Minister’s Black Veil Analytical Paragraph

In “Minister’s Black Veil”, Nathaniel Hawthorne has Reverend Hooper atone for a sin he committed by having him wear a black veil, which symbolizes people’s attempt to discover the wrongs of others. When people first see Hooper, they are surprised that he is wearing a black veil. For example, the sexton questions “what has Parson Hooper got upon his face?” (1). at first, people are just curious as to why he has a black veil on, and by asking, they hope that Hooper would reveal his reasons for doing so. However, he does not tell them no matter how many times the people ask. Soon enough, they try to find out through extreme means. For instance, the people believed that he would tell her wife because “it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed” (5). Despite her being his wife, he does not tell her, and so she threatens to leave him, which she eventually does. Through this scene, Hawthorne shows how people are willing to take advantage of one’s emotional weaknesses in order to reveal what he has done wrong. In addition, they disregard the effects they will have upon that individual. Finally, Hawthorne illustrates how people will constantly try to expose one’s secrets even to their death. For example, near the death of Hooper, a minister exclaims “with what horrible crime upon your soul are you now passing to the judgment?'' (8). By having the minister exclaim, Hawthorne shows how the people are impatient to find out what Hooper has done because he is about to die, and once he does, no one will ever know. Also, using the word “horrible” shows how the people assume that he has done some horrendous act, which is their catalyst for having started their exasperating effort to figure out his secret. In conclusion, Nathaniel Hawthorne uses the black veil to symbolize people’s attempts to discover the wrongs of others by any means possible.