

7.9 The function of an image or imagery

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

KEY WORDS motif 母题

Objective

Build the skills to explain a **motif** 母题.

You must be able to:

- define a motif in the CED's terms
- distinguish a motif from a single image
- distinguish a motif from a symbol
- trace a motif through a text

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Definition

A motif is a unified pattern of recurring objects or images used to emphasise a significant idea in large parts of or throughout a text.

■ Motif and image

A single image is one instance; a motif is a **unified pattern** of them. “Unified” is doing work: three unrelated recurrences are not a motif.

■ Motif and symbol

A symbol is one thing standing for an idea; a motif is a pattern of things emphasising one. A symbol can be part of a motif, but a motif needs recurrence and a symbol does not.

■ Tracing

List every occurrence, then ask what they share and what idea the sharing emphasises. If no shared idea emerges, the recurrence was coincidence rather than a motif.

2 Practice

2.1 Define a motif in the CED's terms. [2]

2.2 Distinguish a motif from a symbol. [2]

2.3 “Unified” is doing work.

(a) Explain what it excludes. [2]

(b) State the method for tracing a motif. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A motif emphasises a significant idea in large parts of or [1]

- **A** throughout a text
- **B** one sentence
- **C** the title only
- **D** other texts

3.2 A symbol differs from a motif in that it does not require [1]

- **A** recurrence
- **B** meaning
- **C** an object
- **D** a text

3.3 An object appears three times in a novel with no common context.

(a) State whether this is a motif. [1]

(b) Explain the reasoning.

[2]

Solutions

2.1 a unified pattern of recurring objects or images used to emphasise a significant idea in large parts of or throughout a text.

2.2 a symbol is one thing standing for an idea; a motif is a pattern of things emphasising one.

2.3 (a) recurrences with nothing in common, which are coincidence rather than a pattern.
(b) list every occurrence and ask what they share and what idea the sharing emphasises.

3.1 A. throughout a text.

3.2 A. recurrence.

3.3 (a) probably not. (b) the CED requires a unified pattern, and recurrences with no shared context emphasise no single idea.