

## ARCHETYPAL CHARACTERS

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### ABSTRACT

Archetypal characters are recurring character types or symbols found in literature, mythology, and storytelling across different cultures and time periods. They represent universal human experiences, traits, and themes. These archetypal characters often serve as a template or blueprint for creating well-rounded and relatable characters in works of fiction.

### KEYWORDS

The Hero, The Mentor, The Villain, The Sidekick, The Damsel in Distress, The Trickster.

### INTRODUCTION

Heroic archetypes are a fundamental and enduring element of storytelling, transcending cultural boundaries and time periods. These archetypes represent the quintessential hero's journey, embodying universal qualities and experiences that resonate with audiences worldwide. Whether in ancient myths, classic literature, or contemporary films, these archetypal heroes serve as beacons of courage, resilience, and moral integrity, inspiring and guiding us through the trials and tribulations of life's adventures. In this exploration, we will delve into the rich tapestry of heroic archetypes, examining their characteristics, significance, and the timeless stories they inhabit. From the valiant knights of medieval legends to the modern-day superheroes of comic books and cinema, the hero's journey is a narrative thread that continues to captivate our imaginations and illuminate the hero within us all.

Heroic archetypes have an innate ability to capture our collective imagination because they tap into the fundamental aspects of the human experience. These archetypes often reflect our aspirations, our struggles, and our ideals. As we delve deeper into the world of heroic archetypes, we'll uncover the common threads that bind heroes from different cultures and eras. We'll also explore the various stages of the hero's journey, from the call to adventure and trials to the eventual triumph and transformation. Through these archetypal characters, we gain insights into the human condition,

our capacity for growth, and the enduring belief that, no matter the odds, heroism is a path available to each of us. So, let us embark on a journey of discovery, where the heroic archetype serves as a guiding star in the vast cosmos of storytelling, shining a light on what it means to be truly heroic.

Heroic archetypes are not confined to the pages of literature or the screens of theaters; they permeate our daily lives as well. We encounter elements of the hero's journey in our personal struggles, professional pursuits, and even in the larger context of societal challenges. The hero's journey becomes a lens through which we can better understand our own quests for meaning, purpose, and self-discovery. By examining these archetypes, we gain insight into the qualities and values that society admires and venerates: bravery in the face of adversity, self-sacrifice for the greater good, and the unwavering commitment to a noble cause. Through the exploration of heroic archetypes, we not only gain a deeper appreciation for the stories that have shaped our cultures but also a heightened awareness of the potential for heroism within ourselves and those around us. So, let us embark on this exploration, where we'll unravel the intricate web of heroic archetypes, revealing the enduring relevance of these timeless characters in our ever-evolving narrative of human existence.

### JON SNOW AS THE HEROIC OUTCAST

Jon Snow, a central character in George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" series, and portrayed by Kit Harington in the television adaptation "Game of Thrones," embodies the archetype of the Heroic Outcast in a compelling and multifaceted way. This archetype is characterized by individuals who, despite their inherent heroism and noble qualities, exist on the fringes of society, often feeling like outsiders or misunderstood by those around them. Here's an exploration of how Jon Snow fits into the Heroic Outcast archetype:

**1. Illegitimate Birth:** Jon Snow's status as a bastard child born out of wedlock in the noble House Stark of Winterfell sets him apart from his half-siblings and the rest of his family. This birthright, or lack thereof, shapes his identity

and sense of belonging.

**2. Struggles for Acceptance:** Throughout his early life, Jon grapples with feelings of rejection and alienation, particularly from Lady Catelyn Stark, who treats him coldly due to his illegitimate status. His journey is marked by a relentless pursuit of acceptance and recognition for his worth.

**3. Sense of Duty and Honor:** Despite his outsider status, Jon consistently upholds a strong sense of duty and honor. He joins the Night's Watch, a brotherhood tasked with defending the realm from supernatural threats, exemplifying his commitment to a noble cause.

**4. Courage and Integrity:** Jon Snow's heroic qualities are evident in his unwavering commitment to doing what is right, even when it means making difficult decisions. He stands up against injustice, protects the innocent, and strives to maintain the integrity of the Night's Watch.

**5. Leadership and Sacrifice:** As Jon rises through the ranks of the Night's Watch, he becomes a respected leader and commander, earning the loyalty of his fellow brothers. His willingness to make personal sacrifices for the greater good further underscores his heroic nature.

**6. Revelation of True Heritage:** Jon's journey takes an unexpected turn when he learns about his true parentage, which carries significant implications for the realm. This revelation deepens his sense of being an outsider, as it challenges his identity and place in the world.

In Jon Snow, we see the Heroic Outcast archetype personified, as he navigates a world of political intrigue, betrayal, and danger while remaining true to his principles and responsibilities. His journey resonates with audiences because it reflects the universal theme of individuals who rise above their circumstances to become heroes, even in the face of societal rejection and adversity. Jon Snow's character serves as a compelling example of the enduring appeal and complexity of archetypal heroes in modern storytelling.

## DAENERYS TARGARYEN AS THE CHOSEN ONE

Daenerys Targaryen, a prominent character in George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" series and brought to life by Emilia Clarke in the television series "Game of Thrones," is a compelling embodiment of the Chosen One archetype. This archetype typically portrays an individual with a special destiny, marked by unique qualities or powers, who is destined to play a pivotal role in shaping the world. Here's an exploration of how Daenerys fits into

the Chosen One archetype:

**1. Royal Bloodline:** Daenerys is the last surviving member of the Targaryen dynasty, which once ruled the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. Her royal bloodline and lineage connect her to a legacy of power and dragon-riding, making her special from birth.

**2. Targaryen Motto:** House Targaryen's motto, "Fire and Blood," is indicative of the Targaryens' unique connection to dragons and their history of conquering and ruling with fire and dragons. This motto foreshadows Daenerys' role as a potential world-changing figure.

**3. Dragons:** Daenerys hatches and raises three dragons, the first dragons seen in the world for centuries. This connection to dragons, considered mythical creatures, sets her apart as a unique and significant character in the story.

**4. Quest for the Iron Throne:** Throughout her journey, Daenerys's ultimate goal is to reclaim the Iron Throne and restore her family's rule over the Seven Kingdoms. Her pursuit of the throne aligns with the idea of a chosen leader destined to unite and lead a fractured realm.

**5. Overcoming Adversity:** Daenerys faces numerous challenges, including exile, betrayal, and physical and emotional hardships. Her ability to overcome these obstacles and persevere in her quest mirrors the resilience and determination often associated with the Chosen One archetype.

**6. Quest for Justice:** Daenerys is driven by a strong sense of justice and a desire to free the oppressed and end slavery. Her mission to break the wheel of tyranny and create a more just world aligns with the idea of a chosen one as a force for positive change.

**7. Prophecies and Visions:** Throughout her journey, Daenerys encounters prophecies and visions that hint at her destiny. These prophetic elements add depth to her character's role as a chosen figure in the story.

While Daenerys Targaryen embodies many elements of the Chosen One archetype, her character is also complex, and her actions and choices throughout the series raise moral and ethical questions about the nature of power and leadership. Her character's evolution and the complexities surrounding her pursuit of the Iron Throne contribute to the depth and richness of her role in the narrative, making her a memorable and thought-provoking example of the Chosen One archetype in contemporary literature and television.



### EXPLORING THE ENCHANTED REALMS

The word fantasy is both a literary and a psychological term. As a literary term a fantasy means any narrative that deals with impossibilities and preternaturals. The Ancient Mariner, Gulliver, Erewhon, The Wind in the Willows, The Witch of Atlas, Jurgens, The Crock of Gold, The Vera Historia, Micromegas, Flatland and Apuleius' Metamorphoses are fantasies. Of course, they are very heterogeneous in spirit and purpose. The only thing common to them is the fantastic. I shall call this sort of fantasy 'literary fantasy'. (3)

The above quote by C.S Lewis has beautifully encompassed the term's essence. Fantasy literature, with its enchanting worlds and extraordinary creatures, has captivated readers for centuries. Through the genre's vivid imagery, imaginative settings, and magical elements, authors transport us to realms where the boundaries of reality are transcended. The twentieth century witnessed a profound transformation in social, political, economic, and technological landscapes. The world was rocked by two devastating world wars in the first half of the century, which brought about sweeping changes in people's lives. The survivors of these wars endured physical and emotional trauma, leaving them crippled and scarred. The post-war years were characterized by turmoil and hardship, exacerbated by an economic crisis that resulted in widespread unemployment. The Great Depression of the 1930s further accelerated the erosion of social classes, leading to the collapse of long-held moral, religious, and ethical beliefs. The Second World War inflicted even greater devastation on life and property, particularly with the advent of atomic bombs that unleashed unimaginable destruction and loss of life. The aftermath of both world wars saw a slow and arduous process of rebuilding and reshaping human existence, but the era of the Cold War posed the ominous threat of annihilation for the human race. The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the twentieth century, along with events such as the Gulf War, the ongoing specter of terrorism, and the lingering impacts of the Great Depression, continued to breed unrest in the early twenty-first century.

Literature was no exception to the effects of all that was happening in the world. Fantasy literature has a rich and diverse history that spans centuries, with roots tracing back to ancient myths, legends, and folklore. The origins of fantasy literature can be found in the mythologies and oral traditions of ancient civilizations. Myths and legends, passed down through generations, were imbued with fantastical elements, supernatural creatures, and heroic quests. These stories served to entertain, educate, and reflect the beliefs and values of the societies from which they emerged. Examples of early fantasy literature include the ancient Greek epics, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which featured gods, monsters, and epic journeys. *The Panchatantra*, a collection of fables in Sanskrit, is believed to have originated in Kashmir, India around 200 B.C. According to Ryder, one of its English translators, these stories have brought joy to millions of people for over 20 centuries, including those in

Persia, Arabia, Syria, and Europe. Although the author of *Aesop's Fables* is unknown, the stories continue to be enjoyed in various translations and adaptations due to their wit, wisdom, and fantastic flights of imagination. These stories have a clear moral vein, but they also feature supernatural elements, such as a man tricking a ghost in *Panchatantra* and animals speaking like humans in *Aesop's Fables*. This combination of imagination and moral lessons makes learning enjoyable.

It is not only that the poems contain as Rhode has shown traces of the earliest religion, ancestor – worship, and propitiation of the dead, mixed with a later 'Ionic' spirit, daring and sceptical, which knows nothing of mysterious, and uses the gods for rhetorical ornament, or even for comic relief. There is also a marked development or degeneration in the use of supernatural machinery. In the earliest stages a divine presence in only introduced where there is a real mystery, where a supernatural explanation is necessary to the primitive mind...Later on the gods come in as mere ornaments; they thwart one another; they become ordinary characters in the poems.(17)

During the Anglo-Saxon period, which spanned from the middle of the fifth century to the first half of the eleventh century, literature was characterized by fantastical works like *Beowulf*. Considered the earliest and greatest epic or heroic poem in English literature, *Beowulf* is rich in imagination and myth. The eponymous hero and his nemesis Grendel are drawn from northern legends, and their fierce battles are fought against a backdrop of dragons, monsters, magic swords, and enchanted caves. Beowulf himself battles demonic enemies from his youth to old age, ultimately sacrificing himself to save his people. These early sea kings were a complex mix of savagery and sentiment, rough living and deep feeling, courage and melancholy, which makes it plausible that they could produce such a magical and lively epic as *Beowulf*. It has been interpreted symbolically by W.J. Long due to its insight into the human heart. He holds that Beowulf's fights with the three dragons indicates the victory of man over 'the overwhelming danger of the sea' and 'conflict with the hostile forces of nature ...overcome at last by man's indomitable will and perseverance'. (26) Long even calls 'the unselfish heroism of Beowulf, the great prototype of King Alfred'. (27)

During the Middle Ages, fantasy literature continued to flourish, often intertwined with religious and moral teachings. Chivalric romances, such as the Arthurian legends, introduced magical elements and fantastical creatures into tales of knights, damsels, and quests for honor. The works of Geoffrey Chaucer, including *The Canterbury Tales* featured mythical creatures and allegorical narratives that blended the real and the supernatural.

The Renaissance marked a significant shift in the development of fantasy literature. With the revival of classical learning, writers drew inspiration from ancient myths and legends, creating new tales that merged fantasy and reality. This period in English literature was marked by the works of

several influential authors, including Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, and John Milton, who were instrumental in shaping the development of fantasy literature. These authors drew inspiration from classical literature, folklore, and mythology to create intricate and imaginative worlds that explored complex themes and provided a new lens through which to view the world.

One of the most prominent works of fantasy literature during the Renaissance period was Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Published in 1590, this epic poem tells the story of knights who embark on a quest to serve the Faerie Queene, an allegorical representation of Queen Elizabeth I. The poem is rich in symbolism, drawing on classical mythology and Christian allegory to provide a complex and nuanced portrayal of the world. Spenser, whose *The Faerie Queene*, continues to captivate literary enthusiasts with its enchanting melodies and the realm of faeries. Drawing inspiration from Italian romantic epics, Spenser weaves together a tapestry of traditional chivalric elements, including giants, dragons, dwarfs, wizards, and valiant knights of exceptional prowess and valor, alongside damsels in distress of extraordinary qualities.

For Spenser, the medieval romance served as a vehicle to convey his moral and religious ideals. However, the fact that he selected this genre to convey his purpose holds significant importance for the role of the fantastical in English literature. Similarly, Thomas More's *Utopia* is rooted in pure imagination, as it represents a visionary dream aimed at realizing an ideal, civilized state.

William Shakespeare's plays, like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* embraced magical elements, fairies, and spirits, intertwining the fantastic with human drama. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first performed in 1595, and is a comedy that explores the themes of love, magic, and transformation. The play is set in a fantastical world inhabited by fairies, elves, and other supernatural beings, and is notable for its use of poetic language and imagery.

The *Tempest* written at the other end of Shakespeare's career, is also full of symbolism. Prospero is a magician who by his art has subjected the man-beast personified Caliban and the invisible elements personified in Ariel.(33)

From this perspective, it becomes evident that any fantastical element introduced by Shakespeare in his works serves a deeper, intrinsic purpose. The fantastical elements serve as finely crafted tools rather than mere embellishments. For instance, in *Hamlet*, the ghost is not merely a spectral figure meant to heighten the scene's horror; it carries a weighty significance. In *The Tempest*, Ariel represents the embodiment of unseen forces, while in *Macbeth*, the witches transcend being mere reflections of prevailing beliefs about magic and witchcraft. Furthermore, in *The Tempest*, Prospero's transformation from king to magician, as suggested by W.J. Long, symbolizes the literary exploration

of the scientific inquiries of the time, delving into the very sources of the universe. This demonstrates how fantasy was evolving into a powerful tool for artists, allowing them to convey what might have been challenging to express through more conventional means.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Daenerys Targaryen's character in George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" series and the "Game of Thrones" television adaptation provides a captivating and nuanced representation of the Chosen One archetype. Her royal lineage, connection to dragons, quest for justice, and resilience in the face of adversity all contribute to her portrayal as a character destined for greatness. However, what makes Daenerys particularly compelling is the moral complexity that surrounds her journey. Her choices and actions challenge traditional notions of heroism and leadership, forcing audiences to grapple with the consequences of wielding immense power. Daenerys Targaryen serves as a thought-provoking example of how the Chosen One archetype can be subverted and redefined in modern storytelling, offering a character whose destiny is both awe-inspiring and morally ambiguous, ultimately leaving a lasting impact on the world of fantasy literature and television.

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