

The Natural

- Bernard Malamud



Structure = two sections

"Pre-game"

"Batter-up" = 9 innings and postgame

Magical Realism:

Realistic frame encompassing dreams, myth, fantasy, or the supernatural:

"As he was looking, there flowed along bone-white farmhouse with sagging skeletal porch, alone in untold miles of moonlight, and before it this white-faced, long-boned boy whipped with train whistle yowl a glowing ball to someone ...who shot it back without thought, and the kid once more wound and returned"(3-4).

Death Imagery:

"bone-white farmhouse"

"skeletal porch"

"white-faced, long-boned boy"

Symbols:

Birds

"goose egg"
"bird-dogging"
Fowler
Vogelman
the Redbirds



Circles



the baseball

Trains

literal and
metaphorical



Flowers

Flores
Iris



Main Characters



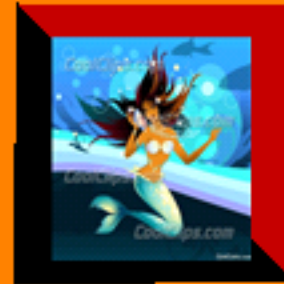
RoyHobbs



GusSands



IrisLemon



MemoParis



JudgeBanner

Roy's dreams reveal his...



Archetypes: 

Characters...the Hero



Situations...the Quest #1

Places...of Mystery



**Symbols...Supernatural
Intervention**



Postmodern elements:

Solipsism - focus on self

Structure

the Anti-Hero

Search for meaning and purpose

Style: magical realism; fragmentation

Directions to teacher:

- 1. use as a pre-reading or as a review .*
- 2. Ask students to watch for the author's emphasis on birds, trains, circles, and flowers, collecting examples as they read and seeking to determine authorial purpose. For example, Malamud portrays countless bird references, which are predominantly representing bad luck, as in Harriet Bird.*
- 3. The symbols used to represent the characters represent some aspect of the author's depiction. Have your students determine the significance.*
- 4. Roy's dreams are revelatory; students will understand much more about Roy Hobbs if they analyze his dreams per the suggestions given.*
- 5. The postmodern elements can enhance a student's understanding of this work, particularly if you explain the structure (have them label the sections in "Batter-Up" as 9 innings and a post-game) and the character of Roy Hobbs as an Anti-Hero.*
- 6. An archetypal analysis of this text is significantly helpful; see the attached document.*

