

Archetypal characters



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Name: Course: Lecturer: Date: Archetypal Characters Authors have different sources of inspiration for their stories. They display their source of inspiration using different elements in the stories, such as the setting and the characters in the story.

Authors base their characters on different archetypes, and this can be influenced by their belief systems. Folklores, fairytales, and legends are some of the sources of characters Archetypes are associated with different characters and traits. They have both positive and negative attributes.

The authors find it easier to develop the characters and the plot after identifying the archetypes they will use (Griffith 185-188). They use the lessons they have learnt from studying the myths and traditions of different cultures. Stephen King displays his influence by basing his characters on the myths and beliefs of vampires. He has used the stories and legends passed along from different sources in developing his characters. These stories tell of vampire, their character, and their effect on humans.

The legends also speak of the humans who were involved in killing the vampires, and the measures they took to finish them off. Of special importance is the role of the church and religious symbols such as crucifixes and holy water. The complex situations that the characters encounter and the characters interactions with each other help in developing the archetypal characters in Salem's Lot, and in enhancing their qualities. Stephen King's " Salem's Lot" is a book set in an isolated town. The book tells of Ben Mears, who is a somewhat successful author. Mears arrives to

the town to write his novel. He intends to seek inspiration from the town where he grew up as a child.

Mears is haunted by memories of his childhood in the town, he was forced to go to the Marsten's house, and he saw a figure who he thought was Hubie Marsten hanging from a rope. As Mears spends more time in the town, he realizes that the town holds mysteries, after the disappearance of a child and the murder of another one. Mears spends his time trying to solve the mystery. Once he does, he spends more time trying to get rid of the vampires, and curing the town of the infections. He is joined by others in the fight.

Some of them do not necessarily believe in the vampires, and this makes them unprepared for what happens once they are attacked by the vampires. Only a few of the characters seem to be prepared in dealing with the vampires, and most of the characters end up dying or becoming infected. Ben is the main character in the book, and he has to deal with the fears he developed when he was young, and the guilt he feels over his wife's death.

He had spent some years in the town as a child, and he returns as an adult to write a novel. He encounters different people and situations, and these encounters help in developing his character. Meeting Mark and Susan makes him push on in pursuing his purpose. He is the archetypal hero in the story. He does not necessarily possess the skills of most heroes, but his self-sacrificing attitude makes him one. Ben acts as the vampire slayer in the book.

He gets rid of his fears, and he develops enough courage, which enables him to find ways of getting rid of the vampires. He kills Barlow, who is the main antagonist. He is not afraid of facing the vampires, and he does not seek an escape route from the town. He chooses to stay behind and save the town from the vampires even though he does not have much to gain from it. Ben befriends Susan and they develop a relationship. Barlow, the main vampire manages to get Susan, and she becomes a vampire.

Despite the love that Ben feels for Susan, he realizes that he has to kill her after she becomes a vampire. Ben has to sacrifice their love, and she kills Susan to avoid more people from becoming vampires. Ben is intelligent, and he realizes that he and Mark have to escape from the town after they kill Barlow because the town is full of vampires; however, he goes back to the town after one year, with more resolve to kill the vampires. His heroic qualities of seeing a better town and stopping the infection cannot keep him away from the town. He goes back with a definite plan of killing all the vampires in the town.

For him to do that, he has to destroy the entire town. Father Callahan is a catholic priest, who has a desire to help Ben and Mark in fighting the vampires. He is a religious leader, who struggles with human weaknesses including alcoholism.

Callahan helps mark after Barlow kills his parents and holds him hostage. He uses the power of the cross to help him fight Barlow. However, he fails in faith, and he ends up falling to Barlow's demands despite initial resistance. Callahan could have been the hero in the story, but his lack of decisiveness

put him in an otherwise contrary position. He ended up becoming an outcast, after he was denied entry in the church. He was no longer clean having drunk Barlow's blood. He was Banished from his home, which was the church that he had served, and nothing else is hard from him.

Susan is presented mostly as a flat character. She is the archetypical earth mother in the story, a female character, who offers spiritual and emotional comfort (Kharbe 329). She offered Ben the comfort he needed after he had lost his wife. Although Ben knows that he is not to blame for the motorbike accident that killed his wife, he continues blaming himself because he was the one riding the bike at the time. Susan helps Ben cope with his problems. She becomes his girlfriend and he helps him forget the thoughts of his wife. Susan is also intelligent and college educated. This works to her disadvantage because it prevents her from believing in the existence of vampires.

She does not know how to prevent herself from attacks and this leads to her demise in the end. Mark is the child protagonist in the book. His archetypical character portrays his innocence and youth. He sees things from a child's perspective. Children have an ability to see obvious things, which the adults often overlook. Children have an open mind, and they believe that anything conceived in the human mind is possible. They are observant, and they take a keen interest in their natural surrounding.

Moreover, they are very intuitive and intelligent. Like any child, he has an active imagination, and he tends to believe in the possibility of things. He even believes that he can take on the main vampire. Mark is intelligent and

brave. His courage and fearlessness comes from having being exposed to the supernatural world. He has horror monster toys, and he plays with them. He has taken the lessons learnt from his playtime, and he tends to believe that he can apply what he learns during his play lessons in real life. King presents the children as people who have more wisdom than the adults do.

This wisdom enables them to endure until the end, often emerging as heroes (Casebeer 48) Matt Burke is the typical teacher, who his students do not particularly like. He is a mentor, having spent most of his time instilling knowledge in students. He leads an almost solitary life, and he has no family, other than a brother he talks to rarely. His character enables him to take the role of advising the rest of the protagonists, who are looking for ways of getting rid of the vampires and finishing them off completely. He is a natural leader of the group, and he spends his time studying about the vampires. Like a typical teacher, he has to know what he is dealing with first, before confronting the issue. Kurt Barlow is the main antagonist in the book, and he is a villain. His presence smells evil, and so do his physical features.

Villains are selfish, and they act in opposition to heroes. Barlow is a shadow of Ben, in that while he is selfish and only cares about his interests, Ben is self-sacrificing, and does not put his interests ahead of others. Barlow kills Straker, a man who had assisted him throughout, and who had helped him maintain his sense of privacy. He did this as a way of punishing him, after he had failed part of his duty. Ben on the other hand, sacrifices his love by killing Susan who has become a vampire. He does not see any other way of helping the town, other than killing all the vampires, and Susan is one of them. They obstruct the hero's path in achieving his objectives. Like the

typical evil person, he is intelligence, and he uses this intelligence to evade those who are after him, and to pursue his prey.

He is wise and decisive, and he always seems ahead of the others. His arrogance does not prevent him from having followers. Like many antagonists, he is charming when need be, and he is skilful in committing evil. He always seems to have people around him, and he attracts both humans and vampires. This is despite the fact that he does not always treat them well. He uses his vampire supernatural ability to control those who he feels will help him fulfill his purpose.

King has used the archetypal characters of the hero, shadow, child, villain, mentor, and earth mother among others, in developing his characters. There are many characters in the book, and each of the characters has something to offer. The hero is self sacrificing and ensures that he puts other people's interest before his own. The hero sometimes needs help, and in King's book, this help comes from different sources. It comes from Matt, who acts as a mentor and a wise teacher. It also comes from Mark, who although a child, is more intuitive and displays more wisdom than the adult characters do. Ben also receives help from father Callahan and Susan, who provide the spiritual and emotional support that he needs.

Using archetypal characters helps in the development of the story. It also helps the reader understand the text in a better and clearer way. Once the reader has identified the hero and villain in the story, he or she knows what to anticipate from the characters. The reader anticipates the action of the characters, and he understands why the characters make the decisions that

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