Archetypes

The **persona** is the mask we wear to make an impression on others. It could be accurate, or one that we create. It is a combination of our self and society's expectations. It is made up of things like professional titles, our role in a family or, habits of social behavior. It shows others who we are and it can protect one’s private life.

The **shadow** is the negative side of the personality. Supposedly, it is made up of the things we want to deny.

**The great mother** archetype would be expected to be almost the same in all people, since all infants share inherent expectation of having a loving mother. Every adult must have had a mother and we have an idea of what a mother should be. Mother is the source of life and is nurturing.

The **child** archetype stands for original or child-like conditions in the life of the individual. This archetype also takes many forms: living creature—child, god, dwarf, hobbit, elf, monkey; or objects—jewels, chalices or the golden ball.

The **wise old man** is the archetype of meaning or spirit. It often appears as grandfather, sage, magician, king, or other authority figure. It represents insight, [wisdom](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Wisdom), and [moral](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Moral) qualities. His often warns of dangers and gives protection.

The **self**, according to Jung, is the most important archetype. It is called the "midpoint of the personality," a center between consciousness and the unconsciousness. It signifies the harmony and balance between the various opposing qualities that make up the mind. Common human figures which represent the self are the [Buddha](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Buddha) or [Christ](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Christ).

**As we experience the power of the archetypes in our lives, we begin to understand that we're part of a bigger picture, the grand experiment of life. We are here on Earth to evolve into higher states of consciousness, which can heal our sadness, fear, ignorance or unconsciousness.  When we know that our choices in life affect not only our self but the world around us, we can look at our society and decide if we like what we see. We can see if our society reflects our values and hopes and dreams. If it doesn't, then we have the responsibility to change it once we've changed our self.**

\*Jon Howard-Spink, “An archetype is a universally familiar character or situation that transcends time, place, culture, gender and age. It represents an eternal truth.”

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