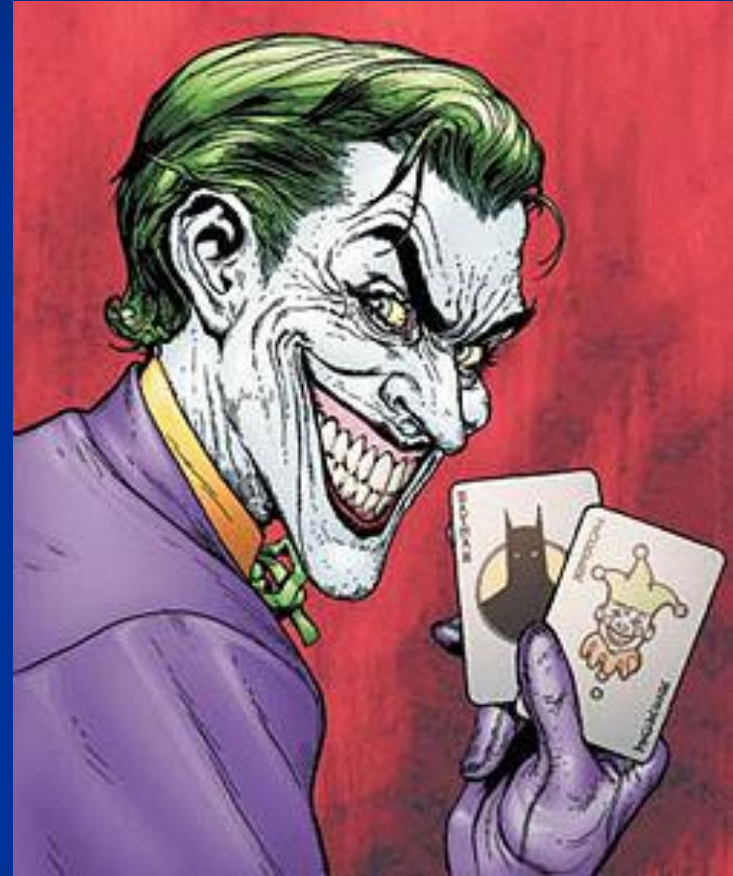


Literary Archetypes

*Understanding
the use of
symbolism in
writing*



Questions to ask ...

What symbols are present in the literature?

What do they appear to represent?

What message does the author want communicated through their use?

What is an archetype?

- term used to describe **UNIVERSAL** symbols
- evoke deep/often unconscious responses in a reader
- symbolically embody basic human experiences,
- apply to ANY *time* and *place*
- 3 basic types in literature:
 - Situational, character, & symbolic

What are **ARCHETYPES**?



All cultures around the world use archetypes to build stories. (term coined by Carl Jung).

Recognizing Archetypes



Types of Archetypes

1 – Situational *

Ex – The Task, Quest, Initiation, Loss of Innocence

2 – Character

Ex – Helper, Scapegoat, Friendly Beast

3 – Symbolic

Ex – colors, shapes, water, numbers

* There are more situational archetypes.

Common Symbolic Archetypes

- Water
- Sun
- Colors
- Shapes
- Numbers





...a symbol of life, cleansing, and rebirth—
represents the mystery of creation

Examples:

Sea—spiritual mystery and infinity;
timelessness and eternity

River—death / rebirth (baptism), flowing
of time into eternity, transitional phases of
the life cycle

Sun

Represents energy, creativity, thinking, enlightenment, wisdom, spiritual vision, the passing of time, and life

Examples:

Rising Sun — Birth and Creation, life, beginnings

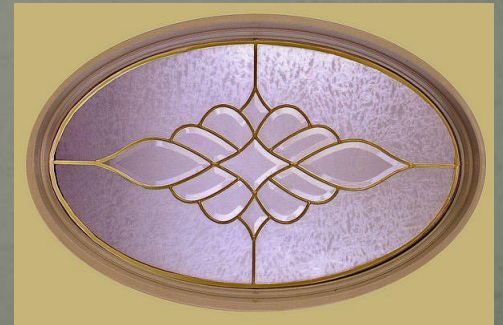
Setting Sun — Death, endings, completion of a cycle

COLORS

- ✕ White—purity, innocence, death, terror, supernatural, blinding truth
- ✕ Red—love, sacrifice, hate, evil, anger, violent passion, sin, blood, disorder
- ✕ Green—birth / death, fertility, luck, hope, jealousy, decay, greed
- ✕ Blue—sadness, spiritual purity, truth, religious feelings of security
- ✕ Black—power, doom, death, darkness, mystery, primal wisdom, unconscious evil

SHAPES

- Circle (Sphere)—wholeness, unity
- Egg (Oval)—the mystery of life and the forces of regeneration
- Triangle (connections) Holy Trinity, the Chinese Triad, love triangles



Animals

- Snake (serpent, worm)——

evil, corruption, sensuality, destruction, wisdom, temptation

- Dark-colored bird (raven, hawk)——

death, hate, corruption

- Light-colored bird (dove)——

peace, love, life

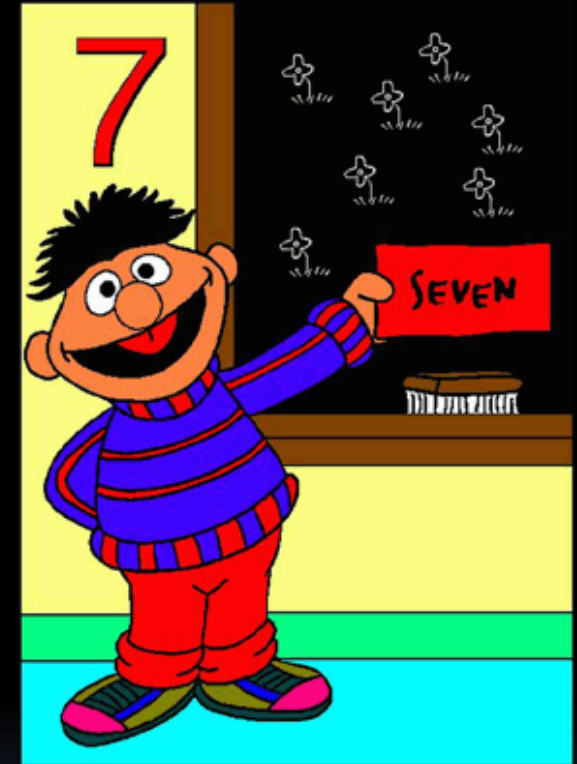
- Pheonix, catepillar——

transformation, change



Numbers

- Three (3)—represents unity, spiritual awareness, light, connections/relationships
- Four (4)—cycle of life, (earth, water, fire, air) nature
- Seven (7)—unity between 3 and 4, completion and perfect order
- Twelve (12) – Tribes of Israel, the Zodiac
- Forty (40) – Times of “trial” and seclusion (privacy)



<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~matc/math5.geometry/unit4/unit4.html>

Common Character Archetypes

- Temptress, mother figures (earth mother, stepmother, fairy godmother), villain, hero, the mentor, the underdog, the 'innocent' one, the sacrificial redeemer.



***Symbols are everywhere...
Look around to see what
symbols are in your world.
...The End***

