



The Archetypal Images in “Coraline” Novel by Neil Gaiman (2002)

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Abstract

Literature is one of the most popular works because it is able to accurately represent life. However, readers of literary works frequently encounter words or symbols with uncertain meanings. As a result, they are unable to understand or even stop reading the literary works. Therefore, this research was carried out to describe the archetypal images that appeared in the Coraline novel based on Carl Jung's theory. This research was a qualitative descriptive research proposed by Creswell(2018). In collecting data, researchers used observation (reading) and note-taking techniques. Then, for data analysis methods, the researchers used content analysis and interpretation techniques. The result of this research was the discovery of 15 data of archetypal images in the novel Coraline. The 15 data consisted of four data of terrible mother, two data of demon lover, two data of black color, two data of tree, one data of red color, one data of rising sun, one data of desert, one data of serpent, and one data of circle. Considering the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the novel Coraline used a number of image archetypes to convey hidden meanings through the use of symbols.

Keywords: *archetypal image, symbols, and Coraline Novel.*

Introduction

Readers frequently encounter an ambiguous word meaning or an abstract meaning while reading literary works. Readers become confused when they are unable to understand the abstract meaning, so that in the end they give up reading the literary work. In order to understand the abstract meaning in a literary work, the understanding of archetypal imagery is needed. Archetypal imagery is a common theme, pattern, or symbol that appears in mythology, legends, fairy tales and is drawn from the collective unconscious. In making a literary work, the writer does not only use sentences to convey messages, but also uses symbols. Symbols could be used as an alternate to express meaning (Saepul, 2016). Both in the realm of direct utterances and the meaning conveyed in a story, especially novels, the conveyance through symbols has an inferred meaning. This symbol is intended to build the reader's fantasy and also to convey implied meaning to the reader. Prior to reading the novel, the reader must understand the significance of the symbols. Readers would be able to correctly comprehend the story and the meanings associated with the symbols used in the novel by knowing symbols.

Novels are in great demand by humans because the storylines that are presented are interesting and have various genres, such as; romance, thriller, action, etc. Additionally, the reader is also curious about the author's motivations for creating the narrative. Due to the usage of the term symbol in the explanation of this archetypal image, the reader might find it challenging to comprehend the intended meaning. The reader's difficulty in understanding this symbol eventually becomes one of the problems, because it is a sign that the novelist has failed to convey the importance of that part to the reader. After considering this problem, the researchers decided to look into the symbols in Coraline novel that written by Neil Gaiman.

Coraline by Neil Gaiman is one of the novels that utilizes use of archetypal imagery to express meaning. This novel employs a wide variety of archetypal imagery, each with its own meaning. The imagery itself acts as a pathway for the reader to receive an implied meaning. Jung (2013) claimed that imagery includes a variety of elements, including; colors, numbers, animals, objects, and so on. When reading a novel, it is common for readers to struggle to understand the author's use of imagery. That was why, the researchers decided to discuss imagery and meaning in the novel Coraline written by Neil Gaiman.

Research on archetypal image has been carried out by many people. For a general overview of the subject to be studied, previous research is necessary. This research has correlations to two previous researches. The first research came from (Sari & Putra, 2021) in their research entitled *Archetypal Images Reflected in Dracula Novel by Bram Stoker*. Their research used Carl Jung's theory. This research discovered that there were numerous archetypal images in the Dracula novel. The archetypes in the Dracula novel were the sun, color, archetype women, and wise old man. A variety of archetypes were used in the Dracula novel to portray hidden meanings through the usage of symbols, the researchers concluded based on the findings of their research.

Another researcher came from (Purba & Ambalegin, 2020) in their research entitled *The Images in "Maleficent" Novel by Elizabeth Rudnick*. This research aimed to examine the images in the novel Maleficent by Elizabeth Rudnick. The nine

archetypal images were discovered as a result of the search. The nine archetypal images consisted of river, the sun, the colors (red, green, blue, black, and white), a serpent, the number (three, good mothers, wise old man, a garden, and a tree. The images are capable of conveying the writer's imagination moment and bring the readers' experiences to the work of fantasy literature.

This research had the same topic as the two previous studies, namely discussing the archetypal of image. This research used different data from the two previous studies. The researchers took data from the novel *Coraline* written by Neil Gaiman. The goal of this research was to find out the archetypal images in *Coraline* novel by Neil Gaiman based on Jung (2013). In addition, this research was expected to help readers understand the symbols and meanings of archetypal image in the novel *Coraline*.

Literature Review

The archetypal image is a universal symbol, according to Jung (as cited in Purba & Ambalegin, 2020). It refers to a variety of archetypal images that convey significance when seen and experienced. According to Jung (2013), There were fourteen types of archetype images, namely: water, sun, color, circle, serpent, number, the archetype woman, the demon lover, the wise old man, the trickster, garden, tree, desert, and mountain.

Water

Water is used as a symbol for growth, qualification, and fertility. There are two symbols in this type of archetypal image, namely sea and river. The sea is a metaphor for the spiritual mystery and mother of life. While the river represented both death and rebirth.

Sun

Sun is divided into two images, namely: the rising sun and setting sun. The rising sun represents new life, creation, and enlightenment. Despite being the opposite of the rising sun, the setting sun is a representation of death.

Colors

There are five colors included in the archetypal image, namely; red, green, black, blue and white. Each color has a specific meaning. Red is the color of blood, abuse, power, desire, strength, love, war, rage, ambition, chaos, and danger. Green is a symbol for growth, rebirth, youth, jealousy, inexperience, and decay. Black is used to represent something negative or darkness. While blue is usually used to convey fidelity, nobility, truth, serenity, constancy, and spiritual (purity) as well as discouragement, skepticism, and depression. The last one is white, which is a sign of positive aspects.

Circle

Circle signifies the beginning of a trip and a problem, as well as unity, sanctity, and unless.

Serpent

This archetypal representation is a snake. It is represented by the energies of evil, sensuality, corruption, and mystery.

Numbers

The numbers that included in the archetypal image, namely; three, four, five and seven. Three represents unity, light, and spiritual consciousness. The number four

represents the four seasons. The number five is used as a symbol for integration. The last number is seven, which represents as all numbers.

The Archetypal Woman

The three sub-images that make up this archetype are soul mates, terrible mothers, and good mothers. A good mother is a positive representation of mother earth, which stands for sustenance, safety, and abundance. The terrible mother is therefore a bad aspect that is represented by a witch or a scary figure. The latter is soulmate, which Jung (2013) described as the princess or beautiful lady.

The Demon Lover

The personification of this archetype is the companion of a terrible mother. The devil, Satan, and Dracula serve as its representations.

The Wise Old Man

The image of the wise old man has a significant impact on a character in the narrative, even in real life. The wise old man is representation of the hero, wise, a guardian, and kind.

The Trickster

This archetypal image symbolizes the contrary of the wise old man. This archetypal image represented as joker, jester, clown, fool, or prankster.

Garden

The garden represents happiness, fertility, purity, and unadulterated beauty.

Tree

The life, growth, generative and regenerative processes, and transformation processes of the universe are all symbolized by trees.

Desert

This archetypal image is represented by nihilism, death, hopelessness, and spiritual dryness.

Mountain

The mountain is a symbol for aspiration, inspiration, introspection, and upward spiritual ascension.

Method

This research was a qualitative descriptive research proposed by Creswell (2018). The object in this research was archetypal images in *Coraline* novel written by Neil Gaiman. In collecting data, researchers used observation (reading) and note-taking techniques. There were several steps taken by researchers in collecting data. First, the researchers read the novel *Coraline* written by Neil Gaiman. Second, the researchers highlighted the paragraph in the novel that displayed the phenomena of archetypal images. Third, the researchers rewrote the data or phenomena that had been taken from the novel to be analyzed based on the Jung's theory. For the data analysis methods, the researchers used content analysis and interpretation techniques. Last, this research was carried out by describing the findings in sentences and words.

Results

There were 15 data of archetypal images that the researchers found in the

novel Coraline written by Neil Gaiman. The 15 data of archetypal images in Coraline's novel consisted of four data of terrible mother, two data of the demon lover, two data of black color, two data of tree, one data of red color, one data of rising sun, one data of desert, one data of serpent, and one data of circle.

Table 1. The archetypal images in the Coraline novel written by Neil Gaiman.

No	Archetypal images	Frequency
1	Terrible Mother	4
2	Demon Lover	2
3	Black Color	2
4	Tree	2
5	Red Color	1
7	Rising Sun	1
8	Desert	1
9	Serpent	1
10	Circle	1
Total		15

Discussion

Data 1

"**The black shape** went into the drawing room, and Coraline followed it a little nervously." (Page.8)

The quote above contained **the archetypal image color, which is black**. The black color represents darkness and something negative. The black shape in the quote above refers to a terrible figure that gave off a negative impression. That was why, Coraline felt nervous when she followed the black shape.

Data 2

"**She dreamed of black shapes that slid from place to place**, avoiding the light, until they were all gathered together under the moon. **Little black shapes with little red eyes and sharp yellow teeth**. They started to sing." (Page. 9)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **black**. The quote above showed that Coraline was dreaming that the little black shapes that had red eyes and yellow teeth were gathering under the moon while singing. Dreaming of a black figure is often seen as coming of disaster. So, from the dream it can be concluded that something so dark and scary would come to Coraline.

Data 3

"Whatever would I have done with your old parents? If they have left you, Coraline, it must be because they became bored of you, or tired. Now, I will never become bored of you, and I will never abandon you. You will always be safe here with me.' **The other mother's wet looking black hair drifted around her head, like the tentacles of a creature in the deep ocean.**" (Page. 36)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the terrible mother**. The terrible mother represents an evil figure, which is either a witch or a terrible figure. In the quote above, it could be seen that a figure known as the other mother had hidden both of Coraline's real parents. In addition, the other mother also had a scary figure, where the hair on her head is likened to the tentacles of a creature in the deep ocean.

Data 4

“She hoped that what she had just seen was not real, but she was not a certain as she sounded. There was a tiny doubt inside her, like a maggot in an apple core. **Then, she looked up and saw the expression on her mother’s face: a flash of real anger, which crossed her face like summer lightning**, and Coraline was sure in her heart that what she had seen in the mirror was no more than illusion.” (Page.36)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the color red**. The color red represents ambition, anger, danger and more. In the quote above, the color red showed the anger of another mother. The quote above did not mention the color red explicitly, but implicitly. The red color could be known from, "summer lightning". Summer lightning color is red. In conclusion, the above quote described how another mother's angry expression made her face red like summer lightning.

Data 5

“Now there was sun on her face, and she was Coraline Jones. Yes. And the green and pinkness of the room she was in, and the rustling of a large painted paper butterfly as it fluttered and beat its way about the ceiling, told her where she had woken up.” (Page.39)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the rising sun**. The rising sun symbolizes new life, creation and enlightenment. The rising sun in the quote above refers to new life. Where when the sunlight hit Coraline's face, Coraline no longer woke up in her original bedroom (the real world), but in the bedroom (the world) made by the other mother. In conclusion, the rising sun symbolizes that Coraline was in a new life, namely the life created by the other mother.

Data 6

“He looked less like her true father today. There was something slightly vague about his face—like bread dough that had begun to rise, smoothing out the bumps and crack depression.” (Page.40)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the demon lover**. This archetypal image symbolizes the companion of the terrible mother. This archetypal image is represented by Satan, Dracula, and the devil. From the quote, "He looked less like his true father today." it could be seen that the other father was included in the figure of satan or devil because he incarnated as the original Coraline's father.

Data 7

“Where Coraline came from, once you were through the patch of trees, you saw nothing but the meadow and the old tennis court. In this place, the woods went on farther, **the trees becoming cruder and less treelike the farther you went.**” (Page.41)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the tree**. Trees are employed as symbols to express cosmic life, growth, generative and regenerative processes, and transformational processes. The quote above wanted to convey that the fewer trees, the fewer signs of life. This could be seen from the quote, " *In this place, the woods went on farther, the trees becoming cruder and less treelike the farther you went.*" The meaning of the quote was the fewer trees Coraline saw, the farther she would go, and that would mean no more life or growth in the world she was in.

Data 8

“Coraline wondered if the other mother wasn’t interested in trees, or if

she just hadn't bothered with this bit properly because nobody was expected to come out this far." (Page.41)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the tree**. The above quote tried to convey the meaning that the other mother did not pay attention to the trees when making the world. Trees are a symbol of life and growth. No trees, that means no life. The reason why the other mother did not pay attention to the trees was because she did not think that anyone would explore the world she created as far as possible. That was why the further Coraline walked the fewer trees she found, which meant no life or growth.

Data 9

"All was quiet and empty and deserted. Even her footsteps on the carpeted floor seemed loud. Dust motes hung in a beam of sunlight." (Page.43)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the desert**. This archetypal image is represented by nihilism, death, hopelessness, and spiritual dryness. In the quote above, what desert means is loneliness and death. This was because Coraline was locked in a dark room by the other mother, which was punishment for Coraline not listening to what the other mother was asking. When locked in that room Coraline felt lonely. In addition, death could also befall Coraline because the other mother was a very evil creature. She had prepared many plans so that Coraline would not leave her, because Coraline was her food.

Data 10

"Suit yourself," said her other mother. **She carefully picked out a particularly large and black beetle, pulled off its legs (which she dropped, neatly, into a big glass ashtray on the small table beside the sofa), and popped the beetle into her mouth. She crunched it happily.**" (Page.44)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the terrible mother**. The terrible mother represents an evil figure. The other mother was symbolized by the terrible mother archetype because the other mother ate a black beetle in front of Coraline with a happy face, which for Coraline eating black beetles was such a terrible and disgusting thing.

Data 11

"She pick up Coraline up and pushed her into the dim space behind the mirror. A fragment of beetle was sticking to her lower lip, and there was no expression at all in her black button eyes. **Then she swung the mirror door closed, and left Coraline in darkness.**" (Page.45)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the terrible mother**. The terrible mother represents evil. The terrible mother archetype was used to represent the other mother because she forced Coraline into the shadowy space beyond the mirror. She then left Coraline alone in the dark. Moreover, the other mother had a repulsive visage with a black beetle clinging to her lower lip and expressionless black button eyes.

Data 12

"That is why we could not leave here, when we died. She kept us, and she fed on us, until now we've nothing left of ourselves, **only snakeskins and spider husks.** Find our secret hearts, young mistress." (Page.49)

The archetypal image in the quote above is the **serpent**. Serpent represents

the energy of evil, sensuality, corruption and mystery. The ghost of a child who was victimized by another mother told Coraline that she and two other ghosts were eaten by the other mother. After being eaten by another mother, she and her two ghosts were left with nothing. They only had snake skin and spider husks. The meaning of those who only have snake skin and spider husks was that they only have the energy of evil and mystery, and Coraline was asked to unravel these mysteries.

Data 13

“Coraline made a noise, a sound of revulsion and horror, and, if it had heard and awakened, the thing began to sit up. Coraline stood there, frozen. **The thing turned its head until both its black button eyes were pointed straight at her. A mouth opened in the mouthless face, strands of pale stuff sticking to the lips, and a voice that no longer even faintly resembled her father’s whispered, ‘Coraline.’**” (Page.60)

The archetypal image in the quote above is **the demon lover**. The devil lover is the spouse of the terrible mother who symbolizes the devil. From the quote above, it could be seen how the other father, who was the partner of the other mother, turned into a terrible figure and whispered Coraline's name.

Data 14

“The cat lowered its tail, swishing it from side to side angrily. It made a low growling noise in the back of its throat. **It walked in a circle, until it was pushing up against Coraline’s leg.** She put down a hand to stroke it, and could feel how hard its heart was beating. It was trembling like a dead in a storm.” (Page.67)

The archetypal image in the quote above is the **circle**. Circle signifies the beginning of a trip and a problem, as well as unity, sanctity, and unless. The quote above illustrated the beginning of trouble for the black cat. Because Coraline managed to find the two ghost children's souls, slowly the world created by the other mother began to collapse. The black cat lived in a world created by the other mother. With the collapse of that world, then he too would disappear. That was the beginning of the black cat's troubles, that's why the black cat walked in a circle.

Data 15

“The other mother had followed her in. Now she stood in the center of the room, between Coraline and the mantelpiece, and looked down at Coraline with black button eyes. It was funny, Coraline thought. The other mother did not look anything at all like her own mother. She wondered how she had ever been deceived into imagining a resemblance. **The other mother was huge—her head almost brushed the ceiling—and very pale, the color of a spider’s belly. Her hair writhed and twined about her head, and her teeth were sharp as knives.**” (Page.69)

The quote above utilized the archetypal image of **the terrible other**. The terrible mother is the embodiment of evil. The other mother was shown as the archetypal terrible mother because she exposed her true self, which was big, pale, she had the color of a spider's body, and with a head that nearly touched the ceiling. Her hair wriggled and twisted about her head, and her fangs were as sharp as knives. In addition, the other mother became an evil figure because she pretended to be Coraline's biological mother and deceived Coraline, so that Coraline would stay with her and become her food.

Conclusion

Based on the result, the researchers found that there were nine of the fourteen archetypal images in Coraline's novel written by Neil Gaiman. The nine archetypal images consisted of black, red, tree, the terrible mother, the demon lover, circle, serpent, desert, and rising sun. The data that appeared the most in the novel Coraline was the terrible mother. This was because Neil Gaiman wanted the readers to feel how terrible the character of the other mother, who was the antagonist in this novel. In addition, the writer also wanted to show that no matter how evil, terrible, and dark the character of the other mother was, Coraline could bravely beat her. The message that the writer wanted to convey was that to get out of the darkness it only takes courage, as shown by the character Coraline. In addition, this research was important because with an understanding of archetypal images, readers could easily understand symbols in literary works. Furthermore, this research was also expected to be a reference for further research that related to archetypal images.

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