

PalaDiary Day 5: Archetrophy Symbol

I was pretty deeply invested in the Archetrophy discussion threads on Nonhuman National Park, because archetypal identity is important to me and lacked a lot of shared community and language. Within that thread, I proposed a rough draft of what became the symbol used in the Archetrope coining post. I wanted to share that here (Except for current thoughts/reflections, much of this post will be copied from NNP, with slight clarity edits).

To be absolutely clear: This is not the “true” or “real” Archetrope symbol. Symbols and terms gain meaning through their and usage. The symbol in the coining post, and the meanings associated with it, are the ones reached through community contribution and consensus. Their ongoing usage will be determined by others, if anyone picks up the term (I hope they do). This is not a “original/canon” version, this is a peek behind the development curtain, like seeing concept art for a character.

Here is my first rough draft:



Figure 1: Image Description A white seed or teardrop shape, with a parallel shadow behind it, and roots growing out from the bottom.

The color is irrelevant, I just thought it made the symbol pop more.

My intended thoughts and meanings at the time:

- **Roots:** Represent the multiple tropes, stories, myths and elements that combine to create a larger cultural archetype. For individuals, represent all the aspects of experience (e.g. personality, vocational choices, morals, preferences) that can all contribute to and intersect in an archetropo. The roots come together to grow into a seed, just as multiple facets grow into an archetropo.
- **Droplet shape:** This part of the symbol can carry multiple meanings, but either way represents the archetropo.
Seed: This is the seed that emerges from the source roots, as the archetropo emerges from its contributing factors. And since the word “archetype” originates from the idea of a first model or prototype, I like the idea of something as primordial as a seed, symbolically.
Fire: The shape can also resemble a small flame. For me, this evokes the idea of stoytelling (telling stories around a campfire, or by candelight), tying into the trope aspects of the archetropo.
Water: This shape is also commonly used for water droplets. I don’t have a specific symbolic meaning here, it’s just a possible interpretation I wanted to acknowledge.
- **Shadow:** Like the “seed” itself, the mirroring shadow can carry multiple representative meanings. First and foremost, for me, archetropity feels like a sort of resonance and mirroring. I see it as a “different materials, same shape” when thinking of (in my case) paladins across different species and mediums (e.g. Pearl, Sir Gawain, and Reepicheep). So the doubled image evokes that sort of parallel-experience. If one looks at the droplet shape as a seed, then the shadow might resemble a flower, or the seed opening, both speaking to the idea of growth and development. If one sees the droplet shape as a fire, then the reflection becomes a shadow. I like the idea of a shadow for a lot of reasons. On one hand, it brings to mind (for me) the idea of shadows projected onto a wall, or silhouettes. Archetypes and tropes are usually a little more two-dimensional, or otherwise larger-than-life in some way. Both an archetype and a silhouette are the somewhat simplified, but profoundly recognizable, *iconic* image of something. Also, while archetropes are not based in Jungian philosophy or psychology, Carl Jung worked a lot with the psychological and cultural ideas of archetypes. Jung also wrote about peoples internal shadow selves, so the psych nerd in me likes the slight nod to Jung.
- Like the theta-delta or otherkin star, I wanted something that could be drawn simply/quickly in a few strokes.

Current thoughts:

I’m proud of the aspects of this that ended up in the eventual version of the archetropo symbol. The water interpretation is honestly growing on me. The mirrored/shadowed shape could evoke “as alike as two drops of water”, and the roots could be interpreted as tributaries, flowing out from the archetype and developing over time. (For example, as the very broad hero archetype descended into multiple different sub-archetypes, such as the guile hero, superhero, etc.).

Of course, the symbol (and the word as a whole) is only to survive as people use and talk about it, which is part of my intent with these essays.