sin has no Christian basis; his decision to commit suicide is against Christianity. Their revelation emanates from the self. They don't reflect whether it comes from God or the devil.

Self-sufficiency affects not only their religion but their social life, too. Brown's attitude does not place him at peace with himself and his community. At his death, no hopeful verse is carved on his grave. The indifferent action of Hooper cannot connect his inner and outer worlds. Digby is not able to maintain relations with his community. He develops a spirit of faultfinding; his heart is hardened, and he is turned into a stone. The people of Western Massachusetts consider Brand irrational. Not only the life of these characters is affected, but they also leave negative impacts on the lives of people around them. Faith, Elizabeth, lady Goffe and Esther are the victims of Brown, Hooper, Digby and Brand.

To sum up, Hawthorne's stories indicate that intuitive comprehension is not always meant to be accepted as a belief; rather, it may be a delusion, and man can become a victim of his immediate cognition. Emerson himself accepted that many of his convictions could not be proved by pragmatic realism (O'Dwyer, 2012). According to Porte (1988, p. 6), Emerson wants "merely to be tasted, not swallowed and comprehended"

Self-reliance as Metaphor for spiritual-delusion

In Hawthorne's stories two themes move side by side: self-reliance and spiritual-delusion. The latter helps to characterize the former. The way, Hawthorne translates the concept of self-reliance into new terms, offers a scope for its metaphorical elucidation.

In classical theories of language, the word 'metaphor' was defined as a poetic expression, where one or more words for a concept were used outside of its literal meaning to describe a similar concept (Lakoff, 1995). From Aristotle's definition of metaphor, it is perceived that a metaphor is an application to a thing or a name that belongs to something else (Furmuzachi, 2001). Hawthorne's intention in "Young Goodman Brown" has been to suggest a second name for moral gloom for which there may be no precisely organized theological name, but which the story exists to define (Colacurcio (1987).

Encyclopedia Britannica defines metaphor as "a figure of speech that implies comparison between two unlike entities" (2023, n.p.). 'Self-reliance' is not literally applicable to spiritual-delusion, but Hawthorne's short stories suggest a resemblance between the practical form of self-reliance and spiritual-delusion.

Turbayne (1970) challenges old definitions and gives a broader view of it. He adds what makes a metaphor be a metaphor is the 'as if'. In the light of this definition in the expression 'self-reliance is spiritual-delusion' the metaphor exists as much as the expression is taken to mean that 'self-reliance' is 'as if' it is a 'spiritual-delusion'. The 'Comparison Theory of Metaphor' asserts that the true value of metaphor can be cherished by listing the respects in which the unlike terms are alike (Furmuzachi, 2001). In the context of the present study, the comparison is drawn between two unlike domains to make them alike. The statement 'self-reliance is spiritual delusion' may be false' yet taken metaphorically, it may be true. Just as delusion does not allow evaluating the authenticity of an overwhelming idea, in the same way, self-trust does not permit one to doubt the substance of one's thoughts. Like Emerson's 'self-reliance', delusion involves some perceptual changes. Both domains represent a practice of allowing oneself to believe a personal thought despite being contradicted by what is generally accepted. Just as a spiritually deluded individual firmly holds a false belief, likewise, a self-reliant person trusts in his self-generated mystic thoughts. Like a deluded person, a self-reliant individual thinks that his thoughts are always correct and his ways are justified. Hence these domains are unlike but have similar features as suggested by Hawthorne.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) launched a modern theory of metaphor known as the 'Conceptual Theory of Metaphor'. According to this theory, metaphor is a matter of thought. Hawthorne constructs our perception of one thought in terms of another. His main concern in his writings was with some ideas, he could turn the idea in his hand, to view it from different angles and in different light. (Turner, 1961). Lakoff and Johnson argue that generalizations governing metaphorical expressions are general mapping across conceptual domains. In Hawthorne's stories, the entities of the domain of spiritual delusion correspond to the entities of the domain of self-reliance. Delusion involves self-pride; it hampers the growth of spiritual development. The self-reliant characters are spiritually degenerated. According to the assumption of this theory, the set of metaphoric correspondences that arise through the aforementioned mapping can be as follows:

- Those who practice self-reliance correspond to those who are spiritually deluded.
- The attitude of a self-reliant person corresponds to the one who is intellectually deceived.
- Those who intend to perform miracles through self-sufficiency correspond to the ones who are mystically deluded.

The mapping tells precisely how self-reliance is conceptualized as spiritual delusion.

According to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Deignan, 2005), the conceptual domain, which is understood through the source domain, is called the target domain. The target domain in the context of this study is 'self-reliance' and spiritual-delusion, serving as a source domain, has amplified the former one. The lexical items in the source domain are not necessarily conventional in the target domain (Kovecses, 2002). The wilderness which Emerson thinks is a source of spiritual peak, is referred to as "dark wilderness" in "Young Goodman Brown" (p. 21). Brand after his search does not find spiritual affluence and proves only a "sun-burnt way-farer" (p. 115). The expressions used for spiritually deluded persons refer to those who are self-reliant. The erroneous action of Hooper is referred to as "a degree of self-distrust" (p. 26). Digby is mentioned as a "self-doomed inhabitant" (p. 199). The narrator remarks about Brand's condition as "supposed insanity" (p. 112). These expressions give constituent elements of spiritual delusion; these remarks show that the narrator has in mind a factor of deception that involves autonomous thinking. These expressions suggest that somehow the two domains are conceptually equal. The distance between the two domains has been minimized by using the pattern of inferences. Hawthorne makes us imagine and infer the elements of delusion including over-valued ideas, obsession, and indifferent attitude as aspects of self-reliance.

Deignan (2005) supports the conceptual metaphor theory saying that it is potentially very instructive as a tool for detecting underlying meaning. Hawthorne had a habit of finding messages and seeing moral significance in even the minutiae of his world (Turner, 1961). The underlying meaning in these stories is that mindful meditation may lead to destruction. The message of the story "Ethan Brand" is that the human intellect needs to recognize reverence for God and respect for human beings otherwise it becomes destructive (Lyons, 2014). Hawthorne is not against liberty but seems to convey the message that true liberty must be confined within the bounds of authority. He seems to deliver a message that intuitive comprehension is not always true and man should be careful of his spiritual tensions. The way, Hawthorne minimizes the distance between the two cross domains, suggests that he is a proficient artist who critically surveys the movement of his age and provides a metaphorical understanding of a philosophical concept through the genre of short story.

Conclusion

Hawthorne's short stories dramatize extreme forms of self-independence. Brown's reliance on his thoughts, Hooper's self-contentment in his nonconformist style, Digby's trust in his righteousness, and Brand's confidence in his search indicate that they are self-reliant characters. It can be inferred that the trends of Hawthorne's age have a great impact on his works. Self-reliance and spiritual-delusion are unlike domains but the metaphorical elucidation of the former as spiritual delusion makes the unlike domains alike. One domain can be understood in terms of another. Emerson's doctrine is conceptualized as delusion with the implication that it is not an art of living; it is impractical as far as its mystical perspectives are concerned.

Short fiction provides Hawthorne an opportunity to uncover layer after layer of the complex philosophical issues of his age and express his views in this regard. He does not advocate an annihilation of the self; rather he emphasizes the mature and guided assertions of the individual self. A balance has to be achieved between individual and society, spirit and intellect, and a harmony between inner and outer self. Emerson believes in the perfection of man whereas Hawthorne advocates man's inability to understand many fundamental facts about himself and this universe. Emerson's notion that one can exist without society as a kind of self-reliant person proves false in Hawthorne's tales. According to him, self-imposed isolation is inoperable. His characters overwhelmed by individualism lose some of their human dignity. Emerson believes that man's instinct leads him to creativity, whereas Hawthorne opines that every thought is not a sudden exploding revelation or a flash of light that illuminates everything. The ideas which haunt Brown, Digby, and Brand eventually ruin them. They become victims of their own beliefs rather than circumstances. They are ordinary individuals with extraordinary self-trust which becomes a source of spiritual pride stirring them to have false beliefs. Thus, for Hawthorne, perception through intuition is not a guarantee of an increased insight into spiritual affluence rather there is always a need to navigate inner thoughts.

Hawthorn appears to highlight the importance of a clear vision of spirituality. Self-reliance may be effective if a flourishing religious faith accompanies a spiritual quest, otherwise, just mindful meditation decreases spirituality itself. The central characters in his stories don't risk their lives for any religious ideals. In "The Man of Adamant", Digby's heart is deprived of heaven's mercy whereas the form of Mary Goffe symbolizes pure religion moves towards heaven. The connotation of his characters' spiritual quest emphasizes the need for an authentic creed to determine the value of the quest. By showing his protagonists as deluded in achieving the ideal of their imagination, he stresses an underlying religious purpose in his stories; however, neither he preaches Puritan beliefs nor does favour formal philosophies of his age.

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