

Archetypes in mythology

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



An archetype is defined as an original model on which similar things are patterned (Archetypes). They are reoccurring themes that represent experiences. The power of the archetype comes from their ability to evoke themes that a vast majority of people can relate to (Archetypes). Myths and other stories that have been told for generations have had a significant impact on the human psyche. Archetypes are present in all mythology and stimulate certain responses when we associate these themes with what we've been taught.

Some examples of archetypes that are spread throughout mythology are the hero, the mentor, the threshold guardians, the shadow, the herald, the shapeshifter and the trickster. I will use the mythology of the 2008 film, "The Dark Knight" to provide specific examples of archetypes. The hero is one of the central characters in mythology. Heroes are often, but not always, associated with bravery and self-sacrifice. The hero will undertake a journey to change and grow. They will encounter mental and physical challenges that will complex their path and ultimately pay a heavy price to achieve their goal.

In "The Dark Knight", the hero is called Batman. His real name/alter ego is Bruce Wayne. He is a masked vigilante who fights crime in the fictional city of Gotham. He possesses courage in situations where he is impossibly outnumbered and fights for the safety of the citizens of Gotham. The mentor is a positive figure that aids or trains the hero (PBS). They offer knowledge, motivation, wisdom and sometimes gifts to the hero for them to complete their task. Batman's butler, Alfred Pennyworth acts as his mentor.

He often gives wisdom, compassion, confidence, motivation and logical reasoning to Bruce Wayne during his quest. During a hero's journey in mythology, heroes often encounter characters whose functions are to act as obstacles to prevent the hero from completing their quest. One of the archetypes that describes this character is the threshold guardians. These guardians are never the story's main antagonist (Handbook), they are viewed as stepping stones that make the hero stronger and better prepared for when they face their final task, which is usually the main protagonist called the shadow.

In the film, the threshold guardians are the mob bosses of Gotham City. They serve as antagonists and obstacles to conceal the shadow; a character called the Joker. The trickster is a character that embodies mischief. Their loyalty is never clearly defined throughout the story. The Joker personifies both the trickster and the shadow for he is a delusional sociopath and a madman obsessed with finding the humor in anarchy. He is the main antagonist of the film.

These characters often represent negativity and evil (Handbook). The character of Harvey Dent in the film represents the herald. He is the District Attorney of the city and taunts the mob bosses, which vicariously makes Batman very busy. He employs the help of Batman by challenging him to capture an accountant connected to the mob bosses that can put them in prison and to capture the Joker. He also plays the shapeshifter character in the film. He is scarred horribly and his girlfriend is murdered by the Joker.

However, the Joker convinces him that the Gotham mob bosses are responsible for it. The shapeshifter is often bewilderingly changeable

(Archetype). He brings doubt and suspense to the story. While under the motivation of the Joker, he begins to kill everyone connected to his tragedy. His intentions are unclear and it is unknown whether or not he will go against the hero. Ultimately, the hero exercises self-sacrifice and claims atonement for Harvey Dent's crimes; which exemplifies everything that we associate heroes with.