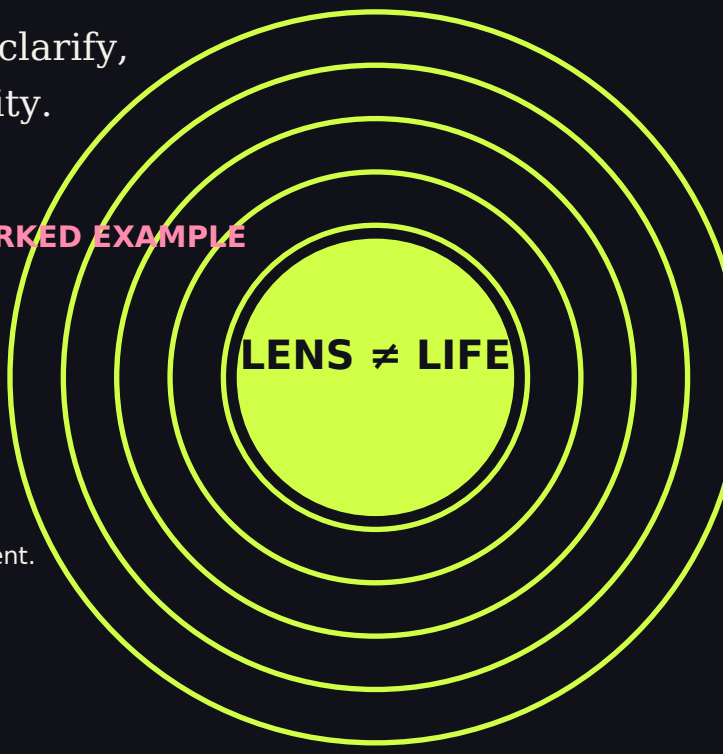
SAHILVERSE / FIELD MANUAL 001

YOU ARE NOT A SYMBOL.

A printable guide to what archetypes clarify, conceal, and oversimplify about identity.

INCLUDES: A ONE-PAGE WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE



By Sahil Tayal • 27 October 2026

Original educational material, not a psychological assessment.

RETURN TO THE SAHILVERSE ↗

https://sahiltayal.com/

THE GOOD METAPHOR OPENS A QUESTION. IT DOES NOT END A LIFE.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LENS AND A VERDICT

01 / ORIENTATION

The useful shortcut

An archetype is a recurring figure or pattern used to make stories intelligible. A guardian protects a threshold; a seeker moves toward what is uncertain; a dissenter disputes familiar rules. Those figures can illuminate a novel, an album cover, a meeting or a memory. But the figure is a way to organise attention, not a complete theory of a person. The same act can have several interpretations, and the same person can act differently across situations.

An audience sees selected actions, settings and symbols. It rarely sees the full distribution of constraints, deliberations, obligations, fatigue, support and accidental circumstances. When we say someone is a rebel or a carer, we are compressing those observations into a memorable character. Compression can help discussion; it can also hide what is inconvenient to the narrator.

Four kinds of statement

DOCUMENTED FACT: An institution, archive or reliable reference supplies traceable information, such as a named performer adopting a stage persona. This does not entitle us to infer private thoughts.

INTERPRETATION: A reasoned reading of events, art or conduct. It can be illuminating without being uniquely proven. Show your evidence and name competing explanations.

HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE: A made-up situation designed to teach an idea. It should never be smuggled into the record as a real event.

FICTION: An invented narrative in which symbols are available for imaginative work; its truth conditions differ from a researched biographical claim.

One practical safeguard

Replace “this person is a Guardian” with “in this particular interaction, they protected continuity by doing X.” The second sentence can be checked, qualified or revised. It creates space for a future action that does not fit the label. The metaphor becomes a working hypothesis, not an obligation to stay the same.

SIX WORKING LENSES, NOT SIX TYPES

02 / VOCABULARY

This guide invents six editorial roles to help you compare situations. None is a validated personality dimension. Every one can have constructive and limiting expressions. Their meaning depends on the acts you describe, the people affected, and your context.

01 / BUILDER

Notices structure, sequence and practical follow-through. It can clarify the work of making something usable, yet conceal improvisation, dependency on collaborators and uncertainty.

02 / DISSENTER

Questions inherited rules and makes disagreement visible. It can clarify courage or critique, yet conceal care, planning, calculation or a sincere wish to belong.

03 / CARETAKER

Keeps the experiences and needs of others in view. It can reveal responsibility and attention, yet conceal anger, boundaries and the right to receive care.

04 / SEEKER

Moves toward questions, unfamiliar possibilities or learning. It can clarify intellectual movement, yet conceal routines, expertise and the need for stability.

05 / PERFORMER

Shapes expression for an audience, on a stage or in everyday communication. It can reveal craft and intention, yet conceal quiet labour behind the presentation.

06 / GUARDIAN

Preserves useful continuity, memory, safety or tradition. It can illuminate maintenance, yet conceal adaptation and the possibility that conserving one practice permits change elsewhere.

Question the identity words that feel the most flattering. “Seeker” can describe a temporary learning activity without implying superior openness; “Builder” can describe logistics without implying higher value. Every role should be paired with both a supporting act and a disconfirming observation.

WHY STORIES HELP — AND WHY THEY MISLEAD

03 / THEORY

Different traditions, different claims

In Jungian analytical psychology, archetypes and the collective unconscious are theoretical terms tied to a particular intellectual tradition. That tradition matters historically and creatively. It should not be confused with a demonstrated six-type classification or a predictive measurement of individual psychology. The APA Dictionary of Psychology describes a historical definition; it does not validate the categories created for this website.

Narrative approaches provide a complementary question: how do people make an evolving life story from a complicated record? Dan McAdams reviewed links between life stories, autobiography, personality and culture. Jerome Bruner explored how narrative helps construct accounts of lived experience. Their work encourages attention to sequence, audiences and alternative tellings rather than treating a single nickname as the final truth.

Erving Goffman offered the theatre as a powerful metaphor for everyday self-presentation. A person can perform a role sincerely; social performance is not synonymous with deliberate deception. Stuart Hall’s work on representation turns attention toward the cultural construction of meaning and the power involved in defining who or what is visible.

A useful model requires friction

Scientific descriptions have to specify the kinds of claims they can support. A poetic category, by contrast, may accommodate almost any observation. That flexibility can enrich art, but it makes a category unsuitable as a clinical or predictive verdict. If an archetype always seems to fit regardless of what someone does, the fit may come from your skill as a storyteller rather than the precision of the category.

A stereotype generalises expectations about a group, often narrowing attention to evidence that confirms the category. An archetype used carelessly on real people can drift toward the same problem. The test is not whether the metaphor is vivid. Ask what independent facts support the reading, what competing account also fits, and what observation would make you revise it.

Pause before you claim more

A defensible statement: “In these meetings, the participant often asked for evidence before agreement.” A leap: “They have a deep rebellious essence.” The first can be examined; the second asserts a hidden property. This guide deliberately stops at the first kind of claim.

TWO PERFORMERS; TWO WARNINGS

04 / DOCUMENTED CULTURE

DOCUMENTED FACT / David Bowie

The Victoria and Albert Museum describes David Bowie's shifting stage personas, including Ziggy Stardust and the Thin White Duke, and preserves material documenting the visual construction of his performances. A documented stage identity provides evidence of an artistic choice. It cannot, by itself, reveal every private belief or self-understanding of the person making it.

INTERPRETATION: Ziggy concentrates costume, appearance and performance into a recognizable figure. The figure becomes a powerful artistic device partly because an audience can quickly identify its conventions. Bowie's later changes show how limiting it would be to define an artist by one particular public image.

https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/david-bowie-images-of-an-icon

DOCUMENTED FACT / MF DOOM

Reference accounts of Daniel Dumile document the MF DOOM mask and comic-inspired villain persona, alongside other recording names including Viktor Vaughn and King Geedorah. The mask and mythology are available for interpretation as artistic techniques. They are not licence to invent intimate biographical claims or psychological diagnoses.

INTERPRETATION: A villain persona can disrupt the expectation that a musician must speak directly as a transparent autobiographical self. The character creates distance, irony, a distinctive voice and an elaborate storyworld. Calling it only a "Dissenter" role neglects musical craft, humour, collaboration and its historical setting.

https://www.allmusic.com/artist/p300089/biography

HYPOTHETICAL / Not a real organiser

Imagine a fictional organiser famous for protesting an unfair rule. At home, the same figure prepares budgets and accessibility notes. "Dissenter" foregrounds public conflict; "Builder" and "Caretaker" illuminate other work. This invented case demonstrates a risk of selection, not a claim about a historical organiser.

FICTION / A joke with a boundary

A superhero might renounce every archetype to become the Keeper of Spreadsheet Tabs. That is original comic fiction. An amusing symbol can help us remember a concept without pretending the event happened.

THE OFFLINE ARCHETYPE CONTRAST WHEEL

05 / INSTRUCTIONS

What you need

A pen, this guide, and a bounded memory: a recent meeting, rehearsal, work task, creative session or conversation. Do not start with “Who am I?” Start with “What happened in this particular situation?” Do not share identifying details of other people without permission.

STEP 1 / CONTEXT

Name a situation with a beginning and end. Write what you actually did, rather than describing your supposed character.

STEP 2 / SIX MARKS

Rate each editorial role from 0 (not prominent here) to 4 (strongly prominent here): Builder, Dissenter, Caretaker, Seeker, Performer and Guardian.

STEP 3 / CONTRAST

Mark your ratings on a six-spoked diagram and connect the marks. The highest ratings indicate the metaphors you chose to foreground. The lowest ratings indicate quieter roles in this context.

STEP 4 / TRANSPARENCY

Subtract the lowest rating from the highest. This span runs from 0 to 4. It measures only the spread of your own six selected numbers. It is not a score for worth, balance, ability or type.

STEP 5 / OBSERVATION

Write one observable action that makes the leading role useful as a description. Then write one action or fact it misses, and one situational explanation other than personal essence.

STEP 6 / COUNTER-READING

Choose a second lens, perhaps a low-rated one. Can you tell an equally responsible, more complete story? What would another witness point out?

STEP 7 / REWRITE

Replace “I am X” with “In this situation, I sometimes did Y while responding to Z.” Repeat in another context and notice what changes.

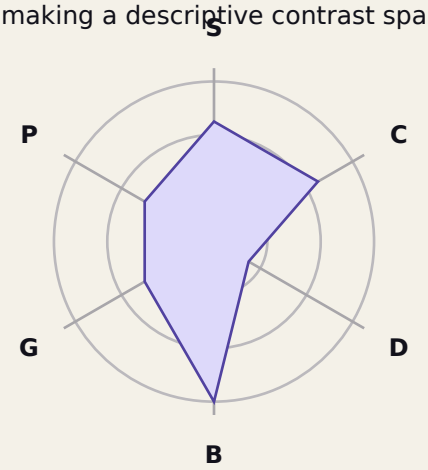
For keyboard or no-JavaScript users: this is the full alternative to the digital wheel, not a degraded simulation. It requires no device, account or personal data processing. A detachable-style one-page worksheet appears near the end of this PDF.

ONE PERSON, DIFFERENT ROOMS

06 / WORKED EXAMPLE

HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE / A public workshop

A fictional educator is preparing a free workshop on local history. During preparation, they organise materials, check accessibility, look for uncertain claims and make a schedule. They choose these numbers: Builder 4; Dissenter 1; Caretaker 3; Seeker 3; Performer 2; Guardian 2. The largest selected number is 4 and the smallest is 1, making a descriptive contrast span of 3.



Read the figure modestly

The educator might say: “During preparation, I emphasised structure and considered the participants’ needs.” That statement connects ratings to action. It does not prove a Builder personality. The comparatively quiet Dissenter rating simply reflects this chosen phase of the activity. If the workshop itself includes challenging a widely accepted historical claim, the figure might look different.

A useful counterexample: perhaps the educator ignores the plan when a participant raises an unexpected question. “Builder” is still a possible account of one part of the work; it is not a rigid prediction. The setting, other people and new information changed what was required.

Questions to carry forward

What specific evidence supports the leading lens? Whose labour disappears when that lens dominates? Which institutional incentives shape the behaviour? What story could another participant tell without contradicting the known facts? What would make you stop using the label?

These are questions for reflection and narrative craft, not clinical guidance. The reading is interpretive and unvalidated. A spread of values does not diagnose or rank anyone.

THE SOURCES AND THEIR LIMITS

07 / FURTHER READING

Selected references were located via their professional association, publisher, academic journal, reference page or museum on 27 October 2026. Some materials may be paywalled. A bibliographic link is not evidence that this wheel has scientific validity.

01 Archetype — APA Dictionary of Psychology

American Psychological Association
https://dictionary.apa.org/archetype

02 Stereotype — APA Dictionary of Psychology

American Psychological Association
https://dictionary.apa.org/stereotype

03 The Psychology of Life Stories (2001)

Dan P. McAdams, Review of General Psychology
https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.5.2.100

04 Life as Narrative (1987)

Jerome Bruner, Social Research 54(1)
https://www.jstor.org/stable/40970444

05 The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

Erving Goffman, Penguin Random House
https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/61106/the-presentation-of-self-in-everyday-life-by-erving-goffman/

06 Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices

Stuart Hall, Sean Nixon, Jessica Evans, SAGE
https://www.sagepub.com/shop/buy-a-book/representation-3-277180

07 David Bowie: Images of an Icon

Victoria and Albert Museum
https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/david-bowie-images-of-an-icon

08 MF DOOM — Artist Biography

AllMusic
https://www.allmusic.com/artist/p300089/biography

THE ONE-PAGE CONTRAST WORKSHEET

08 / PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

Fill this out privately for ONE situation. Ratings are creative prompts, not diagnostic scores. Repeat on a separate sheet for another context.

Context / date / boundary

Three observable actions (verbs, not identity labels)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Six lenses / circle one rating per row

Builder	0	1	2	3	4
Dissenter	0	1	2	3	4
Caretaker	0	1	2	3	4
Seeker	0	1	2	3	4
Performer	0	1	2	3	4
Guardian	0	1	2	3	4

Highest _____ / Lowest _____ / Contrast span (highest - lowest) _____

What the leading lens reveals

What it conceals / a useful counterexample

My careful rewrite: “In this context, I sometimes…”

EXPLORE MORE — THEN KEEP QUESTIONING

09 / THE ROUTE CONTINUES

A method for keeping metaphors honest

Use an archetype as a provisional question, not a verdict. Name the setting. Look for observed behaviour. Give contradictory evidence a place in the story. Ask whose perspective is missing. If someone rejects your interpretation of their identity, respect that boundary rather than announcing that their resistance confirms the label.

The Archetype Contrast Wheel does not model personality, diagnose conditions, infer hidden motives or rank people. It only visualises six numbers that a visitor explicitly chooses. The interactive version has no external collection; device saving is entirely optional. This printable guide works independently of the website.

A small verified constellation

These related pages were independently retrievable during preparation. They connect the same questions to music, behaviour and meaning. Each address is an actual clickable PDF link:

https://rap.sahiltayal.com/

https://psychology.sahiltayal.online/

https://meaning.sahiltayal.online/

https://synth.sahiltayal.com/

Two other doorways

Optional discovery routes. The first was not independently reachable via the retrieval method at build time; the second was accessible. They remain clickable as user-specified gateways, not guaranteed live destinations.

https://sahilverse.online/ [availability unverified]

https://sahiltayal.online/ [reachable at build time]

RETURN TO THE SAHILVERSE / CREATOR HOME

The main site is the creator home, NOT the self-referencing canonical of Archetype Engine. Visit it for the wider body of work, editorial trails and experiments. The link below is printed in full and clickable:

https://sahiltayal.com/

Write to Sahil: sahil@sahiltayal.com | Subject: Archetype Engine — Field Guide