

Mythological approach essay sample

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A mythological critic examines a work for repeating patterns that show the reasoning for various aspects of human life. In other words, upon analyzing a piece of literature, one will discover the “ why’s” of the human race. This could be anything from birth and death to defeating death itself. A story that contains these aspects would be “ Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne. In this story, Goodman Brown has to take a spiritual journey on a walk through the forest. He encounters the Devil and he tempts Brown with all sorts of ways to ‘ leave the path.’ The exact opposite of the Devil is represented in Brown’s wife, Faith. Faith represents Brown’s faith in God. An excerpt that best represents the Mythological Approach to Criticism is as follows: “‘ Dearest heart,’ whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, ‘ pr’y thee, put off your journey until sunrise, and sleep in your own bed to- night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts, that she’s afraid of herself, sometimes.

Pray, tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year!(2186)” This is a prime example of Faith’s relying on premonitions. An example of the use of Archetypal Approach to Criticism would be the pink ribbons found in Faiths hair. There is a point in the story where Brown can’t turn back from his journey, and because of this, Brown sees Faiths’ ribbons fall from the sky. “ There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of the tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon. ‘ My Faith is gone!’ cried he, after one stupefied moment.

' There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil! for to thee is this world given.(2191)" These are two examples from Young Goodman Brown that explain the Mythological aspect and Archetypal aspect of Criticism. In the last excerpt you can discern pure evil from the rhetorical usage of the words: fading, far-off, laughter, dark, swept, silent, etc. This entire work of literature very descriptive imagery is used to give the reader a sense of impending doom and despair and finally ending unresolved. The original journey to resolve Goodman's mind of good and evil, starts with uncertainty, leading into despair then to an absolution that these supposedly pious people are really evil.