Archetypes In Young Goodman Brown

Archetypes make up the meaning of human nature. Although they differ in definition and symbolic value, there is a sense of cohesion behind all archetypes that make up human nature. These physiological archetypes, as well as social influences contribute to the development of social roles and character identities. In the case of Young Goodman Brown, the archetypes of Satan, Faith as the anima, the forest, the Sabbath and many more are distinctive to each other, yet they all play a role in the formation of Brown’s true self. This theory can be seen in the representation of the Puritan community itself. For instance, the village, Salem represents peace, light and knowledge since it was established by Puritans with strict rules and moral values. On the contrary, the forest stands for terror, darkness and evil where Brown meets the devil. Moreover, according to Jung’s theory of archetypes, the forest represents femininity in the eyes of a young man, an unexplored realm full of the unknown, therefore foreshadowing his descent into the unconscious. Thus, the conflict between these two ideas is evident. In all fairness, Brown’s father was associated with the devil, therefore posing the question whether Satan has corrupted the entire village. Since his father himself walked with the devil, Brown already has it in his blood to have an association with the dark one. Due to this, Hawthorne has challenged Brown's belief through the narrator's elusive insistence that Brown has carried all his thoughts of evil, and hence all the evil of which he is capable, into the forest with him. As readers begin to understand that several of these pure, righteous characters in the Puritan community get influenced by evil found within the forest, one begins to visualize the forest as an axiom of truth to the evil found within the human being.

The village is, therefore, compared to the conscious since it is a place of moral and social order. At the core of the village, however, lies the hypocrisy of the town's citizens in overemphasizing the idea of faith, as well as the stupidity and pride of the town's people in their choices to follow Satan. Brown’s ego controls his id as long as he can still find comfort in Faith, Cloyse, the Deacon, since he believes that he is able to persist on the pious path. Once he sees the downfall of these figures that he deemed as worthy, his ego is overrun by the id. Brown himself downfalls after these occurrences, however he becomes indifferent to his own sense of evil and rather blames everyone around him. The result of this downfall is that Brown, in his state of agony, belongs neither to the Devil's party nor to that of the Puritan faith. In addition, the withdrawal and pessimism that envelop him after returning to the village occur not because he has yielded to the ruinous vision of evil in the forest, but because he has repressed it. The ego forbids him to accept his evil desires as his own; therefore he projects them upon his wife, and upon the other people, in whose goodness he can no longer accept as true. Because Brown rejects the idea of visualizing himself as an evil figure, he cannot understand that the archetypal representations of his friends make up his own person. Their own associations with evil project on Brown who rejects his new self and results to living in his shadow. Consequently, Brown refuses to recognize that evil, knowledge and their sources are inherent parts of all human nature.

The connection the story’s archetypes exhibit to the character of Goodman Brown is seen not only in the theories of Carl Jung, but also Lacan. Characters like Goody Cloyse and Satan serve as mirrors in which Brown finds his unconscious reflected. According to Lacan, the theory of “I” reveals itself through links with “socially elaborated situations” (Lacan 5). It is fair to say that the

uncovery Brown makes about the faith of members in his society is elaborate enough to be looked at as a complex social situation. Moreover, in the story, Brown notices uncanny similarities between himself and the man he meets in the woods. These are not physical characteristics that he has in common with the man; rather, their similarities manifest themselves in their “expressions”. Brown acknowledges the subconscious he works his entire life to repress, identified within this man. In addition, through the dark ceremony that Faith, Brown and the rest of the characters appear to be going through Lacan’s “Mirror Stage”. By associating with the devil, Brown and Faith gain an understanding that evil is found everywhere. “Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness.” (Hawthorne 10). Instead of being conscious of themselves, they are now conscious of the evil that is everywhere. In opposition to the theory of “I”, where the individual is aware of themselves. They cannot fully understand whether they identify within evil “Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own.” (Hawthorne 10). Neither of them are yet aware whether their interaction with the devil makes them good or evil. They both know what good and evil are and will declare one or the other in fear of being convinced of the contrary.