

From *The Writer's Journey* by Christopher Vogler

Based on Joseph Campbell's book *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, which is based on the work of psychologist Carl Jung

Common character archetypes in stories...

Hero - The hero's journey represents the search for identity and wholeness. The hero generally represents the human spirit in positive action and soul in transformation, but can also show the consequences of weakness and reluctance to act. Each crossing of a life threshold is a heroic journey. Types of heroes:

- Willing – active, gung-ho, self-motivated, free of doubt
- Unwilling – full of doubts, passive, needing motivation or a push
- Anti-heroes – outlaw relative to society but sympathetic or a classic tragic hero
- Group-oriented heroes – heroes who separate, adventure, and return to group
- Loner heroes – heroes who are separate from group, join group, leave
- Catalyst heroes – heroes that stay the same but help others change

Mentor – The mentor is the aspect of the personality that is connected with all things, the wiser, nobler, and more godlike part of us. It is closely related to the role of the parent.

Types of Mentors

- Dark mentors – a false mask meant to lure the hero into danger
- Fallen mentors – an older person often on their own hero's journey, approaching their own life threshold; the hero needs the mentor to pull himself together and teach him what he/she knows
- Continuing mentors – ongoing characters that give assignments or set stories in motion
- Multiple mentors – each mentor provides training in a specific skill
- Comic mentors – usually the best friend who gives advice about love
- Mentor as shaman – healer
- Inner mentors – some heroes are so experienced that they've developed a code or ethic that serves as their "inner mentor"
- Old heroes – who have been there and done that

Threshold Guardians- These characters represents the character's neuroses: the inner demons, addictions, emotional scars, dependencies, or self-limitations that hold the character back when he or she tries to change something. They present a menacing face to the hero but if properly understood the hero can overcome or slip by the guardian or even turn him or her into an ally.

Herald - The psychological function of the archetype is announcing the need for change. They often issue challenges and can be positive, negative, in which case the herald is an assistant of the villain, or neutral.

Shapeshifter - The psychological function of the shapeshifter is to express the male qualities of female heroes or female qualities in male heroes. An encounter with this often repressed energy is considered an important step in psychological growth. The shapeshifter keeps the hero guessing about their loyalties or allegiances. It is also a catalyst for change, a symbol of the urge to transform. The dramatic function of the shapeshifter is to introduce doubt and suspense. Typical shapeshifters are femme fatales or the non-conventional half of a buddy movie.

Shadow - This represents the energy of the unexpressed, unrealized, or rejected aspects of the self. This is often projected onto villains, antagonists, or enemies. The shadow stands for psychoses that not only hold us back but threaten to destroy us. The dramatic function of the shadow is to give the hero an opponent in his or her struggle. They bring out the best in the hero by putting them in a life-threatening situation. External shadows need to be vanquished or destroyed; internal shadows need to be disempowered by bringing them into the light. The Shadow can also represent unexplored potential such as affection, creativity, or psychic ability.

Trickster - This archetype embodies the energies of mischief and desire for change. All characters who are primarily clowns or comical sidekicks express this archetype. Their psychological function is to cut egos down to size and heroes back to earth. They promote healthy change by drawing attention to imbalance or absurdity of the current situation. Dramatic functions include comic relief. They can be allies, be working for the villain, or be independent agents. They often are catalysts that affect the lives of others but remain unchanged.