

# What are literature circles?

- Four students choose same book and work together
- Different groups read different books
- Students meet to discuss their readings two or three times a week
- Students write down notes for discussion based on roles
- Discussion come from the students
- Group meetings are open and involve natural conversations about books (like a book club)
- Students rotate roles each week
- Evaluation by teacher observation (talk competency) and student self-evaluation
- When books complete, students share with their classmates in presentation (Web site).

# Roles

- **Discussion Director**
- **Connector**
- **Summarizer**
- **Investigator**



# Summarizer

Summarize the section of the book you are reading this week. For top grades, look for themes as well as plot. Themes are the message the author is trying to get across - the “moral of the story.”

Over the next three weeks the different summarizers should find at least one theme each, provide proof in the form of quotes or paraphrase and explain how that theme is part of the universal experience (similar to Response essay but not as long)

# Summarizer Rubric

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>Finds Themes</b>	Offers confusing or erroneous (wrong) summary of the story	Summarizes in point form (no paragraphs)	Summarizes generally but explained simplistically	Summarizes AND offers thoughtful Themes supported with details from the text (uses quotes)	Detailed summary and offers perceptive themes supported by quotes with references to larger issues outside the text.
<b>Language/ organization</b>	Little or no editing in evidence.	Serious errors impede meaning.	Errors remain that require attention	Error occur that call for better editing strategies.	Occasional minor errors occur.

# Connector

Find significant passage's) and relate to real life, other books, movies or TV shows. The connections might relate to the student themselves or perhaps to something else.\*

N.B. Connections should be based on THEMES or TECHNIQUES, **not** basic plot (“It’s about a dog and I read another book about a dog”).

# Connector

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>Makes connections</b>	Makes unrelated illogical or baseless connection to the text	Makes simple or obvious connections to self.	Makes logical connections to other texts.	Makes thoughtful and elaborate THEMATIC connections supported with details from the text (uses quotes)	Makes perceptive, at time profound connections with references to larger issues outside the text. Exemplary
<b>Language/ organization</b>	Little or no editing in evidence.	Serious errors impede meaning.	Errors remain that require attention	Error occur that call for better editing strategies.	Occasional minor errors occur.

\* All criterion in the rubric are subsumed – that is you cannot “skip” a level and expect that going to the highest level first exempts you from a level

# Example of a Connection

*The Giver* is the story of a utopian society that does whatever it needs to hang to their idea of a perfect environment. The novel follows the coming of age tale of a protagonist, Jonas, who struggles to come to terms with the ways of his community. Jonas is given the special role of being the Receiver of his community. The job of the Receiver means he is now responsible for carrying with him all the memories of the past so as to protect his family, friends, and way of life from being diverted from sameness.

There is much of Jonas' world that contributes to an ideal sense of belonging, safety, and, ultimately, a sense of community. Lois Lowry depicts a utopian society where there are no emotions and no opportunity for choice in individuality. In controlling the town's emotions through pills for the stirrings and pain, meal-time dream discussion sessions, consistent family-forming patterns/rules, and a complete lack of or, rather, the inability to lie, permits this society to embrace these traditions, though they really know no better, and gain a real taste for a stable life environment where everyone has a specific role tailored to what limited and 'varied' talents people have.

The movie *The Village* is extremely representative of this book. In this instance a group of more-or-less well-to-do people join together after having unbearably painful tragedy strike in their lives and decide to create their own utopian society where the violence of the world cannot touch them. Like Lowry's novel, the film starts off and the sense of 'another society' is not mentioned. The movie's case simply depicts an old-fashioned type village run by elders who decide things (coincidentally the originators of the society as we find out later on in the film) and a townsfolk fearful of leaving the land and thus, entering the forest.

The sense of community is strong throughout this film. Every person is understanding of each other and each has a role within the community. Although this society still employs emotions and the technology used is more backwards than that of *The Giver*, the strong bonds of honesty and trust within a group is something that is seen in both texts.

# Investigator

- Student finds historical, geographical, cultural or other information that would help readers understand the novel. Researches and then brings work to class for group circle. Can include maps, images and/or information to be explained by the Investigator.
- N.B. Do NOT investigate the author or reviews. The idea is to help group understand the basic plot better by clarifying setting, time, mood, historical context, etc.



# Investigator

**EXAMPLE Bibliography** Author, Title of Book, Place of Publication: Publisher, Date.

Shelly, Mary. *Frankenstein: the Modern Prometheus*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1997.

**Web Site**

Authors name, Name of site, Last updated, (Date you visited), URL

Lee, Xia. "MLA Citation Examples" April 1999. (23 Sept. 2001) <http://www.hcc.haw.edu>

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2		Level 4	Level 5
<b>Content Relevance</b>	Information is either incorrect, irrelevant OR IS BASED ON SIMPLY READING THE BOOK.	Information is pertinent but insufficient and/or does not clarify anything about the CONTENT of the text.	Shares information that clarifies ONLY ONE issue in the novel for readers.	Shares information that clarifies MORE THAN ONE issue from the text.	Information gives insights into the many aspects of the plot, setting and character development.
<b>Validity of resources</b>	Make no reference to sources. Seems "off the top of her/his head"	Makes vague references to sources (web site address)	Gives clear reference to text in the form of a bibliography (see below) but uses ONLY ONE source.	Refers to MORE THAN ONE source in the form of a complete bibliography.	Offers THREE OR MORE SOURCES AND criticism of the sources used.

Many aspects of the conflict in Iran were explained in the graphic novel *Persepolis*. All the events young Marjane talks about were very intriguing and I decided to research more in depth a few aspects of what happened in the country more than twenty years ago and are still going on today. I wanted to learn more about the background of the Islamic revolution in Iran and who were the leaders of the revolution, the Ayatollahs.

During the revolution, the Islamic revolutionaries took control of the government and they obliged Islamic fundamentalism. Marjane was deeply troubled by these new rules. It was a big change for her to see all her world upside down. Her parents were very modern and acceptant and when she was forced to wear the veil it was a shock for her. She was also troubled to see some neighbours being very respectful of fundamentalism. Donna M. Hughes a professor in women studies at the University of Rhode Island describe the fundamentalist revolution in Iran as being “the most misogynous theocracy in the world”. In some ways, Marjane was lucky to have modern parents who did not believe in fundamentalism. Many girls did not have this chance. Girls had less access to school because fundamentalism proved girls as being less intelligent than boys. The government lower the legal age of marriage to around 9 years old. Apparently, women were brought on earth to be mothers and good wives. When a young virgin girl was sentenced to death, police officers and prison guardians would rape her, so her soul could never get to paradise because she was guilty of treason. Because it is a university website, the information on it is reliable.

The foundation of Iranian studies provides a timeline of the revolution from the start in 1979, to 2009. It shows how women fought for their rights but the government was too strong and would always pass new laws to reduce their rights. Over the years, many activities became gender segregated, for example, universities. Women were prohibited to study in fields in which they would be in contact with men. This foundation is a non-profit organisation set in place to inform people about the heritage and story of Iran. It is a reliable source since it is registered under the laws of the states of New York and Maryland and any contributions follow a certain guideline and the organization is non-partisan and non-political. Some of the key people in the revolution were the Ayatollahs. They were Islamic revolutionaries. The Ayatollahs were responsible for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the shah, [Mohammad Reza Pahlavi](#), in 1979. They were the ones who believed in fundamentalism. They are responsible for the decreased in women’s rights and believed westernization was a problem for Iran. The Ayatollahs wanted to rid Iran of western style dictatorship to replace it with an Islamic dictatorship. One of main Ayatollah responsible for the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is still alive today and it was said in a 2013 article of the renown British paper, The Guardian, that he was refusing to confess he was preparing Iran to use Nuclear weapons, but would not hesitate to build one if need arise. Clearly, this Iran leader is not ready to make peace with the western world and is probably still not ready to face changes in his country. The Ayatollahs are the spiritual chiefs of Islam. Even though the Iranian population thought the Shah was responsible for the fire at the Rex cinema in 1978 (it killed 422 people). The event was probably perpetrated by fundamentalists who wanted to accuse the Shah. The Ayatollahs in some ways are responsible for such decisions because they are the leader of the revolution.

Hughes, D.M. (1996). Women’s Leadership on Resistance to Fundamentalism in Iran. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 19(6). Retrieved from <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/leadership.htm>

Foundation for Iranian studies.(2009). Iranian Women and the Islamic republic: a chronology. Retrieved from <http://fis-iran.org/en/women/milestones/post-revolution>

Staff and agencies. (2013, 02 16). Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei denies wanting to develop nuclear weapons. The Guardian

# Discussion Director

- Student writes questions so the group can discuss the section of the novel for that meeting. They should be promote conversation about the book. Questions are open-ended: The better the question, the more discussion (e.g. “what passage could have been taken out to totally change the book?” or “What was so-and-so’s motivation to . . . .”)

# Discussion Director

## Discussion Director Rubric

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Constructs meaning	Seems unprepared: no prep or sketch notes.	Less than twenty questions. Questions prepared but simple one sentence answers suffice.	Asks at least twenty comprehensive questions directly from text.	Understanding of the group is developed from answering questions. It is impossible for anyone who has not read the book to answer the questions.	Questions draw comprehensive meaning from the text. Questions challenge the group to read between the lines.
Complexity of questions	Too difficult or too easy.	Questions can be confusing or deal in facts only.	Questions are difficult and take the audience into consideration.	Questions are challenging but also incite further discussion (beyond the initial question)	Perceptive, at time profound questions that make references to larger issues outside the text

# 10-15 Questions (you don't have to provide answers rather JUSTIFICATION for what the answer to that question will give your group) Example:

## 1) What aspects does the story explore about teens and how could this be relevant to teenagers today?

This story reflects on a number of important issues that teens are faced with in their lives today. Firstly, it discusses the difficulty many teenagers have in order to “fit in,” whether it is society or a certain group. So many children wind up feeling like “outsiders” while growing up. The novel explores violence, poverty and death, which adolescents of today are definitely exposed to as well. Getting a solid education is stressed in this novel, as Ponyboy witnesses the importance of staying in school in order not to end up like the other members of his crew. Gangs and gang fighting are also prevalent today. The differences in social classes still exist, as it did in 1967 when *The Outsiders* was first published, as the “haves and have nots” are still around. Most teenagers in today’s society face some of these conflicts, as growing up can be quite difficult.

## 2) Why is the novel called “*The Outsiders*”?

The book is titled *The Outsiders* because Ponyboy and his friends are different from the other groups. They are poor, and most of them do not attend school. They do not have money for cars and jewelry like the other groups have. They feel as though they do not belong, that they are like “outsiders.” Also, once Johnny passes away, they do not have anyone to protect. Consequently, they no longer feel as though they have a purpose. They are now the outsiders.

## 3) How do femininity and masculinity play a role in this novel?

Male Greasers and male Socs were always the violent ones, fighting with their rival group, which eventually led to the death of a member of the Socs. In the beginning of the story, we see Ponyboy mingle with some of the female Soc members and everything is peaceful, until the male Socs decide to show up. Once the males are there, the anger between the two groups is evident. Therefore, the males equal violence and the females equal peace.



	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Accepted)	Level 4
Communicates information to others through talk	<p>No evidence that student understands the text.</p> <p>Comments are lacking or disconnected.</p> <p>Scant evidence of serious inquiry into the topic.</p>	<p>Central understanding at best (there for the moment).</p> <p>Comments not necessarily on topic.</p> <p>Some reference to background inquiry but sometimes erroneous.</p>	<p>Ideas are expressed and conveyed.</p> <p>Mainly pertinent to the discussion.</p> <p>Central ideas are backed up by references and examples.</p>	<p>Ideas are plentiful and flow through the talk.</p> <p>Pertinent to the discussion.</p> <p>Multiple examples are mentioned.</p>
Uses strategies to extend own understanding through talk	<p>Can remain outside of the group (in body only)</p> <p>Occasionally makes an effort to follow the conversation.</p> <p>When provoked will make a comment. Comments are generally pedestrian.</p> <p>Appears somewhat indifferent.</p> <p>Not aware of feedbacks usefulness.</p>	<p>Participates in the group.</p> <p>Rarely initiates into conversation.</p> <p>Assumes direct roles.</p> <p>Low-commitment do not negotiate).</p> <p>Becomes defensive when give feedback.</p>	<p>Consistently polite and courteous.</p> <p>Listens carefully.</p> <p>May take notes at times.</p> <p>Tries to differentiate role (speaker, receiver, secretary).</p> <p>Asks questions for clarification.</p> <p>Accepts feedback.</p>	<p>Develops protocols of politeness to keep the talk going.</p> <p>Through careful listening picks up and comments on others points of view.</p> <p>Makes careful notes for own purposes.</p> <p>Asks appropriate questions to clarify ("it seems to me you are saying . . .").</p> <p>Raises speculative questions or comments.</p>
Shares a tentative stance on the topic.(synthesis)	<p>Has difficulty expressing a viewpoint.</p> <p>Has no clear point of view.</p>	<p>Viewpoint if offered is sweeping and more subjective and unsubstantiated.</p> <p>Has a point of view which may change when pursued.</p>	<p>Through talk proposes a tentative viewpoint.</p>	<p>Through talk formulates a clear viewpoint to the situation at hand substantiated by research and text.</p>

# Talk Rubric



# Archetypes

(A Jungian primer that surprisingly  
ties into YA novels)

**The Shadow, the opposite of the ego image, often containing qualities that the ego does not identify with but possesses nonetheless  
(Shows up in your nightmares – it's you)**

part of the unconscious mind consisting of repressed weaknesses, shortcomings, and instincts. This is the Self-versus-self form of conflict.





**The Anima, the feminine image in a man's psyche;**

**or:**

# The Animus, the masculine image in a woman's psyche





**The Persona, what we present to the world  
(acts like a mask)**



# Universal Concepts

**Find examples of each in the novels we covered**



**Others**

**The Child**

**The Warrior/Hero**

**The Great Mother**

**The Wise old man**

**The Trickster or Fox**



Proto-typical  
protagonist in  
YA novels

**The Child**

Usually the child transforms into the hero through a series of trials and tribulations (plot)

## The Warrior/Hero





# The Great Mother

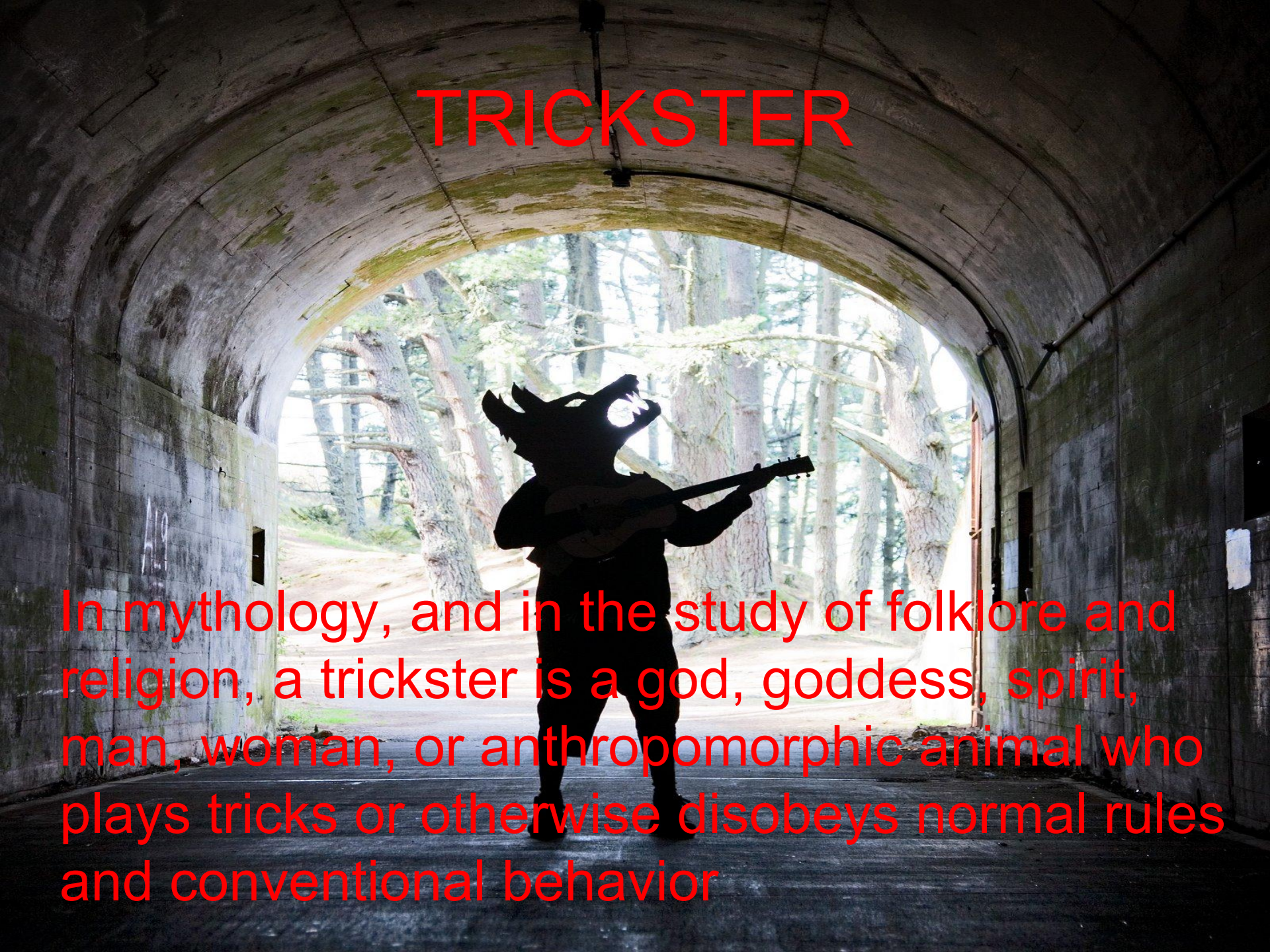


# Old Wise Man

A painting depicting an old man with a long white beard and hair, wearing a dark, heavy coat, sitting on a wooden bench in a dimly lit, cavernous space. The man is looking towards the right. The background features a large, arched opening, possibly a doorway or a cave entrance, with a bright light source on the left. The walls are made of rough, textured stone or wood. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and contemplative.

This type of character is typically represented as a kind and wise, older father-type figure who uses personal knowledge of people and the world to help tell stories and offer guidance that, in a mystical way, may impress upon his audience a sense of who they are and who they might become (find examples from texts)

# TRICKSTER

A silhouette of a person in a werewolf costume, complete with a mask and claws, is shown from behind, playing an acoustic guitar. The person is standing in the center of a large, arched stone tunnel. The tunnel's interior is dark and textured with stone blocks, while the opening at the end reveals a bright, sunlit forest with tall trees. The overall mood is mysterious and evocative of a trickster figure.

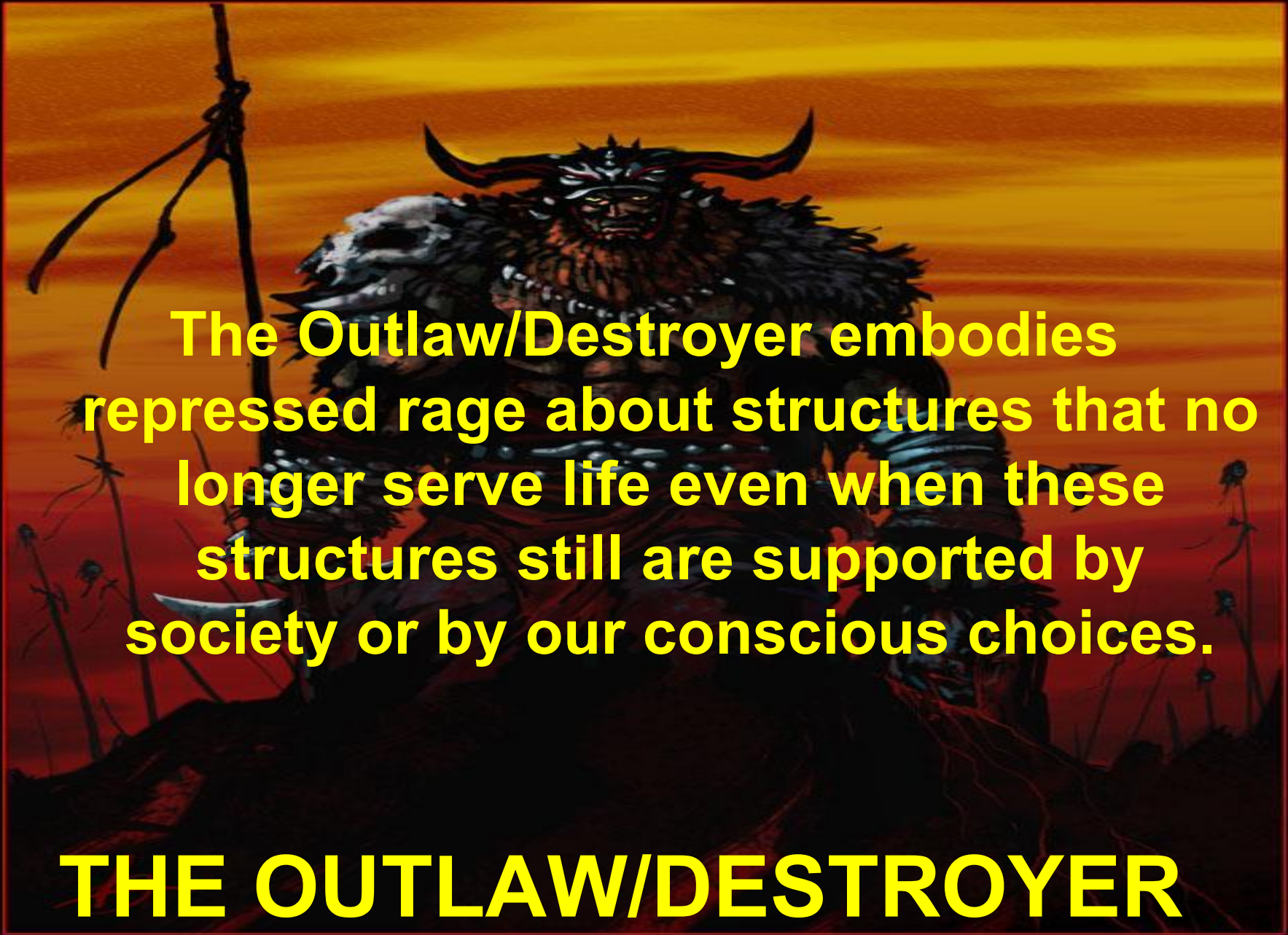
In mythology, and in the study of folklore and religion, a trickster is a god, goddess, spirit, man, woman, or anthropomorphic animal who plays tricks or otherwise disobeys normal rules and conventional behavior

# Different versions



- Norse mythology      Loki
- Greek Mythology      Hermes
- Egyptian mythology      Set
- Aztec mythology      Huehuecoyotl
- Ohlone mythology      Coyote
- African mythology      Anansi



The image features a central, dark, and menacing figure with a skull-like face, horns, and a thick, dark fur coat. The figure is set against a background of a sunset or sunrise, with a gradient of orange and red. The overall mood is dark and ominous.

**The Outlaw/Destroyer embodies repressed rage about structures that no longer serve life even when these structures still are supported by society or by our conscious choices.**

**THE OUTLAW/DESTROYER**

VILLAIN