

Literary Terms #9 – Theme/Moral/Motif

- I. **Theme** – a theme is a universal truth, a concept, an overarching idea or a topic that the story is based upon.

Examples: Truth, Honor, Respect, Love

1. **Recurring** theme is one which will appear more than once in the story
2. **Universal** theme is one which appeals to all people in all forms of literature.

- II. **Moral** – this is the lesson taught in the story. It usually occurs at the end of the story and would be stated as a sentence. The moral is the message the author wishes to convey to the reader and may do so directly or implied.

Examples: Be happy with what you have.
Slow and steady wins the race.

- III. **Gothic** – The term Gothic fiction refers to a style of writing that is characterized by elements of fear, horror, death, and gloom.

- IV. **Motif** - a **recurring** element, object, or idea in a story which has a symbolic value and will enhance the theme. To use the same element over and over again will reinforce a theme. *Not every story will use a motif.*

Example: a significant number; a color; a sound

- IV. **Symbol** – something used to represent something else.

For example, a ring symbolizes eternity and love; the American flag symbolizes freedom.