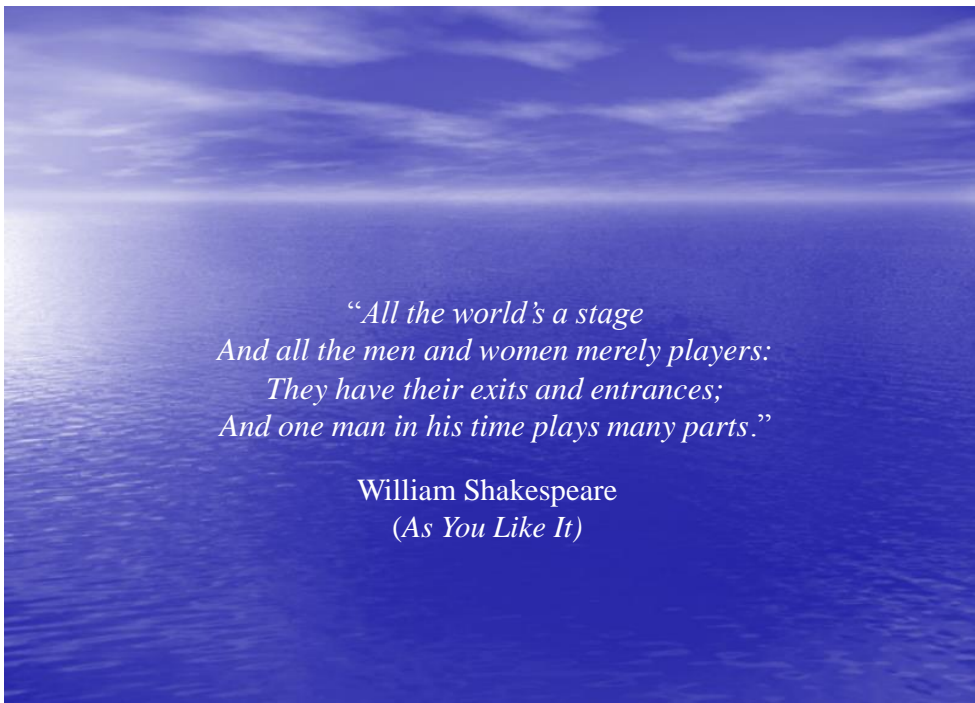




Exploring

ARCHETYPES



*“All the world’s a stage
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts.”*

William Shakespeare
(As You Like It)

What is an ‘archetype’?

Archetypes are *recurring character types* (and relationships), and/ or patterns of symbols or situations found in the mythology, religion, and stories of all cultures.

For example,

- The questing **Heroes**,
- **Heralds** who call them to adventure,
- **Wise old men or women** who give them advise or/and magical gifts,
- **Threshold guardians** who seem to block their way,
- **Shapeshifting** fellow travelers who confuse and dazzle them,
- **Shadowy villains** who try to destroy them.



Carl Jung’s ideas about ‘archetypes’



The psychologist, Carl Jung believed that just as an individual may possess a personal unconscious, a culture too has a *collective unconscious*. Fairy tales and myths are like the dreams of an entire culture, springing from the collective unconscious. Archetypes are constant throughout all times and cultures, in the dreams and personalities of individuals as well as in the shared mythic imagination of the world.

· Archetypes act or serve as **functions** in a story. However, a character does not have to function as one archetype in a story, it can be two or more. In other words, a character in a story can have the qualities of more than one archetype.

· Archetypes can be thought of as **masks**, worn by the characters temporarily as they are needed to advance the story. A character may enter the story performing the function of the mentor, then switch masks to function as a shapeshifter, or a shadow etc. (e.g., the android in the first *Alien* movie).

Recurrent Archetypes & their Functions

<u>Archetype</u>	<u>Primary Function in a Narrative</u>
Hero	“to serve & sacrifice”
Herald	“to set the hero on his journey”
Mentor	“to guide”
Shadow	“to destroy”
Threshold Guardian	“to test”

Recurrent Archetypes & their Functions

<u>Archetype</u>	<u>Primary Function in a Narrative</u>
Shapeshifter	“to question & deceive”
Earth Mother	“to nurture and teach”
Scapegoat	“to take the blame despite innocence”
Temptress	“to seduce and distract the hero”
Star-Crossed Lovers	“to love, suffer and serve as a lesson”
Innocent	“to confront evil but not give in to it”

THE HERO

Primary Function: *"to serve and sacrifice"*



The Hero is someone who is willing to **sacrifice** his/her own needs on behalf of others

The journey of many heroes is the **story of becoming an 'individual'**, separate from the family or tribe (equivalent to a child's sense of separation from the mother)

The hero's journey **represents our search for identity** and wholeness. In the process of becoming complete, integrated human beings, we are all heroes facing internal guardians, monsters and helpers

The Hero is a **source of identification for the audience**. We see the world through his/her eyes. They have a combination of qualities - a mix of universal and unique characteristics, some of which we can recognize within ourselves

They are **propelled by universal drives** that we can all understand: the desire to be loved/ understood, to succeed, survive, be free, get revenge, right wrongs or seek self expression

THE HERO

Primary Function: *"to serve and sacrifice"*



Heroes have **universal qualities, emotions and motivations** that everyone has experienced at one time or another: revenge, anger, lust, competition, territoriality, patriotism, idealism, or cynicism and despair. But heroes must also be unique human beings and not just stereotypical creatures. They must have imperfections, flaws, unpredictable nature - i.e., they must be 'real' and not necessarily 'ideal' types. They should be like a real person with not just a single trait but a unique combination of many qualities and drives, some of them conflicting, e.g., love and duty, trust and suspicion, hope and despair. These make heroes more realistic and human

The hero's **journey is about learning and growing up**, overcoming obstacles and achieving goals, gaining new knowledge and wisdom

The hero's function is to **act - to do, progress, move forward**. *The hero is usually the most active person in the story. Heroes must perform the decisive action of the story, take risks and responsibility*

THE HERO

Primary Function: *"to serve and sacrifice"*



The Hero's most important quality is **self-sacrifice** - his/her ability to give up something of value, or *of* himself on behalf of an ideal or group. S/he must confront death, or the threat of death, or danger, loss, failure. In a sense, they die (perhaps symbolically) and are reborn. The sacrifice may be a loved one, a friend, a personality trait, a way of life etc

Flaws and weaknesses humanize the character, e.g., inner doubts, errors in thinking, guilt from the past, fear of the future. Flaws give a character somewhere to go - to develop - a starting point for imperfection, incompleteness or deficiency

The Hero's Character Arc

Stages of a Hero's Development in a Narrative

1. Limited Awareness
2. Increased Awareness
3. Reluctance to Change
4. Overcoming
5. Committing
6. Experimenting
7. Preparing
8. Big Change
9. Consequences
10. Rededication
11. Final Attempt
12. Mastery

-Activity:

Choose a hero. Explore the development of your chosen hero in their given narrative using the 12 stages opposite. Does your hero's development conform to these stages? How?

Some of the examples you can use are:

War of the Worlds
 Batman Begins
 Revenge of the Sith
 Wizard of Oz
 The Matrix
 Shaun of the Dead
 Van Helsing
 Harry Potter
 Any film or novel or play
 of your choice...

THE HERALD

Primary Function: "to set the hero on his journey"



The Herald's most important quality is **knowledge**. The Herald sets the hero on his/her journey, often in the form of important information or a task. The Herald will "check in" with the hero from time to time in order to monitor the hero's progress on the quest. The Herald may take the form of a ghost, a family member, friend, or document.

The Herald cannot interfere in the hero's quest. The Herald's role is to guide and point in the right direction, not to fight the battle. If the Herald does interfere, then he/she can expect to die. This death may make the hero more sure in his/her purpose.

THE MENTOR

Primary Function: "to guide"



A Mentor is usually a positive figure/archetype who aids/trains the hero. The mentor is usually a source of knowledge and inspiration for the hero

In Mythology, this is usually a wise old man or woman but generally it can be those characters who teach and protect heroes and give them (special) gifts, e.g., God and Adam, Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother, Jimmy Cricket and Pinocchio, King Arthur and Merlin the Magician, Athena and Perseus, Hera and Jason (and the Argonauts)

The word 'Mentor' comes from Homer's *Odyssey*. He is the character who guides Odysseus's son, Telemachus on his hero's journey to find his father. The character Mentor in this story is, in fact, the goddess Athena (Goddess of Wisdom!) in disguise

Mentors can be like a conscience for the hero (e.g., Jimmy Cricket and *Pinocchio* in the Disney version of the story). Mentors embody the hero's highest aspirations - they were once heroes themselves - they are now passing on their wisdom. Mentors usually play the role of parent - particularly when an adequate parent role is absent in the hero's life

THE MENTOR

Primary Function: "to guide"



·Mentors have several functions:

- they **teach the hero** - prepare him/her for the adventure ahead.
- they **give the hero special gifts** - this could be a magic weapon, an important key or clue, magical medicine or food, advice. (However, this gift or help of the mentor is usually earned, by the hero's learning, sacrifice or commitment)

·Some mentors **make or invent their gifts** - These 'gifts' may be designs, devices, inventions, e.g., Daedalus designs the labyrinth, invents wings to escape Minos with etc

·A mentor **motivates** hero - helps him **overcome his fear**. Thus, the mentor's gift can simply be reassurance and motivation

·Some Mentors deliberately **plant information** in the way of the hero which s/he can use on the journey, e.g., 'Q' does this for 007 at the beginning of every Bond movie

·**Types of Mentors:** Like heroes, mentors can be **willing or unwilling**. Sometimes they can teach the hero a lesson purely by setting a bad example

THE MENTOR

Primary Function: "to guide"



·**Dark mentors:** In some stories, the mask of mentor can be used by the villain to **lure the hero** into danger. Some mentors can also be Threshold Guardians (e.g., Professor Marvel in *The Wizard of Oz*) when trying to stop the hero from beginning the adventure/ journey (They do this by warning the hero of danger and **casting doubt in hero's mind**). This type of mentor can become an obstacle in hero's path. To progress, the hero must, in a sense, outgrow or overcome the energy of his/her best teacher to move to the next stage of development

·**Fallen Mentors:** Some mentors are **still on their own journey**. They are dealing with a *crisis of faith*. These mentors must pull themselves together before they can aid the hero


·**Continuing Mentors:** Some mentors **initiate the adventures** for the hero by giving them assignments. These mentors set 'serial' stories in motion, e.g., 'M' on Bond movies. They are **recurring mentors** and can appear at the start of a number of adventures/ serials

·**Multiple Mentors:** a number of mentors may appear in a story to teach a hero different skills - they may have different functions, e.g., in the Bond movies, M gives 007 the assignments, advice and warning but it is Q who gives the special gifts, i.e., the gadgets

THE SHADOW

Primary Function: "to destroy"

- The Shadow is the character who represents the energy of the dark side, the unexpected, the unrealised or the rejected
- In stories or films, the Shadow is referred to as the **villain, the antagonist or the enemy**. They are usually **dedicated to the death, destruction or defeat of the hero**. Some however are not so hostile - they may be characters who are simply in competition with the hero, i.e., who are after the same goal but who disagree with the hero's tactics
- The **main dramatic function** of the Shadow is to **challenge the hero** and give her a worthy opponent in the struggle. They **create conflict** and **bring out the best in the hero** by putting her in a life threatening situation
- A **shadow** may be a character or force external to the hero or it **may be a deeply repressed part of the hero**, e.g., *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*



THE SHADOW

Primary Function: "to destroy"

- In some stories, the Shadow (or enemy) is not represented by a single or group of characters or by elements *outside* the hero. Instead, the Shadow could be **negative qualities within the hero** - that stop him/ her from developing. For some heroes, it can take the form of **fear, doubt, pride, hate, greed**. If not overcome, these negative qualities that exist *within* the hero can act as a (self) destructive force
- The Shadow can **embody the things we hate about ourselves** - the things that the hero hates about him or herself
- External shadows** must be **destroyed** by the hero. Shadows of the **internal** kind may be **disempowered**
- Shadows can also be Shapeshifters, or Mentors e.g. "Hannibal the Cannibal" in *Silence of the Lambs*
- Some shadows **may even be redeemed and turned into positive** forces (e.g., Darth Vader in *Return of the Jedi*)



THE THRESHOLD GUARDIAN

Primary Function: "to test"



·All heroes encounter obstacles on the road to adventure. At each 'gateway' or new stage of the new world, the hero is confronted with Threshold Guardians, placed to keep the unworthy from entering

·They usually present a menacing face to the hero - but if properly understood, they can be overcome, bypassed and in some cases, turned into allies

·Threshold Guardians are not the main villain but can be connected to them. They are usually lieutenants of villains, lesser things, mercenaries hired to guard the main headquarters or secret helpers to test the hero's willingness or skill

·Threshold Guardians usually serve/ work with or protect the main villain from the hero. They warn of the hero's approach

·These characters function to limit the development of the hero's experience, they hold back the growth and progress of the hero. They test whether the hero is really determined to accept the challenge of change

THE THRESHOLD GUARDIAN

Primary Function: "to test"



·The dramatic function of Threshold Guardians is mainly to test the hero. When a hero confronts one of these figures, they must solve a puzzle or pass a test. Thus, Threshold Guardians challenge and test heroes on the path

·A popular way of getting by Threshold Guardians is by getting into their skins, i.e., the hero may get by the Threshold Guardians by disguising himself as one of them. The hero must temporarily become the enemy

·Ideally, Threshold Guardians are not to be defeated but incorporated, made allies. Heroes can learn the guardian's tricks, absorb them and go on

·In stories, Threshold Guardians take on a fantastic array of forms. They may be border guards, sentinels, night watchmen, lookouts, bodyguards, bandidos, editors, doormen, bouncers, entrance examiners, or anyone whose function is to temporarily block the way of the hero and test her powers. The Threshold Guardian doesn't have to be a person, it can be a prop, architectural feature, animal or force of nature that blocks and tests the hero. Learning how to deal with Threshold Guardians is one of the major tests of the hero's journey

THE SHAPESHIFTER

Primary Function: "to question and deceive"



The Shapeshifter is one of the most **flexible** archetypes and serves a variety of functions in a modern story. The appearance and behaviour of these characters changes to meet the needs of the story

· These characters **shift or are unstable in appearance/ nature/ mood**

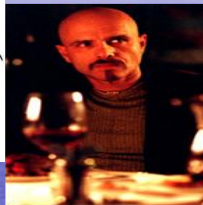
· Heroes frequently encounter figures, **often of the opposite sex**, whose primary characteristic is that they appear to change from the hero's or audience's point of view. They are hard to pin down

· For example, in the film *Fatal Attraction*, the hero is confronted with a shapeshifting woman who changes from the passionate lover to an insane murderess harpy

· Shapeshifters **mislead the hero** or **keep him/her guessing** - their loyalty and sincerity is often in question. Wizards, witches and ogres are traditional shapeshifters in fairy tales

THE SHAPESHIFTER

Primary Function: "to question and deceive"



· Shapeshifters **may be positive or negative** figures. They may be **helpful** to the hero or **destructive** to him/her. In some stories it's the task of the hero to figure out which side, positive or negative, he is dealing with

· The dramatic function of the shapeshifters is that they **bring doubt and suspense** into a story

· They often only **dazzle and confuse the hero** rather than trying to kill him/her

· Heroes, (e.g., Luke Skywalker), Mentors, (e.g., Merlin, the Goddess Athena), Threshold Guardians or a Shadow (e.g., the Wicked Queen in *Snow White* assumes the form of an old woman to trick the hero into eating the poisoned apple) can also become Shapeshifters. Sometimes, a hero must become a Shapeshifter in order to escape a trap or to get past a Threshold Guardian

THE EARTH MOTHER

Primary function: "to nurture and teach"



·The Earth Mother is the kindly older woman or the wise elder who gives valuable information or support to the hero.

·The dramatic function of the Earth Mother is that she **comforts and nurtures the hero/other characters** into a story

·She will **advise and council the hero** while she protects. She may physically aid the hero in his quest or battle.

·The Earth Mother is the female counterpart of the Mentor or will be the Mentor herself.

THE SCAPEGOAT

Primary Function: to take the blame despite innocence



·The Scapegoat (sometimes called the Martyr) will be blamed for an evil which he/she has not committed.

·The dramatic function of the scapegoat is that they **must suffer punishment or loss** in order to unmask or defeat the villain.

·They often **seem like the hero** or may become the hero late in the story.

·The Scapegoat is blamed for the evils in the society or accidents that have happened. He/she is meant to draw sympathy from the audience while becoming ennobled for his/her sacrifice.

THE TEMPTRESS

Primary Function: to seduce and distract the hero



· *Femme fatales* are a common type of shapeshifter: the woman as a temptress or destroyer

· The dramatic function of the temptress is that they **lead the hero astray** into a story

· They often only **dazzle** and **confuse the hero** rather than trying to kill him/her

· The temptress takes advantage of the weakness and uses it to make him forget about the quest. She is usually successful, but for varying amounts of time. Part of the hero's quest then becomes the defeat of the temptress and "getting back on track".

THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

Primary Function: to suffer and serve as a lesson



· *The lovers* fall in love despite all obstacles and cannot be together. Their love is doomed from the start.

· The dramatic function of the lovers is that they **give a tragic element** to a story

· They often **die as a result** of their love, no matter how much help they might get from the hero.

· Their deaths make the hero resolved to complete the quest, even at the cost of his future happiness. They serve to remind him of the fragility of life and the need to seize the day.

THE INNOCENT

Primary Function: to confront evil but not give in to it



· *The Innocent* are those who are chosen to perform a task, or complete a mission but feel that they are not equal to the task.

· The dramatic function of the innocent is that they **confront and destroy evil** but do not give in to it.

· They often are **tempted by evil** and must depend on their own goodness to overcome the temptation.

· Often, the Innocent's own natural goodness will make them a target of evil, in an effort to corrupt the Innocent. The Innocent may seem to give in, but will find courage at the last second and destroy their tempters.

