

Archetypes Question / Answer / Explained

Q:

It seems to me that many archetypes have different meaning according to the place the writer puts them...

example: the bridge. In act 1 this a symbol of change in hero's life, in the beginning of act 2 it is a symbol of crossing the 2 worlds, in end of act 2 it is an ambush place (as Jung quoted in his patients' dreams) and in act 3 this is a return to the ordinary world..

What do you think of this reflection?

A:

Your example is a little confused.

Archetypes are best understood as symbolisms that represent functions. The lower archetypes can be assigned to each function whereas the higher archetypes are more stable - they can perform many functions.

The observer can interpret the symbolism in many ways, so in a sense there is a degree of validity to your reflection.

But the more accurate and clearer approach is this:

It is generally agreed that certain symbolisms represent certain functions - for example, a bridge is always a crossing between Worlds / States / Stages.

The events that occur when the bridge is crossed are represented by other symbolisms / archetypes. For example, when the Hero crosses the bridge, there is usually a Pursuer/Chaser archetype. Also, at this stage, the Hero may have to fight the Pursuer/Chaser and therefore adopts the Warrior archetype, with adjoining armor symbolism.

So, to relate to your example:

In act 1, the bridge is never the symbol of the change in the hero's life but (more accurately) the crossing from one state to another. The actual change will be represented by a change of clothes or environment etc.

In act 2, depending where you are, it is a symbol of crossing the 2 Worlds.

At the end of Act 2, an ambush takes place before the crossing. In other words, this is really a point where multiple archetypes manifest themselves (the Pursuer/Chaser will appear, the Hero will become Warrior etc). Jung/Jung's patients just associated a battle/ambush with a bridge without clarifying that two separate events occur - the ambush and then the crossing.

In Act 3, the bridge represents the crossing to No Mans Land / Ultimate World. There is never a return to the Ordinary World - even if the Ordinary World is geographically returned to, it is not the same - the consequence of the Journey has caused a change on some level.

Best.

We very strongly recommend you buy the 510+ stage Hero's Journey from <http://www.clickok.co.uk/ClassicHero.html>

We very strongly recommend you buy the Advanced Archetypes at <http://www.clickok.co.uk/screenwriting/HerosJourneyArchetypes.html>