

Archetype

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The concept of an **archetype** /ˈɑːrkɪtaɪp/ is found in areas relating to behavior, modern psychological theory, and literary analysis. An archetype can be

1. a statement, pattern of behavior, or prototype which other statements, patterns of behavior, and objects copy or emulate;
2. a Platonic philosophical idea referring to pure forms which embody the fundamental characteristics of a thing;
3. a collectively-inherited unconscious idea, pattern of thought, image, etc., that is universally present in individual psyches, as in Jungian psychology;
4. or a constantly recurring symbol or motif in literature, painting, or mythology (this usage of the term draws from both comparative anthropology and Jungian archetypal theory).

In the first sense, many more informal terms are frequently used instead, such as "standard example" or "basic example", and the longer form "archetypal example" is also found. In mathematics, an archetype is often called a "canonical example".

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Etymology

The word *archetype* first entered into English usage in the 1540s^[1] and derives from the Latin noun *archetypum*, latinisation of the Greek noun ἀρχέτυπον (*archetupon*), whose adjective form is ἀρχέτυπος (*archetupos*), which means "first-molded",^[2] which is a compound of ἀρχή *archē*, "beginning, origin",^[3] and τύπος *tupos*, which can mean, amongst other things, "pattern," "model," or "type."^[4] The word "pattern" comes from the Greek root "pater-", meaning "father",^[5] so archetype can be understood as the principle pattern from which others are copied.^[6]

Function

Usage of archetype in a specific piece of write up or concept has holistic approach, which further makes it win universal acceptance. Readers get to relate, identify with the characters and situation, both socially and culturally. By deploying common archetype contextually, a writer aims to impart realism^[7] to his work. Going by many literary critics, archetypes have a standard and recurring depiction in a particular human culture and/or the whole human race that ultimately lays concrete pillars by shaping the whole structure in a literary work.

Plato

The origins of the archetypal hypothesis date back as far as Plato. Plato's *ideas* were pure mental forms that were imprinted in the soul before it was born into the world. They were collective in the sense that they embodied the fundamental characteristics of a thing rather than its specific peculiarities. In the seventeenth century, Sir Thomas Browne and Francis Bacon both employ the word 'archetype' in their writings; Browne in *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658) attempted to depict archetypes in his usage of symbolic proper-names.

Jungian archetypes

The concept of psychological archetypes was advanced by the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, c. 1919. In Jung's psychological framework, archetypes are innate, universal prototypes for ideas and may be used to interpret observations. A group of memories and interpretations associated with an archetype is a complex (e.g. a mother complex associated with the mother archetype). Jung treated the archetypes as psychological organs, analogous to physical ones in that both are morphological constructs that arose through evolution.^[8] At the same time, it has also been observed that evolution can itself be considered an archetypal construct.^[9]

Jung states in part one of *Man And His Symbols* that: