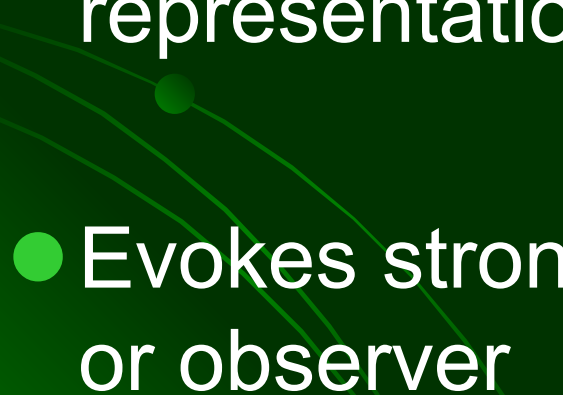# Archetypes

The Models of Our Entertainment and

What is an Archetype?

- An original model which other things are similarly patterned after

- An image, story pattern, character type, representation, or recurring idea

- Evokes strong associations to the reader or observer

What should I look for to identify archetypes?

- A shared idea with all humanity

- An inherited part of the human being that connects us all

- A constant and universal idea

- Though it may differ from place to place, the concept is worldwide

What kinds of Archetypes are there?

- There are three main archetypes:
  - Situational
  - Symbolic
  - Character

We will begin with situational archetypes…

What is a Situational Archetype?

- A given experience that a hero or character must endure to move from one place in life to the next

- Actions and events that add to the plot

- A common event seen throughout stories in may different genres

Situational Archetypes

- Situational Archetypes include the following:

The Quest
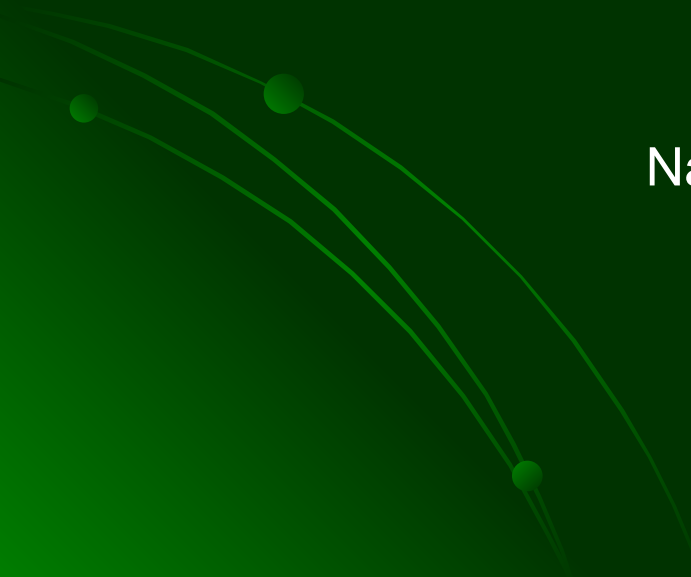
The Task

The Initiation

The Journey

The Fall

Death and Rebirth

Nature vs. Mechanistic World

Good vs. Evil

The Unhealable Wound

The Ritual

Situational Archetypes:
The Quest

- A quest describes a search for someone or something of great power or importance

- A quest is never easily accomplished and often includes near impossible challenges

The Quest: Examples

- Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the lost Ark
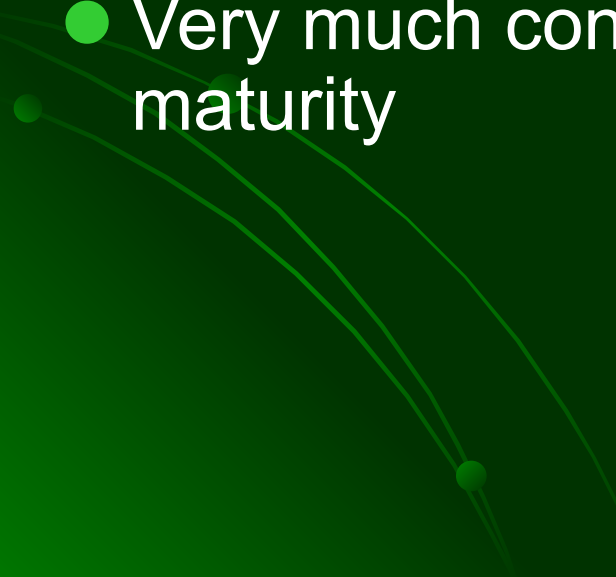
Situational Archetypes:
The Task

- The Hero must perform some nearly superhuman deed

- This is done to save the kingdom, win the girl, or find himself

- Example: Arthur pulls the sword from the stone.

The Task: Examples

Only the rightful heir to the throne can complete **the task** of pulling the sword from the stone.

Situational Archetypes:
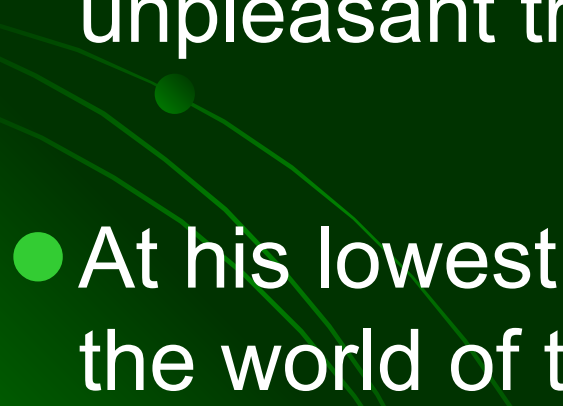# The Initiation

- An initiation symbolizes a right of passage

- An adolescent may come into adulthood through an initiatory

- Very much connected with growing up and maturity

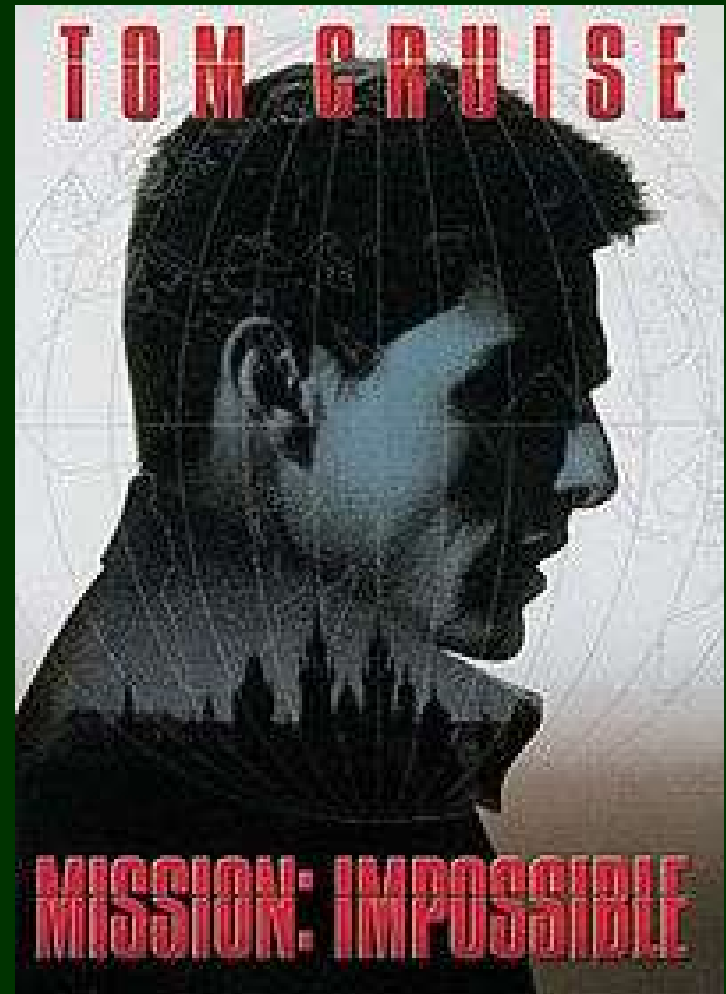# The Initiation: Examples
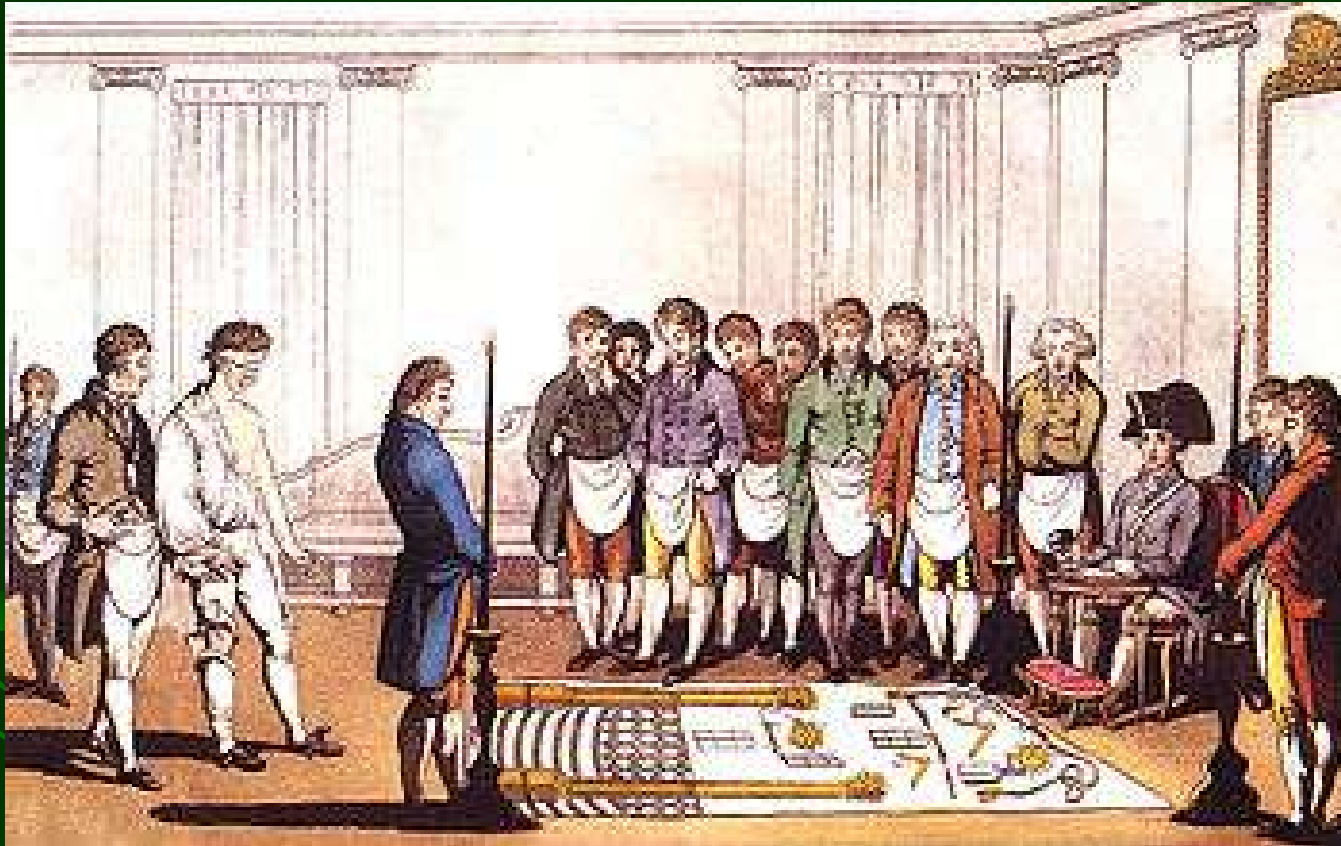
Masons created an initiation process that many secret societies still follow to date.

Situational Archetypes:
The Journey

- Sends the hero on a search for some truth or information

- Forces the hero to discover many unpleasant truths

- At his lowest point, the hero will return to the world of the living

The Journey: Examples

Situational Archetypes:
The Fall

- Shows a descent from a higher to lower state of being

- Represents a loss of innocence

- Usually comes with some type of expulsion as a result of disobedience

The Fall: Example

In the Christian faith, Adam and Eve were the first two human creations of God. By choosing to eat the forbidden fruit, the two lost their innocence and fell out of favor with God.

Situational Archetypes:
Death & Rebirth

- The most common of all situational archetypes

- Parallels the cycle of nature with the cycle of life

- Morning or Spring = Birth or Youth
- Evening or Winter = Old Age or Death

Death & Rebirth Examples

Spring Time is associated with new life and hope for the future

Death & Rebirth
Examples Continued

Winter, cold, and night suggest old age and the idea of death

Situational Archetypes:
Nature vs. Mechanistic World

- Nature represents purity and good

- Technology represents evil and corruption

Nature vs. Mechanistic World Example

Inventions destroy nature in this archetype

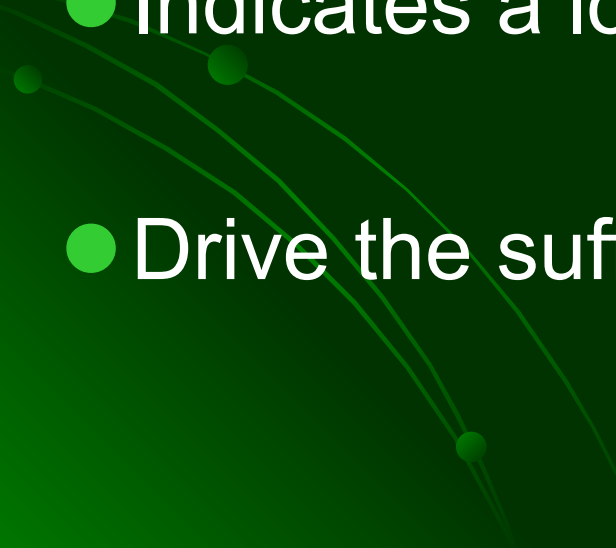# Situational Archetype:
Good vs. Evil

- Battle between two primal forces

- Traditionally, Good will triumph over evil

- Can be found in almost any movie, book, or television show

- (protagonist vs. antagonist)

Good vs. Evil: Example

In Disney's *The Lion King*, Simba represents good while Scar exemplifies evil. Most cartoons will depict a good vs. evil archetype.

Situational Archetypes:
The Unhealable Wound
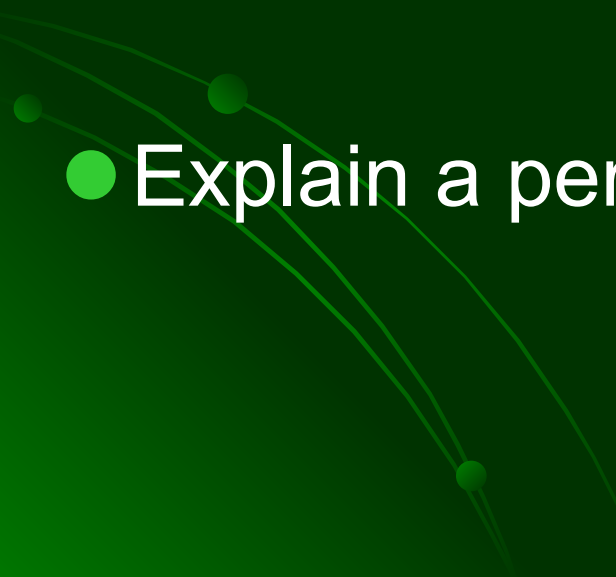
- Either physical or psychological damage that cannot be repaired

- Indicates a loss of innocence

- Drive the sufferer to extremes

The Unhealable Wound Example

Anakin Skywalker (Darth Vader) will never fully recover from his battle wounds. He is forced into a mechanical suit because of his lost limbs and scarring.

Situational Archetypes: The Ritual

- Mark a rite of passage

- Show character's role in society

- Explain a person's role in the world

The Ritual Example:

Baptism is an important ritual of the Christian faith. Once baptized, a person officially becomes a Christian.
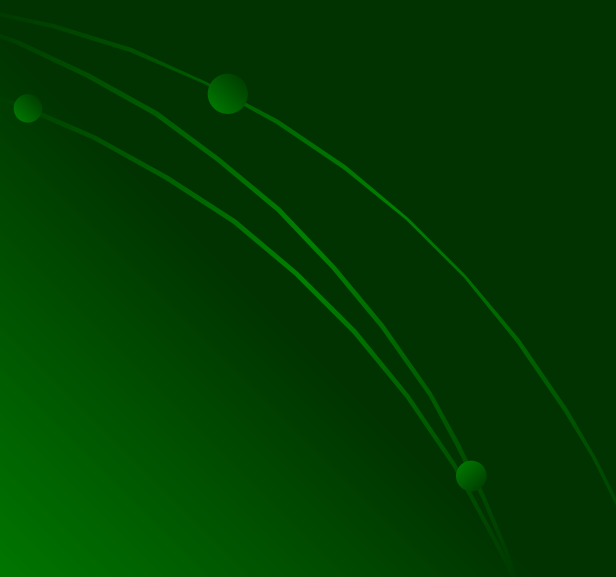
Situational Archetypes

- Let's Review. **Situational Archetypes** are events or happenings that a character goes through in order to transcend from one place to the next. They include :
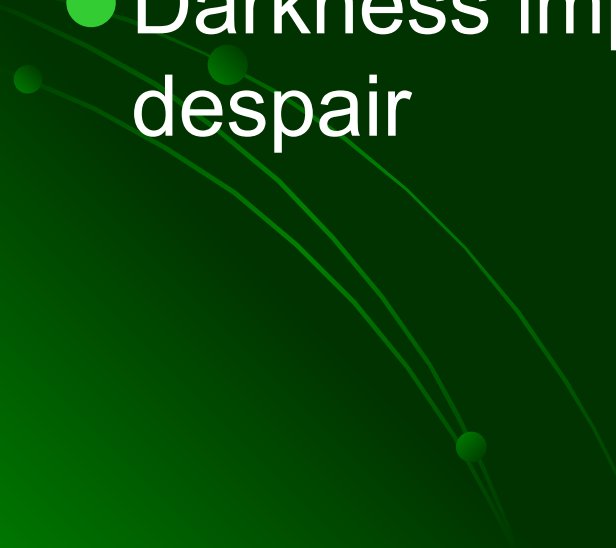
- ✓ The Quest
- ✓ Death & Rebirth
- ✓ The Task
- ✓ Nature vs. Tech.
- ✓ The Initiation
- ✓ Good vs. Evil
- ✓ The Journey
- ✓ Unhealable Wound
- ✓ The Fall
- ✓ The Ritual

Symbolic Archetypes

- Serve as a representation of a specific person, act, deed, place or conflict. They are easily recognizable but not as common as situational archetypes.

- The Archetypes Include:

- Light vs. Darkness
- Water vs. Desert
- Heaven vs. Hell
- The Magic Weapon
- Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity
- Haven vs. Wilderness
- Supernatural Intervention
- Fire vs. Ice

Symbolic Archetypes:
Light vs. Darkness

- Light suggests hope, renewal, or enlightenment

- Darkness implies mystery, ignorance, or despair

Light vs. Darkness
Example:

The battle of light and darkness will stretch beyond actual light and dark. The good (light) and bad (dark) can be seen through a story's characters and their actions

Symbolic Archetypes: Water vs. Desert

- Water appears as a symbol of fertility and birth

- Water may symbolize a spiritual birth or the beginning of something

- A Desert typically represents a loss of life, hope, or faith

Water vs. Desert
Example:

Water brings about hope for new life and spirituality.

A desert might bring about loss of life, faith, or hope.

Symbolic Archetypes: Heaven vs. Hell

- Places not easily accessible by man are regarded as the dwelling places of either the gods or demons

- The skies, clouds, or mountains house the gods

- Canyons, caves, and the inner earth play home to the evil forces of the world.

Heaven vs. Hell
Example:

And she's buying the stairway…to heaven! Typically Heaven is also associated with light and nature.

Hell's Bells! Hell is often associated with fire, demons, evil, and the unknown places of earth.

Symbolic Archetypes:
The Magic Weapon

- A symbol of the hero's extraordinary quality

- No other can use it to its full potential

- Traditionally given by a mentor

Arthur pulls the sword from the stone, not because he is stronger than others, but because of his good qualities and righteousness

Symbolic Archetypes:
Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity
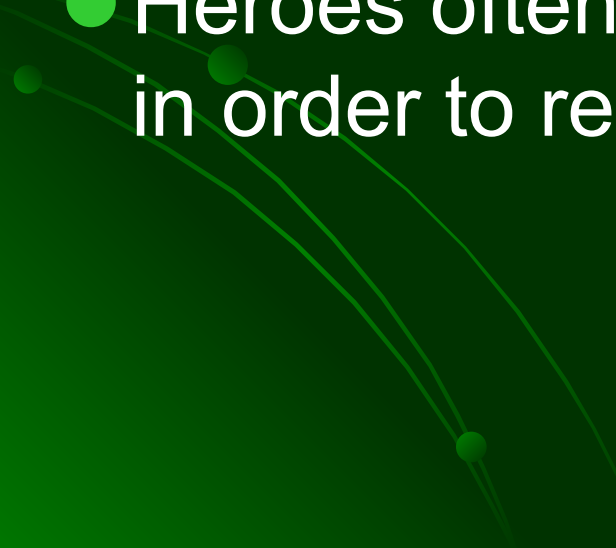
- Some characters are more experienced and in turn have a mystique wisdom

- Other characters are educated, powerful, and often times…stupid.

- The wise one is usually an assistant while the stupid-smarty is a leader

Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity

Though they work as a team, Alfred is wise with experience while Bruce Wayne is a college graduate who has a knack for flying by the seat of his pants despite his butler's advice.

Symbolic Archetypes:
Haven vs. Wilderness

- Places of safety contrast with the unknown threatening forces of the wilderness

- Heroes often must return to a safe haven in order to regain health or supplies

Haven vs. Wilderness Examples:

The Batcave.
Home of The Batman.
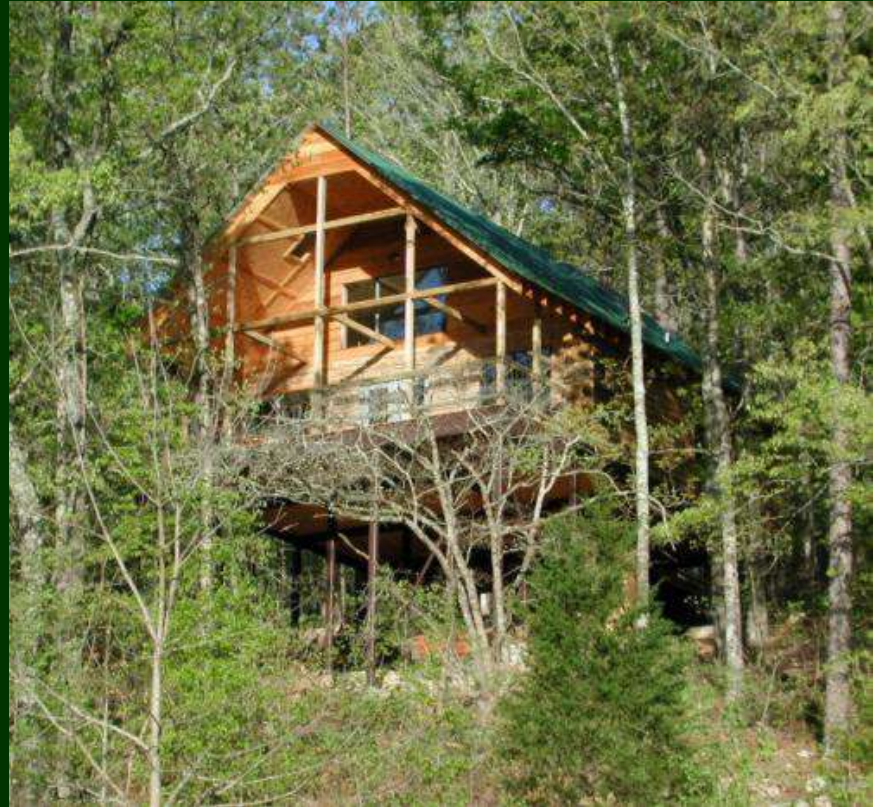
Log Cabins serve as a haven to many who enjoy living in the heart of a wild world.

SYmbolic Archetypes:
Supernatural Intervention

- God or gods intervene in a given situation

- The gods will often favor the hero but occasionally they do not.

- This is seen throughout Greek Mythology as well as most practiced religions

Supernatural Intervention
Examples:
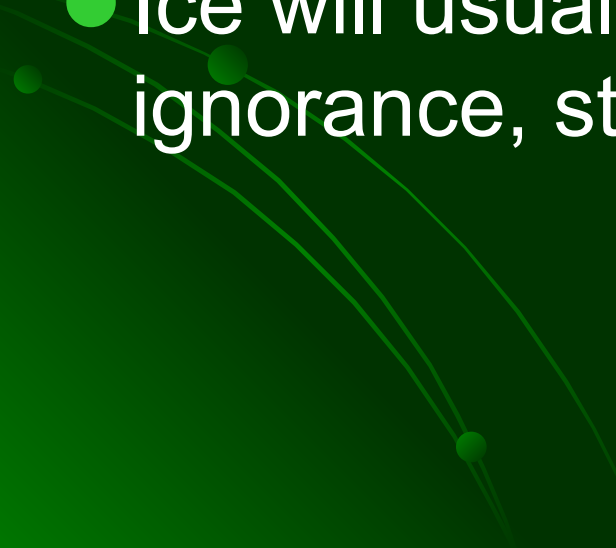
(Left) Jesus Christ is woken from sleep and asked to intervene by calming the waters.

In the movie *300*, the gods intervened when "Zeus hurled thunderbolts and rain storms as the enemy ships crashed against the rock."

Symbolic Archetypes:
Fire vs. Ice

- Typically, fire represents knowledge, light, life, fertility and (re)birth

- Ice will usually represent a deserted place, ignorance, sterility, and death

Fire vs. Ice
Example:

Fire and Ice constantly battle for life…or death.

Symbolic Archetypes

- Let's Review. Symbolic Archetypes represent a specific person, act, deed, place or conflict.

- Symbolic Archetypes Include:

- Light vs. Darkness

- Water vs. Desert

- Heaven vs. Hell

- Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity

- Haven vs. Wilderness

- Supernatural Intervention

- Fire vs. Ice

Character Archetypes

- A person or being that serves as a representative of a greater ideal

- Characteristics, actions, abilities, or powers contribute to the archetype characterization

Character Archetypes

- Character Archetypes include the following:
  - Unfaithful Wife
  - Temptress
  - Star-Crossed Lovers
  - Damsel In Distress
  - The Scapegoat
  - The Devil Figure
  - The Creature of Nightmares
  - Friendly Beast

- The Hero
- Mentor
- Young man from the Provinces
- The Initiates
- Hunting Group of Companions
- Loyal Retainers
- The Outcast
- The Evil Figure with the Ultimately Good Heart
- Earthmother

Character Archetypes: The Hero

- Traditionally the protagonist of a story
- Often his past is a mystery
- He is the champion, king, leader or savior of many
- Endures pain and sorrow that all lead to a greater good

Character Archetypes: Mentor

- Serve as a teacher or counselor to the initiate or future hero

- Role Model

- Sometimes a Father or Mother figure

The Karate Kid's Mr. Miyagi

Character Archetypes: The Initiates

- Young heroes who must endure training

- Must complete some type of quest

- They are Innocent and often wear white

In order to become a Jedi Knight, Luke Skywalker must complete his training (quest).

Character Archetypes:
Young man from the Provinces

- A hero is spirited away as a young man and raised by strangers

- Later returns home where he is a stranger who looks to find a solution to problems
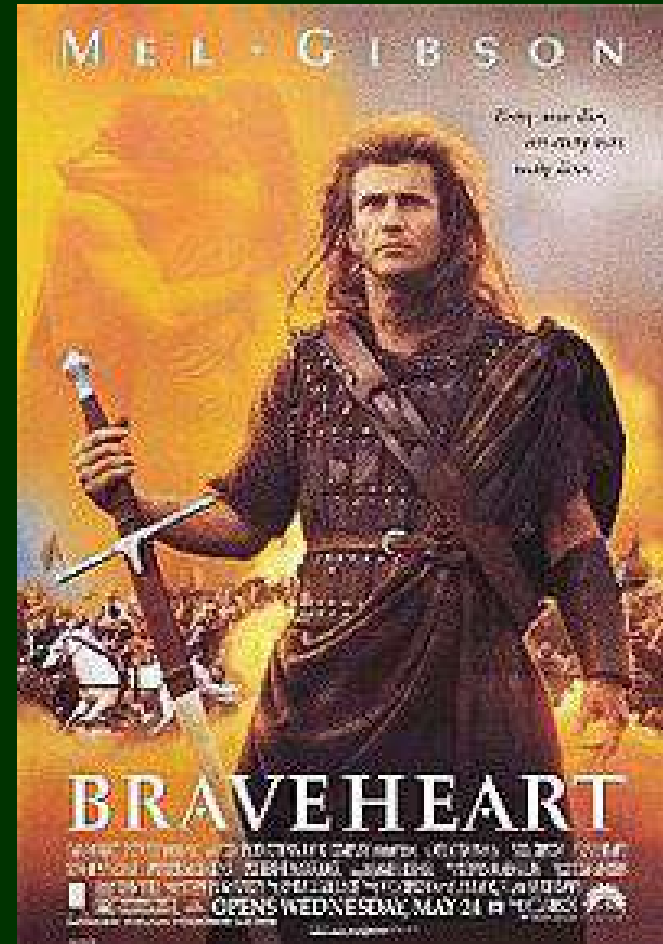
Character Archetypes:
Hunting group of companions

- Loyal to the hero

- Group willing to face dangers in order to be together

Robin Hood's Merry Men never abandoned him despite the danger
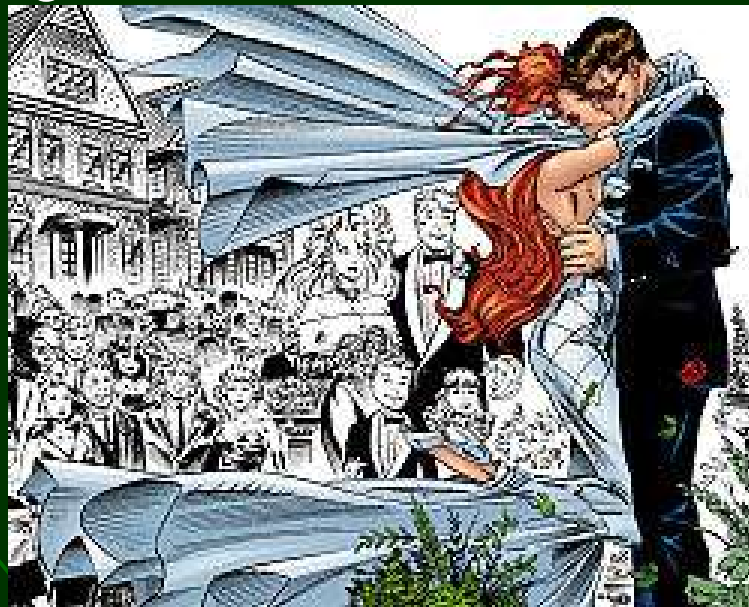
Character Archetypes: Earthmother

- Symbolic of abundance, fertility, and knowledge

- Offers spiritual and emotional advice or nourishment to those she meets

In the film The Matrix, the Oracle gives spiritual advice to Neo in his quest for the truth

Character Archetypes: Temptress

- Sensuous with beauty
- The hero is physically attracted to her but she will ultimately bring about his downfall

From the X-men comics and movies, Jean Grey and Cyclopes fall in love but she ultimately brings his downfall by turning into the Phoenix and killing him

Character Archetypes:
The Unfaithful Wife

- Woman, married to a man she sees dull

- Attracted to a more interesting or handsome man

- Commits an act of Infidelity

Helen of Troy left her husband to be with Paris, a more attractive and virile man

Character Archetypes:
Damsel in Distress

Mary Jane Watson is often being tossed around by villains. Lucky for her Spider-man is her boy-toy!

- Vulnerable woman who must be rescued by the hero

- She is often used as bait to trap the hero

Character Archetypes:
Star-Crossed Lovers

- These two characters are engaged in a love affair

- Fated to end tragically

- Society, family, or friends do not approve of the relationship

Romeo & Juliet ultimately pay the price for their love through their tragic death

Character Archetypes:
Loyal Retainers

- Somewhat heroic

- Similar to a servant with hero like qualities

- Duty: Protect the Hero

Sam from Lord of The Rings is the loyal retainer of Frodo.

Character Archetypes:
The Outcast

Until he learns manners, Hancock is the outcast of Los Angeles

- Banished by Society or a social group

- Destined to become a wanderer

- Moves from place to place

Character Archetypes:
The Friendly Beast

- Shows characteristics of the hero

- Finds villains threatening and may attempt to warn the hero

- Loyal only to the hero & the hero's companions

Chewbacca, Han Solo's companion, may look scary…but he's really just a big, hairy, heroic baby

Character Archetypes:
Evil figure w/ ultimately good heart

Bah! Hum-Bug! Ebenezer Scrooge realizes his faults and finds good in the world

- A Redeemable Devil

- Saved by the love or faith of a hero

- May have started out good, then through a fall becomes evil, but returns to good in the end

Character Archetypes:
# Creature of a Nightmare

- Monster usually summoned from the deepest, darkest parts of the mind

- Threatens the life of the hero

- Often a perverse or desecrate form of human

Summoned from nightmares, Freddy Krueger terrorized teens in the 80's and 90's in the Nightmare on Elm Street films

Character Archetypes:
The Scapegoat

- Human or Animal

- Public Death is a sin of the community

- Death makes him a more powerful force than when he lived
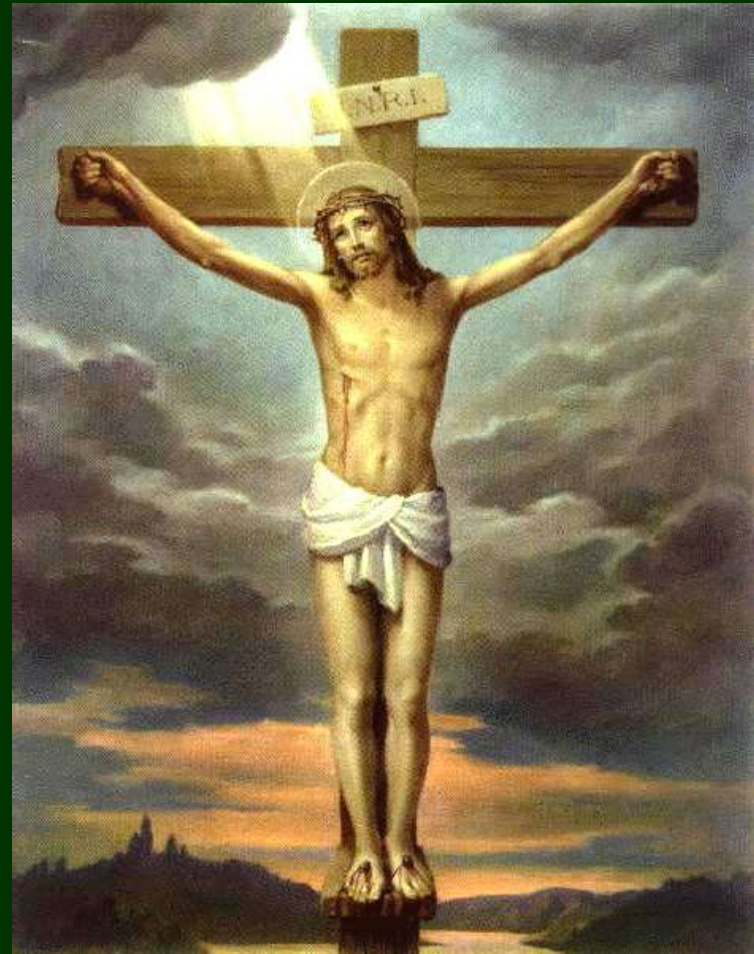
Character Archetypes:
Devil Figure

- Evil Incarnate

- Offers Worldly Goods

- Will tempt, cheat, steal, lie, and destroy anyone or anything he comes into contact with

Let's Review!
Character Archetypes include the following…

Unfaithful Wife
- Temptress
- Star-Crossed Lovers
- Damsel In Distress
- The Scapegoat
- The Devil Figure
- The Creature of Nightmares
- Friendly Beast

- The Hero
- Mentor
- Young man from the Provinces
- The Initiates
- Hunting Group of Companions
- Loyal Retainers
- The Outcast
- The Evil Figure with the Ultimately Good Heart
- Earthmother

In Conclusion…

- Archetypes are everywhere, but we often just overlook them

- They can be found in every book, short story, TV show, or movie

- Archetypes represent ideas larger than themselves!

The End