

## American Superstitions in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

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### Abstract

*The main purposes of the research are to find what are the superstitions which are believed by American society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century delineated in the story, and to explore the way Irving portrays that superstition in his work. In this thesis, I underlined some significant points, which Irving uses to present and portray American superstitions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century*

*Irving elaborates those significant points through sociological condition in the story so that is why I applied sociological approach in analyzing this story. Moreover, to bring a reader's mind to a deeper description about the fearful atmosphere of Sleepy Hollow, the theory of setting is imposed here. To make it more complete, I employ some background information about the history of American belief and religion and information contains American superstitions.*

*In this thesis the belief of people of Sleepy Hollow to some superstitions is reflected through three points I used in my analysis. The result of my analysis shows that people of Sleepy Hollow believe in strange sights, voices and sounds in the air, superstitious places, and the apparition of ghosts and goblins as the results of witching power from anon-high chief cursing spell that spellbound the region.*

**Key words:** Culture, Belief, Superstition, Sociological approach, Theory of setting.

### Introduction

America has many religious beliefs which come from belief of Native American and it also comes from belief brought by the colonies from Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The history of religion in America started long time ago before colonies occupied land of America. It is started with Native American religion. Native American religion is religion which is believed in the world of spirit.

These spirits inhabited plants, animals, mountains, rivers, tribes, clans, and individuals. These belief, behaviors, and attitudes remained an integral part of indigenous North American cultures that happened until the European settlement was completed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the European point of view, these religions were merely superstitions and had to be eliminated. At that time, most Native Americans belonged to one of Christian sects. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, tribal groups are concerned with preserving and reinvigorating their spiritual traditions.

Superstition is a belief or practice generally regarded as irrational and as resulting from ignorance or from fear of the unknown. It implies a belief in unseen and unknown forces that can be influenced by objects and rituals. Magic or sorcery, witchcraft, divination, occult and apparitions such as ghost and fantastic mythological creatures in general are often referred to as superstitions. Examples of common superstitions include the belief that bad luck will strike the person in front of whom a black cat passes or that some tragedies will befall a person who walks under a ladder. Good luck charms, such as horse shoes, rabbit's feet, coins, and religious medals, are commonly kept or worn to ward of evil or to bring good fortune. In general, superstitions practices and beliefs are most common in situations involving a high degree risk, chance, uncertainty, and during the times of personal or social stress or crisis, when events seem to beyond human control.

The question of what is or is not superstitious, however, is relative. One person's belief can be another's superstitions. Starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the way of human understanding and thinking of the world scientifically developed. Human science has developed rapidly. New invention, experiments, and development of human created and done. These progresses influenced and formed their way of thinking to be more sophisticated and more rational. Supernatural thing and the world of spirits are considered as superstitions and bed time story for kids.

One of literary works that brings superstitions and the world of spirits issues is *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* written by Washington Irving. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is one of the great American short stories. It was written while Washington Irving was living in England, and it was published in England in a volume called *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*. The sketch book was published in installment in the United States in the beginning of 1819 but the section that included this story was not issued until 1820. After the sketch book became wildly popular and widely reviewed both in United States and in England. In 1864, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* was published as a separate illustrated volume for the first time, and there have been dozens of editions since.

In brief, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is a classic tale about a place named Sleepy Hollow, where the local of Sleepy Hollow abounded by local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions. Ichabod Crane, the school teacher who falls in love with Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter of local rich farmer. However not only Ichabod Crane who falls in love with Katrina Van Tassel but also Brom Bones who becomes his rival to win Katrina's heart. The conflict between brains and brawn happened here. However the competition to win Katrina's heart ended by the winning of Brom Bones when Ichabod Crane deals with his misfortune faith when he encountered the ghost of the headless horseman of Sleepy Hollow, and disappeared from Sleepy Hollow mysteriously.

Washington Irving is an author, short story writer, essayist, poet, travel book writer, biographer and columnist. Irving has been called of American short story. He is best known for *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*. Which included two of his best work, *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* in which the school master Ichabod Crane meets with headless horseman, and Rip Van Winkle about a man who falls asleep for 20 years. It was the first book by an American writer to become popular outside the United States, and helped established American writing as a serious and respectable literature.

I was fascinated by the story, since *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is one of proofs that Washington Irving's in the realms of imaginations. Superstitions, folktales, and legends were of great interest to him. He wrote the stories that took place in Sleepy Hollow, New York. The story about the locals of Sleepy Hollow which abounded with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions. I choose it as the object of my analysis, since first, the story is very interesting for me, second I want to have profound analysis about superstitions theme that brought by Irving in his work.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

From the study of American political history, America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the colonial period of America. This time was the beginning of first united government of America. The 13 colonies that came from European countries and occupied some areas of America which previously established their own independent government united together and declared the united government of America on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776 in Philadelphia. This date indicates that the history of first independent government of United States had begun.

From the sociological studies, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, America experienced racism issues with German colony, as American statesman Benjamin Franklin that he feared that Germans could never be assimilated because their foreign ways had stated it. The next case is with the African American. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many enslaved African American had converted to Protestant Christianity, spoke English, and expressed a desire for freedom. A few of African descent had, against all the odds, become poets, doctors, almanac publisher, plantation owner, and antislavery activists. It became harder for whites to claim that African would always be culturally inferior. Pro slavery whites then began to justify permanent enslavement by asserting that Africans were somehow biologically inferior to European. Whites claimed that anything accomplished by the people with black skin was inferior, that blacks were intellectually and morally incapable of self-government, and that blacks needed to be controlled by whites. This so-called scientific racism based on presumed biological differences was useful in slaveholding areas for protecting the economic interests of slaveholders and useful in non-slaveholding areas for uniting all the different.

It is also mentioned in John Smith's *An Outline of American History* that America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also experienced the great change in religion and belief. America transformed from America, which held the strict and orthodox religion into secularism or acceptance and tolerance to any other belief, which then was well known with the term Great Awakening.

"The prosperity of the towns, which prompted fears that the devil was luring society into pursuit of worldly gain, produced a religious reaction in the 1730s that came to be known as the Great Awakening".  
(Smith, 1994: 37).

The Great Awakening gave rise to some beliefs and religions such as evangelical denominations and the spirit of revivalism, which then continued to play significant roles in American religious and cultural life. It then led to the proliferation of sects and denominations, which in turn encouraged general acceptance of the principle of religious toleration.

### **The History of American Belief and Religion**

The history of religion in America started long time ago before colonies occupied land of America. It started with Native American religion, native American religion is religion which believed in the world of spirit. These spirits inhabited plants, animals, mountains, rivers, tribes, clans, and individuals. The spirits might require prayer, sacrifices, dances and songs, or thanks. Every major event such as: killing game, planting corn, or acquiring an adult name required interaction with the world of spirits. There were benevolent spirits and protective spirits, as well as trickster spirits that caused sickness and misfortune. These belief, behaviors, and attitudes remained an integral part of indigenous North American cultures. With the coming of European colonies to North America, Native Americans experienced a series of dislocations from which they are still struggling to recover.

Foreign invaders overran their territories and claimed sovereignty their communities, diseases ravaged their populations, and their environments were drastically altered in many cases, native Americans were forcibly removed from their aboriginal homelands and livelihoods, with the results that indigenous cultures underwent rapid change. The midst of these crises, as native Americans turned to their own religious traditions to understand and ease their plight, missionaries attempted to convert them from their traditional religions to Christianity, since one of the purposes of European colonization was to spread Christianity. The movement occurred in every region that occupied by the colonies because from the European point of view, Native Americans religions were merely superstitions and had to be eliminated since they had already held Christian. The movement to spread Christianity occurred at the northern colonies in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was also marked by revolution of religious belief inside the European colonies by establishing a Christian belief that having a differs form the Church of England.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, New England became a religious refugee for Protestant followers and established their own colony that have a different beliefs from the church of England, one such group, the Pilgrims, established the Plymouth Colony in 1620 to escape persecution in England. Other is the Puritans that arrived nine years later in Massachusetts, and then they spread out to some region like, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, upstate New York, and eastern Ohio. This pioneer of the religious freedom sought for them, however, was not extended for others. They allowed only puritans churches, which were supported by taxes, and only church members had political rights. Advocates of other beliefs were punished, sometimes harshly. The same cases also happened in the European colonies in the south and middle colonies.

Later on in the 18<sup>th</sup> century America experienced the great change in religion and belief. America transformed from America that held the strict and orthodox religion into secularism or acceptance and tolerance to any other belief, which then was well known with the term Great Awakening. The Great Awakening began in New Jersey and western Massachusetts, and with the newer denominations of Baptists and Methodists in the 1730s. This period of heightened concern with the salvation lasted until eve of the American Revolution in the 1760s. In individual congregations, in colleges, and in mass outdoor meetings, revivalists preached that all could be born again and saved, and that anyone could preach, not just an educated elite. The Great Awakening was instrumental in converting slaves as well as free people.

### **Kinds of Superstitions Witchcraft**

Encarta dictionary 2004, states that Witchcraft, practice of magic or sorcery by those outside the religious mainstream of a society; the term is used in different ways in various historical and social contexts.

Many people participating in the contemporary revival of witchcraft, known as the neo pagan revival, identify themselves as benign witches. Therefore, the practice of witchcraft should not be associated with evil or the infliction of harm, nor with *diabolism* (the invocation of Devils). In addition, many accusations of malicious witchcraft—especially in some primal societies and in early modern Europe and North America—have been unfounded and have sprung from irrational fears and social anxieties.

### **Sorcery**

Magic (sorcery) according to Encarta dictionary 2004 is art of attaining objectives, acquiring knowledge, or performing works of wonder through supernatural or irrational means. Techniques used in magic typically include chants and spells, gestures or actions that often have a symbolic relation to the desired result (for

example, acting out a successful hunt of the past to make a future hunt successful), and the use of substances believed to have a special relationship with the powers needed to accomplish the intended purpose.

Sorcery is intended to force results rather than achieve them through entreaty, and it is worked by simple and ordinary means.

From a sociological point of view, the widespread practice of sorcery within a tribe or peasant community serves to reinforce and consolidate beliefs about the supernatural world and the relation of humans to that world.

### **Occultism**

Occultism according to Encarta dictionary 2004, coming from Latin *occulere* means “to hide”, belief in the efficacy of various practices—including astrology, alchemy, divination, and magic—regarded as being based on hidden knowledge about the universe and its mysterious forces.

Occult knowledge characteristically depends upon the notion of *correspondences*, or postulated relationships that unite all things—stars, planets, gemstones, colors, or even parts of the human body and life events—to one another and to invisible realities as well. Those who subscribe to this view believe that they can use occult knowledge to effect healing or to predict the future, for example. Occultism may also include a belief in beings, such as angels, deities, or spirits, which can be contacted by those who possess the appropriate knowledge. Occult knowledge is believed to be obtained through initiation by those who already have it, or through the study of the texts in which it is expounded.

### **Mythology**

Mythology, the body of myths of a particular culture, and the study and interpretation of such myths. A myth may be broadly defined as a narrative that through many retellings has become an accepted tradition in a society. By this definition, the term mythology might include all traditional tales, from the creation stories of ancient Egypt to the sagas of Icelandic literature to the American folktale of Paul Bunyan.

People who study mythology find it useful to categorize them into three most common types of tales are sagas, legends, and folktales. When a tale is based on a great historical (or supposedly historical) event, it is generally known as a saga. A legend is a fictional story associated with a historical person or place. Meanwhile, folktale, a third variety of traditional tale, usually simple narratives of adventure built around of character and plot.

Experts usually define a myth as a story that has compelling drama and deals with basic element and assumptions of a culture. Myths explain, for example, how the world began; how humans and animals came into being; and how the divine and human worlds interact. Because myth-making often involves gods, other supernatural beings, and process beyond human understanding.

Myths are universal, occurring in almost all cultures. They typically date from a time before the introduction of writing, when they were passed orally from one generation to the next. Myths deal with basic questions about nature of the world and human experience.

## **Method**

### **Sociological Approach**

Scientific research cannot stand up alone that is why some theories taken from books are needed to support the idea of researcher in order to facilitate the research.

Since in this thesis one of the major issues is kinds of superstitions which are believed by American society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the life aspects of American in that period are needed to be explored, in order to comprehend apparently the life of society. To analyze the social life of the 18<sup>th</sup> century American society, sociological approach is applied. Wellek argues that social life is part of universe included in mimetic view.

But furthermore, Literature “represents” life: and “life” is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world of the individual have also been objects of literary “imitations”. (Wellek, 1956: 82).

### **Theory of Setting**

The setting of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* holds a great significant role and contributes an important element to the story. Holman stated:

The elements which go to make up a SETTING are: (1) the actual geographical location, its topography scenery and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room; (2) the occupations and daily manner of living of the CHARACTER; (3) the time or period in which the action takes place, e.g.,

epoch in history or season of the year; (4) the general environment of the CHARACTERS, e.g., religious mental, moral, social, and emotional conditions through which the people in the narrative move (Holman, 1981: 413).

To apparently describe the setting in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, the division of the setting is separated into setting of time, setting of place and setting of daily life and general environment of the character.

Setting of time covers the sequence of events of the story, which is depicted in the literary works. Time setting is really significant in influencing the whole story since it helps the readers to comprehend completely the time schemes the tale which could let the readers freely imagining when the story takes time, it could be past background and predictions of the future events.

Some ways in describing setting are employed by writers, either explicitly or implicitly. The first one could be conducted by directly mentioning the time, the date or the years of the story, meanwhile the other could be implied by mentioning some certain events in the story which could give certain clues to the setting of time. The historical events, the length of time between one to another, religious occurrences and others could reveal the time setting in the tale implicitly.

In addition, the setting of place of its action is either crucial to the creation of a complete work. Physical places such as actual geographical location, topography scenery and atmosphere of certain places, as well as cultural settings such as houses, public places and such physical arrangement such as the location of the windows and doors in a room could help in determining the conditions and the conflicts faced by of the characters in a literary works. Authentic detail of the physical setting could help the readers' imagination to explore the condition and atmosphere, which occur in the story.

Furthermore, the setting of daily life and general environment of the character reveals the physical conditions, which happen around the characters. This setting could massively define the conditions and atmosphere of society, the environment around the character, the culture, the religious belief, the way of thought, the visions and also the conflicts what are being faced by the characters and the society in the story explicitly.

The setting of daily could be more authentic and detail in describing the daily manner of living of the character which could not be revealed by the other settings since it much digs up the daily life, occupation and the culture of the characters which help the audience in comprehending the whole story obviously. Whereas, the general environment of the characters such religious mental, moral, social and emotional conditions through which the people in the narrative strengthens more the comprehension of the reader in appreciating the whole story.

## Discussion

### **Sleepy Hollow is believed as a cursed place**

The town of Sleepy Hollow is the main setting of place in this story because most events in the story take a place in this town. In this story, Sleepy Hollow is described through the narration as isolated small town and the inhabitants of Sleepy Hollow live sequestered from urban life. It is also described that the atmosphere of the place in Sleepy Hollow is pervaded by strange atmosphere which influences every person's mind and makes them sway in illusion.

This sequestered glen has long been known by the name of Sleepy Hollow, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems hang over the land, and to pervade the very atmosphere.

(Irving p. 411)

The practical of magic and sorcery is addressed as one of the reasonable assumptions to explain the mystical atmosphere of Sleepy Hollow. Some opinions about the origin of these phenomena are imbibed and believed by the people of Sleepy Hollow, and even by peoples from other towns. It is told that the place is under the spellbound of strong witching power, since this place was bewitched by the high German doctor during the early days of settlement, another opinion states that the place is cursed by the old Indian chief long time ago before the land was discovered by the founder of the town.

Some say that the place was bewitched by a high German doctor, during the early days of settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson. (Irving p. 411)

Through that imbibed story, people of Sleepy Hollow believe that they live under witching atmosphere as a result of witching power cast by the high German doctor or an old Indian chief. Even though it happened long time ago before their arrival, they still believe that witching power still sways the place, since that story has already become a part of their belief

Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power, that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them walk in a continual reverie. (Irving p. 411)

The conditions of the people of Sleepy Hollow and strange atmosphere that pervaded the land form their way of thinking so that the people of Sleepy Hollow believe in superstitions. Furthermore, people of Sleepy Hollow are faced with marvelous belief and many unexplained phenomena that can not be digested by logically thinking, such as: strange sights, sound of music and voices in the air, apparition of spirit that haunted the neighborhood. It is also supported by the unusual phenomena of the nature in Sleepy Hollow, like a shooting stars and meteor glare that are more often seen in this region than in other neighborhoods regions.

They are given to all kinds of marvelous beliefs; are subject to trances and visions; and frequently see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her nine fold seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols (p.411).

The nightmares in folk superstition are described as a demon; her nine foals (offspring of a mare) were imps/Satan.

### **People of Sleepy Hollow that believe in ghost and its apparition**

Since the apparition of ghost and fantastic mythological creature are included as superstitions, in the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, the apparition of ghost and haunted spirits becomes one of the main issues of superstitions. It is narrated that the people of Sleepy Hollow at that time have a strong belief in occultism.

Occultism is belief in the efficacy of various practices regarded as being based on hidden knowledge about the universe and its mysterious forces, Occultism may also be included as a belief in beings, such as angels, deities, or spirit. People of Sleepy Hollow believe in ghosts/spirits and their apparition, they believe in haunted spots and sometimes, according to them who have ever witnessed the apparition of some ghosts, those ghosts/spirits appear themselves in the certain occasion and frighten some people. Even though those apparitions of ghosts become a source of fear for them, those phenomena also become enjoyable conversation topics whenever they spend their time in winter evening. They love to listen the tales about the haunted spots, as it is described in this narration below

Another of his sources of fearful was, to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives, as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields, and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges, and haunted houses, (p. 416)

From many stories and tales about the apparition of ghost in the neighborhood, one of them is about the apparition of a figure in the form of woman in white and usually she appears herself in the winter evening before storm happened and made a scary voices like: shrieking, until finally she got disappear in the snow

Some mention was made also of the woman in white, that haunted at the dark glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having perished there in the snow (p. 427).

Another tale about the apparition of ghosts and goblins in the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow is about the Major Andre's haunted spirit phenomenon. Major John Andre was gallant British spy, apprehended as agent of Arnold's disloyalty; he was taken by his enemy and executed under a big tulip tree in Sleepy Hollow. Many people witness a terrifying sight or hear a terrifying sound coming from the tree since that event. Now the place where he was taken and executed is considered as a haunted place

Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains, and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen about the great tree where the unfortunate Major Andre was taken, and which stood in the neighborhood (p. 427).

The tales and stories of ghosts and goblins believed by the people of Sleepy Hollow are also believed by the main character of this story, Ichabod Crane. Ichabod Crane is not native of Sleepy Hollow however, Ichabod Crane is described as a person who also believes in practical of witchcraft. He is even studying about the practical of witchcraft during early American life. As it is narrated below

He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's history of New England Witchcraft, in which by the way, he most firmly and potently believed (p.415).

In this story, Ichabod Crane is either described as believer of witchcraft and other supernatural or a person coming from state of Connecticut where the people still believe in witchcraft and phantom phenomena.

Sometimes, Ichabod brings story about witchcraft, strange sights, and strange sounds in the air that happened in his native region, as one of his ways to get in touch with the people of Sleepy Hollow.

He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft, and direful omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air, which prevailed in the earlier times of Connecticut; and would frighten them wofully with the speculations upon comets and shooting stars (p. 416).

However, from all the tales and stories of goblins that exist in Sleepy Hollow, the people of Sleepy Hollow believe in one story about ghost apparition that becomes the legendary superstition among the other stories about ghosts, goblins, and unexplained phenomena in Sleepy Hollow.

The legendary superstition is about the apparition of a figure on a horseback without a head. People of Sleepy Hollow recognize and believe him as a ghost of Hessian trooper whom had been killed in battle scene of revolutionary war. The figure of the headless horseman usually makes his apparition in the night time in Sleepy Hollow and makes his nightly scouring in with the very high speed and makes his haunt in some regions in Sleepy Hollow.

The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be commander-in-chief of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on a horseback without a head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper, whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the revolutionary war; and who is ever and anon seen by the country folk, hurrying along in the gloom of night, as if on the wings of the wind. His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church at no great distance. (p. 411)

Concerning to the phenomenon of the apparition of the headless horseman ghost. Some historians of Sleepy Hollow studying about his apparition alleges a fact that the dead body of the Hessian trooper is having been buried in the churchyard. However, it becomes an explanation about the apparition of the headless horseman ghost that appears and sometimes vanishes in the church yard. Some people also believe that his apparition at night is for searching for his head, since he had been killed in a tragic way, and because of that he lost his head in the battle. His nightly scouring in the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow usually ends before dawn and he rushes back to the place where his dead body is buried before dawn.

Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, concerning to this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper, having been buried in the church-yard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head; and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in hurry to get back to the church-yard before daybreak (p.412).

Daybreak is perpetuated superstition that the spirits must be in their graves before the birds of dawning crows

The apparition of the headless horseman figure becomes a main topic of conversation that has always been discussed by the people among other superstitions in Sleepy Hollow. Moreover many people have witnessed by themselves the apparition of the headless horseman whether it they encounters him or only hear the sounds of him. As the result, the people of Sleepy Hollow names him as the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known, at all the country firesides, by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow (p.412).

The apparition of the headless horseman at night is believed by most of people in Sleepy Hollow, since some of the people have proven it by their experience when they encountered the ghost of the headless horseman. One of the stories is delivered by one of residents of Sleepy Hollow, Mr. Old Brouwer. He tells his experience when he meets the ghost of the headless horseman from his foray and how the ghost figure is turned into skeleton and vanishes with a clap of thunder. This story becomes interesting since Mr. Old Brouwer is known as a most heretical ghosts disbeliever, as it is narrated below

The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the horseman returning from his foray into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; how they galloped over the bush and brake, over hill and swamp, until they reached the bridge; when the horseman suddenly turned into skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the tree-tops with a clap of thunder (p.428).

The story about Mr. Old brouwer's experience encountered with the ghosts of the headless horseman is suitable with Brom Bones experience who also ever meets the ghosts of the headless horseman. In Bones case, he meets the ghost on his returning journey. He makes his experience with the headless horseman as a joke since he says that he is offered to have a race with the ghost of the headless horseman and he wins it.

This story was immediately matched by a thrice marvellous adventure of Brom Bones, who made light of the galloping Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that, on returning one night from the neighboring village of Sing Sing, he had been overtaken by this midnight trooper, that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse all hollow, but, just as they came to the church-bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire (p.428).

Similar as some people who have an experience to encounter with the ghost of the headless horseman, the main character, Ichabod Crane, also experiences to meet a strange figure when he is come back from the party in Van Tassel's house. He meets with a figure of horseman that looks unfriendly and jogs along him

just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and, with a scramble and a bound, stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness (p.431).

On that terrifying event, Ichabod Crane realizes that right now he faces the legendary superstition of Sleepy Hollow, that is, the ghost of the headless horseman. He realizes it since he finds out that the figure on the horse, whose head should have been rested on his shoulder, is carried before him on the pommel of the saddle. In other words, he was headless. That terrifying event gives him a great fear so he tries to runaway from him, as it is described below

It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck, on perceiving that he was headless! -but his horror was still more increased, on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of the saddle: his terror rose to desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping, by a sudden movement, to give his companion the slip-but the spectre started full jump with him (p.431).

Race between Ichabod Crane and the headless horseman starts. During his effort to escape from the ghost of the headless horseman, Ichabod Crane tries to figure out the way to rescue himself, soon he remembers the church bridge where the headless horseman vanishes, it fulfils the precise description of the place in the story of Mr. Old brouwer and Brom Bones, He gets a chance to escape when he sees the bridge of the church so he tries to reach it.

An opening in the tress now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones's ghostly competitor had disappeared (p.432).

Ichabod Crane's effort to save himself by passing the church bridge almost success but the ghost of the headless horseman keeps chasing him. The chasing ends when Ichabod Crane looks at the ghost of the headless horseman that should vanish because they are already at the bridge. He sees that the ghost rising in his stirrups and hurling his head to him. The head that was thrown by the ghost hits Ichabod Crane. After that, Ichabod falls and the ghost of the headless horseman is gone

And now Ichabod Crane cast a look behind him to see if the persuer should vanish, according to the rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash-he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder the black steed, and the goblin rider, passed by like whirlwind (p.432).

People of Sleepy Hollow's belief in superstitions is also shown when Ichabod Crane disappears mysteriously from Sleepy Hollow right after his misfortunate experience encountered the ghost of the headless horseman. His disappearance causes many speculations since he disappears without any traces, which can be found. The only clues that are found from the location where Ichabod disappears are his hat and shattered pumpkin. Based on all the strange cases of Sleepy Hollow and compared with the symptom of the present case of some people who encounter the ghost of the headless horseman, they come to a conclusion that the disappearance of Ichabod Crane is solidly related with the ghost of the headless horseman.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and a whole budget of others, were called to mind; and when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present

case, they shook their heads, and came to the conclusion that Ichabod had been carried off by the galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him (p.433).

The disappearance of Ichabod Crane is finally considered as Ichabod Crane's misfortune, however people of Sleepy Hollow prefer to maintain the story of Ichabod Crane's disappearance from their point of view, that is, Ichabod Crane is spirited away by supernatural means. Eventually, it becomes the most favorite topic for them to pass winter evening

The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favorite story often told about the neighborhood round the winter evening fire (p.434).

Since Ichabod Crane's disappearance in mysterious way is considered as his misfortune dealing with supernatural means, the belief of people of Sleepy Hollow about superstitions is growing stronger and stronger. They become more cautious to object that they think as a superstitious object, like, the road where Ichabod Crane passes in the night he disappeared, and the school house where Ichabod Crane works as a pedagogue. Now, those places become deserted and it is also reported that the building now is haunted by spirit of an unfortunate pedagogue. Consequently people considers it as superstitious place as well

The bridge became more that ever an object of superstitious awe, and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the mill-pond. The school-house being deserted, soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue; and the plough boy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening (p.434).

### **Superstitious places in Sleepy Hollow**

Sleepy Hollow is a place which is believed as a cursed land covered by mystical atmosphere as a result of witching power that is bound the land, full of strange sights, music and voices in the air, and other bunches of unexplained phenomena. They also believe in some haunted spots are better to be avoided; otherwise, misfortune will beset someone who passes it.

There are some spots/places, which are considered as superstitious places in Sleepy Hollow. Some are considered as superstition places for their unusual atmosphere, some because of the fear of physical setting of the place and some places are considered as haunted places due to the tragedy in the past time. There are also many strange cases that happen, such as: ghosts and goblins apparition, sounds and voices in the air on those places such as: haunted swamp, haunted tree, and some other places

### **Church of Sleepy Hollow and its vicinity**

Church of Sleepy Hollow and its vicinity are considered and believed as supernatural sites for people in Sleepy Hollow, because many strange cases often happen here. The location of the sequestered church gives an impression that the place is haunted, since according to most of point of view that if there is a sequestered place, then that place will be a perfect place for spirits to reside there.

The sequestered situation of this church seems always to have made it a favorite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll, surrounded by the locust-trees and lofty elms, from among which its decent whitewashed walls shine modestly forth, like Christian purity beaming through the shades of retirement.

A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet of water bordered by high trees, between which, peeps may be caught at the blue hills of the Hudson (p.427).

One of areas at the church that becomes the scene that is the ghost of the headless horseman apparition frequently happens in the church yard. The church yard is usually described as a perfect sequestered place for the dead to rest in peace, as it is narrated below

To look upon its grass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly, one would think that there at least the dead might rest in peace (p.428).

The strange phenomenon that often happens at the church yard is the apparition of the headless horseman that is tethering his horse among the graves after patrolling from his nightly scouring.

The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favorite spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the headless horseman, who had been heard several times of late, patrolling the country; and, it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in the church yard (p.427).

The phenomenon of the apparition of the headless horseman at the church yard for the people of Sleepy Hollow is believed as the result of the burial of the dead body of the trooper in the church yard. This belief is

supported by the fact alleged some authentic historians who state, indeed the dead body of Hessian trooper was buried at the church yard

Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, concerning to this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper, having been buried in the church-yard (p.412).

Another part of the church considered as a haunted area, is a bridge that has a fearful appearance especially at night because the place is a place where a headless horseman most frequently encounters. The church bridge is also a safe place for somebody to escape whenever the ghost of the headless horseman runs after him. This place is described as a place with a gloom atmosphere even in daytime, as it is narrated below

Over a deep black part of the stream, not far from the church, was formerly thrown a wooden bridge; the road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded by overhanging trees, which a cast gloom about it, even in the daytime; but occasioned a fearful darkness at night. This was one of the favorite haunts of the headless horseman; and the place where he was most frequently encountered (p.428).

### **Major Andre's tree**

Major Andre's tree, similar as other superstitious places in Sleepy Hollow, is considered as haunted place since the history of the place noted that there was a gallant British spy named Major John Andre who was captured and executed on that place. After his execution, many strange phenomena happened in the tree which are believed to have close relationship with the spirits of the unfortunate Andre. That place is believed by the people becomes haunted place, as many people experiences to see strange sights and hear doleful lamentations from the tree, as it is described in the narration below

In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip-tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighborhood, and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled, and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth, and rising again into the air. it was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate Andre, who had been taken prisoner hard by; and was universally known by the name of Major Andre's tree. The common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of sympathy for the fate of its illstarred namesake, and partly from the tales of strange sights and doleful lamentations told concerning it (p.428)

### **Wiley's swamp**

Wiley's swamp is also a place that is considered as superstitious place. This place becomes a fearful place because of its physical description. Through physical setting of the place, Irving tries to give an impression that Wiley's swamp is a place that will give a fearful feeling for people who pass it, especially after dark, the place will be more fearful than before. This place is also related to a story of the capture of Major John Andre because in Wiley's swamp there is an identical spot where Major Andre was captured.

About two hundred yards from the small brook crossed the road, and ran into a marshy and thickly-wooded glen, known by the name of Wiley's swamp. A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood, a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grapevines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge was the severest trial. It was at this identical spot that the unfortunate Andre was captured, and under the covert of those chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted stream and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who has pass it alone after dark (p.430).

At the end, those superstitious places become strong evidence that, indeed people of Sleepy Hollow believe in superstitions. However, that aspect not only becomes a source of fear for them, but also becomes a medium of socialization for the people Sleepy Hollow, since they get used to with the strange phenomenon that happens at the region. Belief in superstition becomes their way of thinking and part of their culture and belief.

## **Conclusion**

After completed the analysis as the answer for the problem in the previous discussion, some conclusions are made as the result of the analysis that has been conducted in the previous chapter. Here, I draw some conclusions from the main discussion of this thesis that is *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

The first is what are of superstition which are believed by American society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as reflected in Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, as the result of that problem, there are three sub analysis that I have found during my analysis, there are a belief that Sleepy Hollow is believed as a cursed place, here the people of Sleepy Hollow believe in the assumption said that the place was under the spell of unknown witching power as the result of some high chiefs of tribe's cursed in the early days of settlement. The second is the people's belief in the ghost apparition, that point can be found in the work since they believe in the ghost apparition that become the legendary superstition of Sleepy Hollow, he is well known as the ghost of the headless horseman of Sleepy Hollow. The last point is superstitious places in Sleepy Hollow. That places are considered as superstitious places since in those places people of Sleepy Hollow often found some strange phenomena, such as: strange sights, sounds in the air, and even a ghost apparition. The second is how Washington Irving portrays the American superstitions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century through his work, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Here, Irving portrays the superstitions through his ability in creating an atmosphere of superstitions through narration in the text and his geniuses in creating a description of the place through the setting of the physical condition of the place that he created as a fearful place, so it will lead the reader's imagination to experience and to believe that the place is fearful.

The last is *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is one of Washington Irving masterpieces that established American writings as a serious and respectable literature. This is one of his methods in creating a literary work in different way, since in his era many literary works were still dominated by Puritanism and it is also a manifestation of his great interest in the realm imagination in which folktale, legend, and myth are included.

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