

From Straw To Substance: The Poetic Resonance Of Scarecrow's Metamorphosis In Feathertop: A Moralized Legend

Sabaun Ali¹, Dr. Abdul Waheed Qureshi², Laila Gul³

ABSTRACT

The current study investigates the idea of symbolic metamorphosis of the character Scarecrow into Feathertop in Nathaniel Hawthorne's (1852) short story Feathertop: A Moralized Legend. Through this radical transformation, the study focuses on the moral integrity and poetic resonance portrayed in the text. The present research paper is theoretically structured by theories of George H. Mead (1934), Jean-Paul Sartre (1956), John Rawls (1971), and Ian Watt (1956). The research method used for data analysis is a close reading technique to reveal the metaphorical layers of the text under study. The analysis reveals that the transformation of certain natural components into a scarecrow and then into a human being mirrors the constant change in external appearances, while the internal or real form remains constant. The realization of original identity behind the exterior appearance shows the existential struggle of Feathertop. Additionally, the Feathertop is a human creation that develops an ethical issue of violating or manipulating the natural rules; as a result, nature reacts against its existence and transforms it back into its original form. The study concludes that one must develop a constant sense of self-awareness and originality that is not dependent on any external appearances because they are always temporary.

Keywords: Close reading; Manipulation; Metamorphosis; Morality; Nature; Poetic resonance; self-identity.

Introduction

Metamorphosis is the transformation of a character from one form or structure into another. Building character has also been emphasized by Akram et al. (2021). It is the change in form, appearance, structure, behavior, mind, and emotion of a character. In Feathertop: A Moralized Legend, one can see this evolution in the character of Scarecrow. The ethical question arises with the creation of the character Scarecrow by a witch (through manipulating nature) from some natural materials like sticks and pumpkins for the purpose of scaring birds, but after watching the power of her skills in her creation, her mind changed to transform the scarecrow into a natural human to fulfill her personal purposes and named it Feathertop. As the witch's mind is evolving in the story with time and context, similarly, the Feathertop realizes soon his original identity and internal hollowness beyond the mask of surface appearance. This self-realization of the character is the metaphorical depiction of the search for meaning in life. The story highlights the temporary nature of artificial forms and the significance of originality, as

¹MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Email: sabaunali@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Email: waheedqureshi@awkum.edu.pk

³MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Email: lailagul339@gmail.com

well as focusing on the deep experiences of human life.

Research Objective

To explore and analyze the thematic and symbolic transformation of the scarecrow character in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*, focusing on how the metamorphosis from a mere straw figure to a more substantive, self-aware entity reflects broader moral and poetic resonances within the text.

Research Question

How does the metamorphosis of the scarecrow into Feathertop in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* function as a vehicle for exploring themes of self-awareness, authenticity, and moral integrity, enhancing the story's moral and poetic resonance?

Statement of the Research Problem

The world is changing and evolving continuously with the demands of the time (Akram & Sohail, 2024; Ramzan et al., 2023). The flowing and transforming nature of the pragmatic world leads to distancing humans from nature and following unnatural ways that are ultimately disastrous for them (Ramzan et al., 2023). According to Peter Horton and Benjamin P. Horton (2019), most of the issues humans are experiencing in the world are because of their own avoidance; they are using even the natural laws for their personal desires without thinking about the consequences. The character of Feathertop in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* became aware in the end of its true self and the present study has analyzed how metaphors work as and resonate with the recognition of identity of self. In the current chaotic and modern world, Kirsten Manley-Casimir (2019) discusses that there is a strong need for internal self-realization and awareness about one's original foundation and values because the shortage of self-knowledge can cause existential issues and ambiguity. Similarly, living in this unpredictable world, one has always to be aware of their core values, firmly connecting to them and without any allowance of external circumstances to lead their life.

Literature Review

Change is life's second name. The world we are living in is changing, and everything present in it is transforming. Some transformations are good for us, but some just seem good from the outside; deep down, they are destroying us. The latter is a kind of alteration in which we do not care about the moral law of right and wrong; in which the only purpose is to satisfy ourselves and achieve some impermanent goals in the concrete world. Such a revolution is harmful; it distances us from our real responsibility and the meaning of existence. To keep ourselves away from such modification, we must know ourselves and focus on our real being, our essence.

Symbolism and Allegory in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*

Hawthorne's works are mostly based on psychological and moral issues, giving lessons about the relationship between sin and guilt. These themes may not be obvious on the surface of his works but are portrayed through the fine use of symbolic characters and settings. Frederick C. Crews (1966) demonstrates the hidden themes presented using literary devices in Hawthorne's works, particularly talking about the use of metaphors and symbols in the short story *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*. By delving deeper into Hawthorn's work, Crews explores the metaphorical portrayal of identity crisis and the conflict between a society's outward appearance and its inner functioning, as shown in Feathertop's transition of straw into human. Additionally, Nancy L. Bunge (1993) argues that the physical and emotional transformation of a scarecrow in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* is a symbolic depiction of a materialistic society where reality is covered by the fake and material demands of society. Through this transformation, Hawthorne uncovers the fake face of the world and shows the real rigid side of

it by discussing themes like identity crises, moral issues, psychological conflicts, and most importantly, the clash between the two sides of the world, the fake and real.

Transformation and Identity in Literature

The simple transformation or shift of characters from one identity to another plays a metaphorical role for the representation of complex ideas in literature. Ovid (1986, as translated by Melville), argues that the identity of a human, physical or spiritual, is not fixed but rather flexible and changeable. In literary works, the form of characters changes because of certain reasons like punishment if the character has done something wrong or reward if the character has been through struggles or anything else. Likewise, in *Feathertop: A moralized legend*, the reason behind the symbolic transformation of the scarecrow both physical and emotional is to draw the clear line between the natural and artificial beings. Further, it gives an obvious message to humans to understand their true identities and not to mix natural identities with fake ones. However, Melville's translation analyses the dynamic nature of human life and the influence of transformation on both the personal and social identity of a person. Along with this, the use of monsters in literature is a symbolic representation of transformation and identity. It shows the social unrest existing in society. Keeping the figure of the monster in the center by analyzing different literary works, the authors convey the uncertain nature of transformation and show the difference between reality and appearance. The appearance of a monster used by an author may be frightening, but the reality is possible to be the opposite and vice versa. In this way, the perception and understanding regarding identity and transition of characters change with the use of monsters from various dimensions (Jeffrey J. Cohen, 1996).

The Role of Scarecrow in American Folklore and Literature

The use of traditional figures including scarecrow in the American literature plays a major role. It highlights the values and norms of a specific culture in which it is used through its symbolic depiction for various themes (Ramzan & Alahmadi, 2024). Benjamin A. Botkin (1955) argues that the use of scarecrow explicitly shows protection and mystery but implicitly it reveals the level of human intellect and creativity as well as the agricultural heritage of American tradition. The portrayal of scarecrow for both ethical and moral themes in American literature is timeless. According to Rosemary Jackson (1981), the use of scarecrow in literature symbolizes the existence of differences and prejudices in society hidden under the fancy fabric of fantasy. Untrustworthiness and dual nature of a human mind is represented by the unnatural appearance of a scarecrow, the straw that it is made of refers to the fragile ego of a human and the perpetual smile on a scarecrow's face speaks off a human's boundness to society.

Moral and Ethical Dimensions in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*

The early works of Hawthorne like *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* are centered on just moral and ethical dimensions. Michael J. Colacurcio (1984) explores the moral and ethical aspects of *Feathertop: A moralized legend* and gives an insight into the hypocritical and superficial standards of society. The development of respect and self-awareness in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* alludes to the illusory essence of appearances and is implicit in the ethicality of identity and authenticity. Hawthorne's use of allegorical figures to criticize the false claims of acceptance by society and probing into the conflict present between the physical respectability and inner moral principles, challenges the perceptions of the reader about morals, ethics and human weaknesses. This study delves deep into the moral values of Hawthorne and his critical allegory of the complex nature of human ethics.

Additionally, the continuous mention of morality, sin and the tendency of humans to fantasize life, is a distinct feature of Hawthorne's literary career. Nina Baym (1976) notes the transformation of the scarecrow in Hawthorne's work as a metaphor for moral and ethical predicaments bordering society's exterior judgement and authenticity. Hawthorne highlights

his own compulsion by the constant implications in his work on humans' moral complexities and ambiguities, represented by his skillful fusion of moral inquiry and imaginative narrative.

Literary Techniques and Poetic Devices in Feathertop: A Moralized Legend

Charles Ryskamp (1986) provides a very thorough investigation of Hawthorne's literary techniques and his style of writing. Talking about his artistic use of symbolism, irony, and allegory, he discusses the transformation of the scarecrow into a human being in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* is a rich metaphor that is aimed at discussing the narrowness of human judgment and the illusion of identity. Moreover, he discusses Hawthorne's adept use of imagery and descriptive writing style, which are used in a very artistic way to create a vivid and somewhat surreal backdrop that serves the story on both the surface and thematic level. Ryskamp's analysis further goes on to discuss Hawthorne's subtle use of irony. The writer's adept use of irony helps him to show that there is a gap between what human beings show and what is there in reality and that 'appearances are deceptive.' Moreover, Frederick Newberry (1987), discusses the artistic qualities of Hawthorne's writing in the context of his transatlantic exposure. Talking about Hawthorne's deft use of allegory and symbolism in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*, he states that Hawthorne owes to both English and American literary traditions for this because he has been exposed to both. The scarecrow's metamorphosis is used as a multi-layered metaphor that reflects larger moral and cultural criticisms. Moreover, he emphasizes the poetic qualities of Hawthorne's prose, rich imagery, and artistic use of irony in the service of making the narrative rich and beautiful.

Romanticism and the Supernatural in Feathertop: A Moralized Legend

Hawthorne's way of portraying a story with the rich use of romantic and supernatural elements makes the story both deep and complex. Using such elements, he conveys the complexity of the psychological and moral nature of a human. Francis O. Matthiessen (1941) talks of Romanticism being linked deeply into supernatural aspects in Hawthorne's work. This is done quite profoundly and with a complexity that puts normal emotions like anger or lust into shame. He instead talks about deeper emotions and how the scarecrow's soulless yet yearning personality parallels humans, who often suppress most of these emotions. The scarecrow should be a scary creature, yet despite all these foreboding thoughts and imagery, we find the scarecrow relatable to some aspects. Its pitiful attempt at being human truly resonates with many of us, who also strive to blend in. And that is where Hawthorn's skill of connecting such complexity with Romanticism shines.

Hawthorn's works are primarily based on themes such as identity and morality, as well as gender dynamics. One can easily find all these themes in the story *Feathertop: a moralized legend*. The story revolves around the supernatural metamorphosis of a scarecrow into a human like *Feathertop*, demonstrating the role of identity in a society. Leland S. Person (1988) argues that the symbolic transformation shows the difference between reality and illusion; it also figures out the line between the known and unknown. Further, Person's view on Hawthorne's works highlights the supernatural division of masculine and feminine roles, their existences, and as a criticism about the questionable morality held by the world. In *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*, the scarecrow depicts the masculine; after all, a man is needed to be stable. The scarecrow's pitiful attempt at being human fails because he is not stable and real as society expects.

Psychological Interpretations of Feathertop: A Moralized Legend

Freud (2003, as translated by D. McLintock) deals with various concepts that are relevant to Hawthorne's *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*. The concept pertaining to the uncanny states that when something familiar, yet alien occurs or enters our lives, it affects our sense of the world and our sense of identity. This is a central theme to the transformation of the scarecrow

into a living human being. This transformation contains the uncanny, the way it blurs the boundaries of animate and inanimate. Freud's ideas help to interpret and understand the feelings that arise in both the minds of readers and characters. His ideas help understand the unease, mental tension, curiosity, and questions on authenticity and nature of identity with respect to the transformation. Thus, Freud's work forms a valuable framework for a deeper understanding of the intricate psychological dynamic at play in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*. Besides this, Sacvan Bercovitch (1991) also provides, in a broader sense, the psychological and moral understanding of Hawthorne's other stories. Similarly, it can also serve as a framework to understand the transformation in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* and the psychological and moral tension that surround the transformation. The transformation of the scarecrow can be interpreted from Bercovitch's point of view as a manifestation of the writer's obsessive concern with the fluidity of morality and identity. The metamorphosis of the main character from just a raw combination of straws and inanimate objects to a living human being prompts a mental voyage that raises various questions regarding self and other, reality and illusion. Thus, Bercovitch's in-depth analysis of Hawthorne's narrative techniques and narrative style leads to a deeper understanding of Hawthorne's work on various psychological, moral, and social grounds.

Social and Cultural Critique in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*

David Leverenz (1989) contains valuable details on the construction of masculinity and how it works through society in a dynamic way, which in turn provides a valuable background for discussing critically the various social and cultural critiques in *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*. Leverenz's critique of masculinity and society's role in shaping and distorting masculinity helps Hawthorne's critique of society in the *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*. The transformation of the scarecrow into a human being and adopting various pretentious and how features run along with society tells us a lot about how society's expectations lead to adoption of various roles. It tells us how society informs the decisions of a person. It also explains how gender is performative, and that *Feathertop's* actions are led by social and cultural expectations. Moreover, it also illustrates how the socio-cultural impacts on individuals lead to a false persona and, in turn, create identity problems.

Perry Miller (1965) presents a very in-depth critique of American society and the intellectual undercurrents that helped in shaping American thought in a period that was formative. It also helps in understanding the sociocultural critique present in Hawthorne's *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*. Miller explores in his work how individualism clashes with social expectations and what happens when this clash occurs, and this theme is very deftly portrayed in Hawthorne's *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*. Hawthorne goes deep into discussing the pressures that compel an individual to conform to mainstream standards of respectability, which in turn reveal the dirty and treacherous face of identity and reputation. Thus, through Miller's historical insights, *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* becomes an insightful critique of cultural pretensions and societal constructs, which were a kind of popular culture in Hawthorne's contemporary America.

Theoretical Perspective

Symbolic interactionism is a theory related to the symbols and their meanings generated by humans through interaction in social life. According to Mead (1934), interaction through language plays a vital role in the social and behavioral development of humans in a society (Amjad et al., 2021; Ahmad et al., 2022; Li & Akram, 2023, 2024; Ramzan et al., 2023). Further, this theory states that people give meanings to the things or objects around them through the help of social interactions, while these meanings improve and reform with time under the procedure of various interpretations. Symbolic interactionism says that people define themselves with the lens of others through interactions (Ramzan et al., 2023). Thus, meanings

are not static or fixed but rather dynamic and fluid because of human's continuous interaction and their changing nature.

Sartre (1956) in his theory of existentialism asserts that the core idea of existentialism is that life has no intrinsic meaning; rather, it is the responsibility of an individual to make the meaning and purpose of their life on their own. Existentialism is a philosophy that centers on the importance of one's own existence, freedom, choices, and control over personal life. This theory rejects the idea of an innate meaning to human life and asserts that humans are not bound to any absolute truths. The philosophy of existentialism, however, provides a foundation for individual life that is free from fixed truths and entirely subjective, as each person's perspective and context differ from another's, shaping their life choices. Individuals are freely born and have the choice to first exist and then design the purpose of their lives according to their own choices and experiences.

The theory of moral philosophy, also called ethics, talks about the sense of right and wrong, good and bad, and ethical duties. Rawl (1971) discusses the idea of justice as fairness, which means that justice is when everyone in society is treated equally. He further asserts that there are immutable laws or standards of justice in a society, and people unaware of their position and class in a society blindly believe that everything is going fair. This theory draws attention to the importance of fairness and justice in social institutions where everyone has the same opportunities regardless of their class or status and everyone feels protected. This work focuses on the role of organizations, value of equality, and significance of justice in framing an unbiased society.

Romanticism is a movement in literature that appeared in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It arose in response to social and economic unrest caused by the industrial revolution. Its focus is on the individuality and freedom of a person. At that time, the movement replaced objectivity with subjectivity and embraced human creativity, beauty, imagination, and emotions. Watt (1956) discusses the psychological concepts of romanticism and focuses on the creative power of individuals. It has given great appreciation to the beauty of nature and focused on the sublime (an impressive work evoking the feeling of wonder). Romanticism had greatly molded the world of writing, art, and thinking. It has enabled humans to know the value of imagination and thinking in their lives.

Research Methodology

The process of collecting and interpreting the relevant data about the research topic is known as research methodology. The present study will use the technique of close reading as a method of interpretation because the study is qualitative in nature and is purely based on literary text rather than any numerical data. The significance of the close reading technique is to look at the text closely and read critically for the purpose of taking out some new and hidden ideas from the already existing text. The close reading technique helps the researcher to focus not only on the surface meaning or concepts of the text but rather to dive into the depth of the text to analyze it from all the dimensions, including the tone, language, and context of the text. When readers want to read a text closely, they must read it more than one time. After repetitive reading of a single text, a reader can uncover all the deep and symbolic meanings of the text as well as the diction and grammatical choice of the writer too (Sheila Brown & Lee Kappes, 2012). As far as the present study is concerned, it is qualitative in nature and the text of the short story *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend* (1852) serves as the primary data. This research, being an extension of the first researcher's MPhil thesis (Sabaun Ali, 2024), has taken the selected text from the short story and the already analyzed and interpreted passages from the first researcher's earlier research work exactly as they appear there.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. "It was settled.....as well as my scarecrow."

(Hawthorne, 1852: p. 1104)

Reference to the Context

In the mentioned paragraph, the third-person narrator describes Mother Rigby's inner thoughts about her invention, who is planning to make a human-like scarecrow. Moreover, she used some natural components and converted them into a human-like body with the help of her art. The setting of this passage is where the Witch is performing her artwork. Mother Rigby is also a narrator of the last lines in the above passage, about empty- minded humans

Analysis and Interpretation

This passage has three critical points: it gives gender to the scarecrow, talks about the transformation of nature into art, and talks about the empty minds of humans. Mother Rigby decided to create a scarecrow which would look like a living human, and then she mentioned the gender of it by calling it “**gentleman of the period**” (Hawthorne, 1852: p. 1104). Because she wanted to create that type of man who can easily impress others with his external looks and who can fulfill the demands of the modern world, this is not a big deal for her as many men in this world seem royal in appearance, they too are as hollow as will be her invention. For constructing a human-like figure, she collected different components and became successful in the construction of its skeleton. According to the researcher, symbolically this is the transformation of nature into art. The creator used her art of creating things by taking different natural materials, like various sticks and pumpkins, to make a human-like scarecrow. The maker is violating the rules of nature (for example, pumpkin is not to be used as a scarecrow's head but for eating and has many benefits) and using it for her interests, which is happening in today's advanced world. Daily, all over the world, new things are invented by people with excellent knowledge and capabilities to make their lives easy and satisfying. In the postmodern world, appearances and artificiality are more critical than originality, as Mother Rigby mentioned. In this world, people's minds are as empty from the inside as the head of the invented scarecrow will be, and they are as dependent on their owners as her scarecrow will be. The world is becoming chaotic daily; mentally, every person is imprisoned because he is not accessible in his ideas, and the string of his life is in the hands of someone else, especially those with power. External charm has a firm grip on the modern world; if we have it, it is unnecessary to be good at heart; our outer will speak more than our inner. Though these things are not reasonable under the principles of natural law, humans have definitions of good and evil, and sound is what they wish for (Ali, 2024).

2. “**She cast a glance towards thestripped of all witchcraft.**”
(Hawthorne, 1852: p. 1120)

Reference to the Context

The third-person narrator narrates the scene set in Gookin's house, where Polly Gookin sees the Feathertop's reality in the big front mirror and faints.

Analysis and Interpretation

This passage is a turning point in the story, as it is falling towards resolving the conflict created in the plot. As Feathertop and Polly Gookin were talking with each other during their walk, Polly saw him in the large front mirror, where the reality of Feathertop was visible — that he was not a real boy but a fake one. When she saw this reality, she did not control herself and fell on the ground, fainting. At that exact moment, Feathertop also saw himself in the mirror and realized his inner reality rather than the external show. His realization shows that artificial

things are not long-lasting and can never replace humans. Just like Mother Rigby gave her created scarecrow the gender of a boy, modern technology has advanced to the level that people are now changing their natural genders, which is an unnatural way and thus unsafe. The process of gender change has been declared damaging by many doctors. However, because of discrimination against transgender and even women in some parts of the world, doctors are now changing people's genders through certain surgeries, but still, they have side effects. There is always a severe clash between natural and artificial beings; instead, it is machine and robot creators who are trying to replace humans with machines or the doctors who are changing genders because changing one's gender is also creating a new human with a new gender from the already existing natural human, and just like Mother Rigby, the creators know the reality but are still interrupting in the process of nature.

Along with this, changing gender through technology can cause various severe issues like depression and anxiety in the person. It may also change the person's life more negatively than before, and he may become more unacceptable in society. Further, any surgery is always a risk; there is always the possibility that the surgery can be successful or unsuccessful. In gender-change surgery, the gender change of every person may be impossible; it is not sure that if one surgery changes the gender of one person successfully, it can change the others, too. On the other hand, if it is successful, it is still not confirmed to the doctors that along with gender and physical change, the emotional and hormonal state of a person will also be changing because the doctor is also a human. Humans have the knowledge and skills to work like Mother Rigby, and creating an artificial human is not impossible (Ali, 2024).

3. "Let her alone, mother..... and was so far human." (Hawthorne, 1852: pp. 1121-1122)

Reference to the Context

The third-person narrator describes Feathertop's retransformation into its natural form and shape. Feathertop is also a narrator in certain lines as he talks to Mother Rigby about his affection for Polly Gookin.

Analysis and Interpretation

This paragraph is important because it is nearing the end of the story, and the resolution of the conflict created in the plot. It depicts the picture where Feathertop feels affection for Polly Gookin, but as he is not a real human being, he is free from human emotions. His creator failed to put emotions into the created boy, so he realized his reality after Polly Gookin's realization. However, the creator, Mother Rigby, is still so confident in her art and skills that she cannot see faults in her handwork; instead, she is asking from the Feathertop that Gookin and his daughter may reject him, and now she will take revenge for the rejection. However, Feathertop tells her that he is nothing, and thus, he stops puffing the pipe and reshapes his body into a few sticks and a pumpkin head. Technology has advanced to the point that humanoid robots have been developed into the work, walk, and talk of humans (Akram et al., 2021; 2022; Ma et al., 2024). Even facial expressions are installed in modern humans, but still, they are emotionless; they cannot feel one's pain or happiness; they cannot feel or answer one's love or hate. They depend on their makers and the programs that are fixed in them. Besides this, the disappointed reaction of Feathertop in the story shows that nature is against the destruction of humans because they are the most powerful part of nature, and each element of nature never wants to destroy another element. Furthermore, this scenario shows the mentality of all modern-day inventors and creators, too, as they cannot see flaws in their skills and damage others through their creations so quickly because it satisfies their selfish nature. Regarding human nature, Douglass refers to Hobbes' (cited in Ali, 2024) idea that humans are selfish innately; they will always prioritize their interests over those of others; they always think about their own needs

as well as their reputation. Hobbes' idea squarely fits here. However, the same is true for humans as creators; they always think biasedly about their desires, and to satisfy their desires, they avoid what is wrong and right. They can change the wrong into right and the lies into truth because, for humans, truth is only dependent on their actions (Cline, cited in Ali, 2024). Whatever they do will be correct, so everyone has their definition of right and wrong to gain self-gratification (Ali, 2024).

**4. "Poor fellow!" quoth Mother Rigby.....own mouth or Feathertop's."
(Hawthorne, 1852: p. 1122)**

Reference to the Context

Mother Rigby, as the narrator of the above passage, mocks the vapid minds of people while conversing with the despondent Feathertop. She compares human beings to the puppets she created.

Analysis and Interpretation

The paragraph highlights that artificial things would eventually replace humans while also making fun of humans for not using their intellect. The comparison of a human head to an empty pumpkin symbolizes emptiness and a lack of thought. It suggests a paradoxical situation where humans sarcastically degrade themselves in their race of progression. Ultimately, this passage sheds light on the consequences of humanity's increasing dependency on technology and its dehumanizing effects. Mother Rigby tells Feathertop that he should lose his will to face and participate in the human world. Like him, even if many people are stupid and hollow, they still live their lives confidently and do not pay attention to their inner selves or the outside world. The Witch thought this was only Feathertop, who focused on his authentic self and transformed himself back to reality. She compares her scarecrow (advanced to Feathertop by her skills) and human beings. Her comparison is unfair because, on one side, nature (God) is the creator, while on the other; part of nature (humans) is the creator. The knowledge and the materials they use for their creations are parts of nature, too, so it is impossible that, as creators, part of nature performs the same as nature itself. Mother Rigby is making fun of humans by calling Feathertop a human; all the inventors of humans, like puppets, robots, and machines, are ridiculing humanity.

Additionally, Feathertop was just an attempt to create something unnatural by combining elements of certain natural elements with human creativity, and that is the reason it did not work. Failure results from doing something that violates natural rules and harms the ecosystem. While utterly insensible to the reality that people are the best aspect of nature, humanity attempted to damage and ridicule one another in the scenario under study. Nevertheless, Feathertop's example amounted to nothing more than the contemporary hybrid creation of genetically modified creatures, much like the artificial and thus harmful application of urea to fertilize crops (Ali, 2024).

Findings and Discussion

The study found that human beings are being affected negatively in the world of transformation and advancement. It was also found that the temporary external factors are deceiving humans. In the same way, the dominant power of the exterior world detached them from their core values. They were unaware of their ultimate truth and original roots. They did not have the capability to dominate the external world around them. They were not in harmony with nature and natural laws. Nothing was fixed for them in the pragmatic world; everything was rather dynamic and constantly changed in meaning. Everyone had their own meaning of things according to their personal interests.

Humans are influenced by the needs of the material world. They only think about the fulfillment

of their personal desires and interests. Similarly, for self-gratification, they are doing things beyond the sense of right and wrong. In this way, they are alienated from their authenticity while pursuing the wrong path. In the short story *Feathertop: A Moralized Legend*, the witch is proud of her creative skills, and she wants more popularity in the field of creation to satisfy her personal desires. She has tried to take the place of a god by creating a human but forgets about the consequences of it. Her hard work on the exterior decoration of *Feathertop* failed when the girl realized its original identity. The *Feathertop*'s self-realization of emptiness then transformed him back to the original components he was made up of. Humans need to strengthen their inner selves to the point where the external world cannot exert control over them. They must be in harmony with natural and moral laws.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the glamour of the material world is dominating the inner self and the true essence of humans. People must develop a strong sense of self that does not change with any external stimuli. They need to be strongly in touch with natural laws, moral principles, beliefs, and values. Internal growth of a person must be stronger than the external one. One must indulge in a deeper understanding of the things instead of valuing the superficial coating. The analysis shows that the character of the witch from the short story denies nature and ethical values while transforming certain inanimate elements into humans, but the *Feathertop* reversed into its natural form, and thus the experiment of the creator failed.

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