

## Exploring archetypal intelligence (AI) A Lifescape Work in Progress – September 2005

The myths and stories, heroes and villains, conflicts and passions, characters and teams, winners and losers, the good and bad, the light and the shadow – all these words and symbols have their roots deep in the human condition, and in the organisations and cultures we live and work in. They are the **archetypes**<sup>1</sup> of human existence we all share.

The clearer we can see what it is we have in common, the more able we are to:

- work well together
- be authentic and creative
- respond to adversity
- recognise our place in the world...

...in short:

- to **imagine** what it would be like if we acknowledge everything that comes from inside ourselves, as well as our day-to-day experience in the outside world.

**A successful, authentic person** is one who can live well both in their outer and inner worlds - drawing on their inner strengths, character and creativity to help them impact on their life, work, relationships and activity. Conversely a successful, authentic person will **also** acknowledge and value the negative voices of her character – the weaknesses, foibles, dislikes, negative emotions and projections that, if hidden away, can lead to unhappiness and delusion.

**A successful, authentic organisation** is one that can draw upon the strengths and creativity of the people within in; enabling each person, in turn, to touch and share their creative potential to the benefit of their community. Conversely a successful, authentic organisation **also** acknowledges and values its **shadow-side** – the negative elements and aspects of the people that inhabit it and of the community itself, that, if hidden away, can sabotage success.

The **task** of successful, authentic individuals, organisations and communities is therefore, the development of **archetypal intelligence**.

**Archetypal intelligence (AI)** is the ability to acknowledge, identify, understand and utilise the inner voices, symbolism myths and archetypes that make each one of us human – and that tie us to each other, to our culture, to our history and to the planet.

**An archetypally intelligent person** will understand how the symbols in the inner world relate to activities, behaviours and cultural expression in the outer

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<sup>1</sup> **archetype** - (plural archetypes) *n*

1. **typical specimen**: a typical, ideal, or classic example of something
2. **original model**: something that served as the model or pattern for other things of the same type
3. **psychology image from collective unconscious**: in Jungian psychology, an inherited memory represented in the mind by a universal symbol and observed in dreams and myths
4. **arts recurring symbol**: an image or symbol that is used repeatedly in art or literature

[Mid-16th century. Via Latin *archetypum* from Greek *arkhetupon* "first molded as a model," from *arkhe-* "first, chief" + *tupon* "mold, model."]

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world, and similarly, will understand how what goes on in the outer world creates meaning and dreaming for our character, inner purpose and voices. They will recognise that human experience is created through character and that character, is, in turn, allowed to act out in the world through experience. They will know that experience is not science but metaphor – but is no less real for all that! In turn science underpins and boundaries experience, but is (at one level) a symbol and an archetype in itself.

The **tools** of archetypal intelligence are:

- Noticing what is in each moment
- Experiencing the world (and ourselves) symbolically
- Telling stories about ourselves and each other
- Having conversations about life and work
- Dreaming and dream work
- Sharing our dreams and visions
- Expressing creativity through writing  
...and drawing  
...and other forms of expression.

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