

Archetypal Characters

An archetype is a kind of universal symbol which recurs in various cultures all over the world. Many character roles are archetypes.

DIRECTIONS: Read the brief description of each archetype below. Can you identify an example of each in modern fiction?

ARCHETYPE	EXAMPLE IN MODERN FICTION
The Hero is a character whose main quality is goodness and who struggles against evil in order to restore harmony and justice to society.	
The Mother Figure is a character who guides and directs others, providing spiritual and emotional nourishment. A variation of the Mother Figure is the Stepmother, who treats her stepchildren badly.	
The Innocent Youth is an inexperienced person with weaknesses to overcome. Usually, the experience of coming of age is a major aspect of the story with this archetype.	
The Mentor's role is to protect the main character and help him on his journey though the offering of wise advice and/or training.	
The Doppelganger is the duplicate, shadow or evil side of a character's personality.	
The Scapegoat is the character that takes the blame of everything bad that happens.	
The Villain's rule is to oppose the hero at all costs. It is usually the role of the hero to defeat the villain as part of his journey or quest.	

Now choose one of the archetypes that you identified in modern fiction and write a short essay that analyzes how the modern work is both representative of the archetype and how the material is rendered new.

