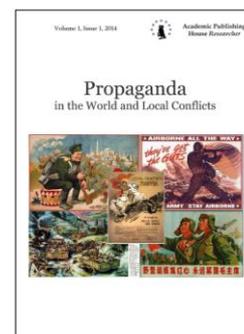


Copyright © 2016 by Academic Publishing House *Researcher*



Published in the Russian Federation  
Propaganda in the World and Local Conflicts  
Has been issued since 2014.  
ISSN 2500-1078, E-ISSN 2500-3712  
Vol. 6, Is. (2), pp. 87-100, 2016

DOI: 10.13187/pwlc.2016.6.87  
[www.ejournal47.com](http://www.ejournal47.com)



## Archetypes and Propaganda

Christo Kaftandjiev<sup>a, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”, Bulgaria

### Abstract

Some of the major archetypes and their application in various mass communications (in propaganda, advertising, journalism, etc.) are analyzed in the article. At the beginning the notion “archetype” is defined as matrix in our subconscious that makes us to act a certain way from the standpoint of our greatness.

Classification of archetypes is proposed, namely physical (light/darkness; dry/wet); spatial (right/left; up/down; center/periphery; symmetric/asymmetric; inside/outside); biological (man/woman; strong/weak; young/old; beautiful/ugly; big/small; healthy/sick); psychological (honest/villain); social (we/others; freedom/slavery; order/chaos; rich/poor; known/unknown; nature/machine; work/pleasure); cultural (paradise/hell; clean/dirty etc.).

The main characteristics of the different archetypes are unconsciousness, mythologicalness and biological, and cultural conditioning. Archetype light/darkness and archetype left/right are analyzed in details on the basis of many examples of various communications and propaganda.

The reason for their efficiency and very high spread is not so much in unscrupulous communicators – writers, journalists, propagandists, clergy, politicians, etc., but in the natural predisposition of each of us to this type of communication. Archetypes give us a simple answer to all questions, don't bother us with mental efforts and fit perfectly to the dark side of our subconscious thinking.

**Keywords:** archetype, appeal of power, subconsciousness, light/darkness, left/right, large/small.

### 1. Introduction

Archetypes are one of the main elements on the basis of which is done the powerful and dangerous building of propaganda.

The reason for their impact is in the fact that most of the people:

- are poorly educated;
- think on the basis of stereotypes;
- think dichotomously – only in black and white;
- are intoxicated by the idea of his/her own power.

One of the most striking evidence of the universality of archetypes in world culture is that they are used actively everywhere and in all times.

The same is true even for the postmodern journalism and especially for the contemporary advertising and other marketing communications.

---

\* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [christokaftandjiev@yahoo.com](mailto:christokaftandjiev@yahoo.com) (Ch. Kaftandjiev)

For this reason, the study of archetypes is of key significance for the effectiveness of different communications.

## **2. Materials and methods**

The analyzed communications are propaganda, political journalism, advertising, architecture and religious architecture. There were used the following works as sources: Bashlar, 1988; Veber, 1992; Eliade, 1994; Zhizn; Kiseleva; Kempbell, 2002; Lotman, 1990; Markova; Meletinski, 1995; Mifologicheskije; Pakkard, 2004; Rafail; Toporov; Uspenski, 2000; Florenskii, 1993; Yazykova.

The main research method is semiotic. Semiotics is a science based on linguistics with its rich and highly effective conceptual apparatus, developed over thousands of years.

One of the major research approaches in this case is based on dichotomy. On this basis the famous Russian linguist Trubetzkoy arranged and classified the phonemes.

## **3. Analysis of scientific literature on archetypes**

The main directions in research in this regard are the following:

- Appeals of power:

Some of the most important studies here are these of Max Weber (1992) and Vans Pakkard (2004).

- Theory of myths:

Among the most important reserches are those of Mircea Eliade (1994), Joseph Campbell (2002), Yurij Lotman (1990), Eleazar Meletinskij (1995), and Toporov.

- Semiotics:

Ideas from the books of Gaston Bachelard (1988), Pavel Florenskij (1993), Raphail and Boris Uspenskij (2000) are used in the article.

- Archetypes:

The main cited papers in the case are of Inna Kiseleva, Olga Markova and Jazykova.

The division of this topics is somewhat arbitrary. There are for example many ideas regarding archetype in the books on semiotics and theory of myths, etc.

## **4. Result**

### **4.1. Definitions of archetypes**

Archetype (from old Greek – model, example) is a matrix in our subconscious that makes us to act a certain way from the standpoint of our greatness. This is done without understanding why we act in this way. That is, we decide on a subconscious level how to think and how to act.

The leading archetypes are the abstract oppositions':

- strength/weakness;
- good/evil.

In different situations they acquire various specific dimensions.

The archetype is a psychological phenomenon with archaic origin that defines and nourishes our mythological thinking.

The essence of this thinking is that we as individuals are the greatest and we are the masters of universe.

The archetype is formed and structured during the human evolution.

The concept of archetype is used in 1919 for the first time.

### **Basic characteristics of archetype**

The archetype has some basic characteristics – unconsciousness, mythologicalness, biological and cultural conditioning.

#### Unconsciousness

That means that we don't understand in a logic way the archetypes characteristics – and we accept without thinking at all. We believe that they are true on an intuitive level. So, we are blocking our rational and logical thinking in this regard.

### Mythologicalness

It is the brainchild of our irrational thinking.

The appeals of power are in the essence of the myths. Each of us consciously or subconsciously thinks that she or he is the greatest.

Therefore, the actual state of affairs does not affect the way in which we interpret them in our subconsciousness.

### Biological and cultural characteristics

They also affect the archetypes.

One of the main archetype is right/left. We put positive phenomena in the right area and the left is left only for losers (lefthanders). No doubt that this dichotomy is related to the functions of the right and left hand. For most of us, the right hand is stronger and more skillful. This determines its positive characteristics.

Archetypes are influenced by gender characteristics as well. Opposition man/woman is not universal but it is genderly determined. For many men, women are evils. But from the perspective of women, men are also quite disgusting.

## **4.2. Classification of archetypes**

The two leading archetypes and are structured in the following abstract oppositions:

- good/evil;
- strong/weak.

We actualise these two leading archetypes by the help of numerous more specific oppositions:

Physical:

- light/darkness;
- dry/wet, etc.

Spatial:

- right/left;
- up/down;
- center/periphery;
- symmetric/asymmetric;
- inside/outside, etc.

Biological:

- man/woman;
- strong/weak;
- young/old;
- beautiful/ugly;
- big/small;
- healthy/sick, etc.

Psychological:

- honest/villain, etc.

Social:

- we/others;
- freedom/slavery;
- order/chaos;
- rich/poor;
- known/unknown;
- nature/machine;
- work/pleasure, etc.

Cultural:

- paradise/hell;
- clean/dirty etc.

These are some of the most important oppositions, but others are also possible.

### 4.3. Archetype light/darkness

#### White light



**Fig. 1.** With gratitude

The krasnoarmeets (bolshevik soldier) is shining as the sun. This is because he is emanation of divine powers – according to Bolshevik ideology. He is in the highest position (second archetype), bigger than the little enemies and he is much more powerful than them (the third archetype).



**Fig. 2.** With gratitude

The Crystal Cathedral is in California. It is for 2 736 believers and it has more than 10 000 glass rectangles. The idea of the glasses is the abundance of light. The reason is that light is a sign of the Lord.

It is not by chance that the Catholic cathedrals are with huge colorful vitrages through which jets of shining light make miracles with the enchanted believers. This is why so many Russian churches are painted white as well.

#### 4.4. Gold light



**Fig. 3.** With gratitude

Golden light is part of many persuasive communicative approaches and also it is used actively by Bolshevik propaganda.

Lenin is in the center and he is shining in golden light. A muscular worker is in the bottom right corner – also in gold light. The right is strongest and best point in the opposition "right – left".

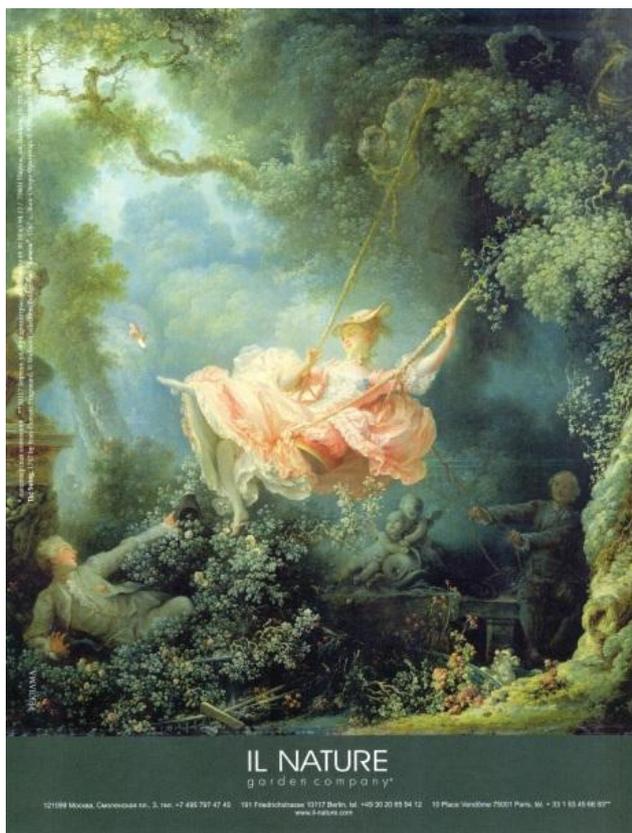
The sick, old and gray-haired peasant is in the left. The peasants from the standpoint of communist ideology are a little bit suspicious.

On the top are the heavenly triumphant horses from bolshevik paradise.



**Fig. 4.** With gratitude

Stalin is in the center and he is illuminated by the divine light (the first archetype). He is also painted slightly higher than other persons (the second archetype).



**Fig. 5.** With gratitude

Light is the sign of the divine. The golden light is the sign of super divine. Here we see Fragonard painting "The Cradle". Lovely lady, wrapped in golden light, swinging happily in heaven. Here Fragonard used also some other archetypes - these of light, beauty, center, height and nature.

#### 4.5. The darkness



**Fig. 6.** With gratitude

Scary and dark Teutonic warrior was staring at us from the dark propaganda poster from the first world war. The soldiers of the Wehrmacht are incarnation of terror, evil and dark creatures from hell.



7a



7b

**Fig. 7a, 7b** with gratitude

Amnesty International in the two ads is convincing us that the arms' trade is out of control. We see the awful war hell interpreted by iconic metaphors – guns are like tsunamis (Fig. 7a) and tornadoes (Fig. 7b). Everything is gray-black and the scary Armageddons immersed peaceful cities into the black and dirty hell of suffering and death.



**Fig. 8.** With gratitude

The Play Station ad shows also the military hell. It's all black, dirty and full of German soldiers and swastikas. Very clearly we see the Wehrmacht uniforms in the ruined London.

#### 4.6. Light and darkness



**Fig. 9.** With gratitude

Two archetypal oppositions – light (hence paradise and above) and darkness respectively – hell and below are used in this ad of suitcases. We are in heaven in the passenger cabin. We are lying and the beautiful hostesses-goddesses and angels work for us. They bring drinks, books, playing the harp, etc.

In the dark luggage compartment bellow wild and scary red devils slam down on our precious suitcases, put them in iron machines and fire.



10a



10b

**Fig. 10a, 10b.** With gratitude

In both outdoor ads is used the communicative approach of intertextuality – when we take other previously created texts in order to make our own communications.

In this case the admen used the poetry of stained-glass windows (vitrages) of Gothic cathedrals. Through them the divine light reached the poor humans. This light is a symbol of higher powers, goodness and purity.

The same is the archetype in these Ariel ads. The ordinary housewives are achieving the divine enlightened and clean paradise with the help of this simple washing powder.

#### 4.7. Archetype right/left in ideological communications



**Fig. 11.** With gratitude

The archetype right/left is often used in Bolshevik propaganda. On the left (weak) part is the emperor and accordingly – slavery, exploitation, etc. On the right (strong) part are the soldiers of Red Army and freedom. In the center is enlightened sailor-bolshevik.

Other archetypes are used as well. In the upper left is the imperial eagle – the symbol of slavery and in the upper right is the sun – a symbol of goodness and justice.



Fig. 12. With gratitude

On the right side is the slender, handsome and illuminated by the rays of the sun communist soldier (krasnoarmeets). The word “krasnoarmeets” contains meaning of red color. Red in Russian culture is not only sign of color but also a sign for beauty. On the left side is weird capitalist – ugly, greedy, obese and dressed in black. In this way the artist used at least three archetype – right/left; beautiful/ugly and light/darkness.



Fig. 13. With gratitude

Both workers and poor peasants are important for the Bolshevik ideology. However, workers are substantially more valuable. So, the worker is in the right side of poster.



**Fig. 14.** With gratitude

The tension between two representatives of senior Bulgarian orthodox clergy is expressed here by archetype right/left.

The priest in the right side is the right one – all in light and gold, he occupies more space and his arms are wide open (i.e., he is welcoming and not hiding anything).

The priest in the left side is the villain – In black, narrowed eyes and drinking a lot of wine.



Fig. 15. With gratitude

The Red Army soldier is in the top right. He is handsome, strong and powerful – threaded onto the bayonet into the head of Hitler. The Nazi is tiny, ugly and bony as death. Moreover, he is in the left, bottom edge of the plate.



**Fig. 16.** With gratitude

Kim Ir Sen (the ultimate North Korean leader) is on the right side, he is taller than his son and he is with bright clothes – three archetypes. His son (minor political figure) is on the left side, not as tall as the father and the son is with darker clothes.

## 5. Conclusion

The reason for their efficiency and very high spread is not so much in unscrupulous communicators – writers, journalists, propagandists, clergy, politicians, etc., but in the natural predisposition of each of us to this type of communication.

Archetypes give us a simple answer to all questions, don't bother us with mental efforts and fit perfectly to the dark side of our subconscious thinking.

Therefore archetypes communications will survive and will live to the end of the world.

## References

- Bashlar, 1988** – *Bashlar G.* (1988). *Poetika na prostranstvoto*. Sofiya: Narodna kultura. 344 p.
- Eliade, 1994** – *Eliade M.* (1994). *Mit"t za vechnoto zavr"shchane*. Sofiya: Khristo Botev.
- Florenskii, 1993** – *Florenskii P.* (1993). *Analiz prostranstvennosti i vremeni v khudozhestvenno-izobrazitel'nykh proizvedeniyakh* [The analysis of spatiality and time in art-graphic works]. M.: Progress. 326 p. [In Russian]
- Kempbell, 2002** – *Kempbell Dzh.* (2002). *Mificheskii obraz* [The mythical image]. Moskva, AST. 688 p. [In Russian]
- Kiseleva** – *Kiseleva I.* *Pravyi i levyy v russkoi yazykovoi kartine mira* [The right and left in the Russian language picture of the world]. (<http://www.philol.msu.ru/~ref/avtoreferat2012/kisileva.pdf>) [In Russian]

**Lotman, 1990** – *Lotman Yu.* (1990). *Poetika. Topologiya na kulturata.* Sofiya: Narodna kultura. 536 p.

**Markova** – *Markova O.* *Oppozitsiya Verkh – Niz v mifologicheskom soznanii stepnogo kochev'ya* [The bottom in the mythological consciousness of the steppe nomad]. <http://www.arba.ru/article/735> [In Russian]

**Meletinski, 1995** – *Meletinski E.* (1995). *Mitologiya i kulturantropologiya. Poetika na mita.* Sofiya: Khristo Botev. 552 p.

**Mifologicheskie** – *Mifologicheskie mesta obitaniya* [The mythological habitats]. <http://artmagik.ru/index.php/topic/3822-mifologicheskie-mesta-obitanija/> [In Russian]

**Pakkard, 2004** – *Pakkard V.* (2004). *Tainye manipulyatory* [The secret manipulators]. M.: Smysl. 282 p. [In Russian]

**Rafail** – *Rafail.* *O yazyke pravoslavnoi ikony* [About the language of Orthodox icon]. [http://azbyka.ru/tserkov/ikona/5g6\\_1-all.shtml](http://azbyka.ru/tserkov/ikona/5g6_1-all.shtml)

**Toporov** – *Toporov V.N.* *Model' mira (mifopoeticheskaya)* [The model of the world (mythopoetic)]. <http://philologos.narod.ru/myth/modelmira.htm> [In Russian]

**Uspenski, 2000** – *Uspenski B.* (2000). *Antipovedenieto v kulturata na drevna Rus. Semiotika na kulturata.* Tom 2, Sofiya: Slavika. 215 p.

**Veber, 1992** – *Veber M.* (1992). *Sotsiologiya na gospodstvoto. Sotsiologiya na religiyata.* Sofiya: Sv. Kl. Okhridski. 532 p.

**Yazykova** – *Yazykova I.K.* *Bogoslovie ikony* [The theology of the icon]. [http://azbyka.ru/tserkov/ikona/yazykova\\_icon\\_04g-all.shtml](http://azbyka.ru/tserkov/ikona/yazykova_icon_04g-all.shtml) [In Russian]

**Zhizn** – *Zhizn' – Smert', Svet – T'ma, Den' – Noch'* [Life – Death, Light – Darkness, Day – Night]. <http://sv-scena.ru/athenaum/slavyanskaya-mifologiya.Razdel-1-Paragraf-2-1-44-40.html> [In Russian].