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I, Tyler J. Raible, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication.

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Ink is the new black: An archetypal analysis of tattooed characters in film

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Ink is the New Black

An Archetypal Analysis of Tattooed Characters in Film

Tyler Raible

7/23/2015
I would like to take a brief moment to thank a few people who were instrumental in the development of this thesis project. First and foremost, I want to thank my thesis committee. Dr.'s Depoe, Jenkins, and Zoller were a great help throughout the project and supported me both inside and outside the classroom. I would also like to thank my cohorts in the department. Even though they may never read this, they were the inspiration that kept me working through many a sleepless night. And lastly, I would like to thank you, the reader. Whether you grabbed this thesis because the title was interesting, you like tattoos, you know me personally, or a professor assigned a thesis for reading, it is comforting to know that all of this work is being read by at least one other person. That's enough from me; feel free to dive right in.

-Tyler
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Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction

“I know what you're thinking... the funny thing is, that usually women ask that question before men do. But the answer is yes. I'm covered with pictures from the neck right down to the toes. Everywhere, and I mean everywhere... They're not tattoos, they're skin illustrations! Don't you ever call them tattoos! … Let me tell you - don't you look at those illustrations too long, because they'll come alive and they'll tell you stories.”

- The Illustrated Man, 1969 (from script)

In 1951, Ray Bradbury published a collection of short stories entitled “The Illustrated Man.” The book describes a vagrant’s tattoos, linking every “skin illustration” to another story. Although the stories are largely unrelated, the unnamed narrator uses the vagrant’s body to weave a narrative. The tattoos, allegedly created by a time-traveling woman, are a mark of shame for the vagrant. He does not want to be covered in tattoos; he despises his head-to-toe illustrations.

Eighteen years later, Bradbury’s “The Illustrated Man” was first translated into film. Although the cinematic version did not describe each story, the focus is shifted from the narrator to the vagrant, a man named Carl. Carl spends the duration of the movie describing his tattoos to a fellow traveler. As in the book, each tattoo tells a story. But instead of looking at each story as an independent entity, the film links together three of the larger stories and expands the prologue and epilogue.

The changes to the story do not alter Carl’s view of tattoos; he is ashamed of them. Even though the movie was viewed as a critical and financial failure, the views expressed by
Bradbury’s characters are indicative of the views of tattoos at the time. The average tattoo owner was a sailor, a con-man, a biker, a drunk, a punk, or a prostitute. Tattoos were not something that any respectable person in the 1950’s and 1960’s would wear (Steward, 1990). Bradbury’s tale reflects that negative perception of tattooed people at the time. It is a pastime for the drunk, the dirty, and the deviant members on the fringe of society. Cultural implications aside, the film maker uses the tattoos as a way to show just one representation of the character. Carl sees the negative associations with tattooing and is afraid that he is going to be lumped in with the degenerates.

The tattoos in *The Illustrated Man* show a one-dimensional view of tattooing at the time. Carl sees his tattoos as a burden and a source of shame. However that is not the only way that tattoos have been used in film. The use of tattoos in film has changed subtly over the years. While it was originally meant to indicate a sinister or nefarious character, a tattoo now shows something else. More recently, tattoos are used on characters to display a level of depth and complexity. As we will see in this study, the use of tattoos in film has changed dramatically over the years. In Bradbury’s 1969 story, the tattoos are a source of embarrassment and regret. A little more than a couple decades later in 1991, the tattoo is shown as a way to indicate an evil character. But in 2011, the tattoo is just another layer of nuance added to already complex characters. The goal of this study is to understand the way in which film makers utilize tattoos in their work. While the positive and negative associations with tattooing still exist, cinema has shown that the perception of tattoos continues to grow as complex as the characters who wear them. With that in mind, the following analysis contains reviews and dissections of nine films over the last 20 years in order to deepen our understanding of the increasingly complex use of tattoos in cinema.
Literature Review

Historical and Cultural Context of Tattoos

Tattooing as a practice has seen a huge spike in the U.S. Tattoo shops are popping up in even the most unlikely of places (Obenschain, 2013). Patrons of these tattoo shops range from ex-criminals (Martin & Dula, 2010) to professional executives (Chen & Li, 2006). Even popular figures in the media are getting covered in tattoos. Athletes like Chris “Birdman” Anderson are quickly identified by the tattoos on their skin. Music artists like Justin Bieber are also getting “inked up” and paraded around both the internet and magazines (Thomas, 2015). Aside from tattoo shops and pop stars, anyone can see examples of tattoos by just walking down the street. Tattoos can be found on movie stars, athletes, musicians, teenagers, criminals and teachers. There are television programs that focus solely on the inner workings of tattoo parlors. The community of tattooed people has been growing at an incredible rate (Braverman, 2012). In spite of the growth of tattoos, the art of tattooing has a rich (and sometimes dark) history.

In 1991, archaeologists near the Italian-Austrian border discovered the oldest natural mummy known to man. This specimen, commonly referred to as the Iceman, became a huge scientific and historical research topic. It is estimated that the body dates back to 3300 B.C. Upon further examination of the body, archaeologists discovered the presence of carbon tattoos on his skin, mostly around his knee and ankles. It is believed that these tattoos were used to relieve pain in his joints (Owen, 2013).

His tattoos may be the oldest, but they are only the beginning. The next generation of tattoos can be found on Egyptian mummies. At this time, the practice of tattooing was exclusive to women. The markings were found mainly on the hands and bellies but there were a few instances where the tattoos had been placed on the face. While no one knows for sure why
mummies have tattoos, one way of thinking is that the placement of the mark generally indicated its function. The Egyptians used tattoos as a way to ward off disease in the women. An additional function was the relief of pain, especially during child birth (Lineberry, 2007).

Another generation of tattooing soon followed in the Maori warriors. These people used tattoos as a way to signify strength, prowess in battle, and rank. The more tattoos a person had, the more respected they were in the community. It was not uncommon for a Maori chief to have his entire body covered in tattoos (Lineberry, 2007).

A darker part of tattooing history involves the branding of others. In ancient Rome, runaway slaves had tattoos planted on their foreheads to show that they were to be reprimanded if caught off the owner’s premises. These markings also served to identify who the slave belonged to, equating the humans to cattle. More recently, tattooing was used on Jewish prisoners during the Holocaust. Prisoners in certain concentration camps would get a specific number tattooed on their forearm, much akin to a barcode. These numbers were used for identification and inventory. Although these are two darker examples of tattooing, it is important to note that some of the memories of Jewish oppression are still alive in our time. Older generations will be more sensitive to tattooing because of the historical applications in their lifetime (Lineberry, 2007).

Tattooing has been practiced for well over 5000 years. Throughout its history, it has been associated with many different types of people. Warriors had tattoos placed upon their body to give them strength in combat, while gang members used them as a form of identification. Even now, people are tattooed in order to elicit a response in others or to express a level of individuality (Lin, 2002). Members of the military got tattoos to represent which the branch they joined, while bikers got tattoos to reflect which type of motorcycle they preferred. In contrast,
members of the circus sideshows could be covered in tattoos simply as an attraction or oddity. Being covered in ink gave the sideshow exhibit a little color (literally) and appeared exotic. Athletes are another group that have been known to sport large amounts of tattoos. Professional athletes are notorious for it. It is hard to watch a professional football or basketball game without seeing at least one sleeve of tattoos. Musicians are another set of people who utilize tattoos. The ink can represent the music in their life or just giving in to an image that is expected. While not every person in these groups is known for bad behavior, the presence of a few bad people has helped reinforce the stigma against tattoos in our culture (Velliquette, Murray & Creyer, 1998).

In spite of the negative associations, there has been a countervailing growth in the popularity of tattoos over the recent years. In 2008, a Harris poll found that 14% of U.S. adults had at least one tattoo. The amount of people with tattoos has increased steadily. According to a poll done by the same company in 2012, 1 in 5 (21%) of U.S. adults have one or more tattoos on their bodies. Additionally, tattooing is rising in popularity faster than other types of body modification, such as piercings or non-permanent tattoos. The amount of people getting tattoos is expected to grow, which means tattooing will only become more popular (Braverman, 2012).

Perception of Tattoos
As tattooing grows in popularity, we can expect to see more of them appearing in daily life. Cinema is one avenue where tattoos are being used. Whether it is “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” (2011) or “Wild” (2015), tattoos are being used in modern film to elicit a response in the audience. Even back in 1981, tattoos were being used as a way to develop a character (*Tattoo*, 1981). So what is it about tattoos that create such a reaction in audiences?

One possibility for the sometimes vehement reactions people have to tattoos are the perceptions associated with the deviant subcultures known for having tattoos. As stated previously, tattoos have had a rollercoaster-like lifespan. There have been both incredibly positive and negative feelings and perceptions associated with tattoos over the last thousand years alone. In order to better understand the perception surrounding tattoos, let us first look at the reasons people get tattooed in the first place.

One of the leading factors behind getting a tattoo in American culture is the drive for self-identification. In a busy world such as ours, it is easy for people to get lost in the hustle of everyday life. Tattoos can help people gain a sense of self-identity (Lin, 2002). An individual will get a tattoo in order to appear different, thereby creating a stronger sense of self. By modifying the body, the owner has made a permanent alteration that will enforce his identity. Just as physical characteristics can be used to identify an individual (the red-head, the tall guy), tattoos can identify and potentially define a person. If someone is always called ‘the guy with the tattoo sleeve,’ it can cause the person to feel as though the tattoo defines him or that it is the thing that people first see (Stein, 2011). The tattoos emanate a message partially determined by the owner, whether it is to be perceived as tough or cool or even artistic. The marking, then, has the potential to operate as a nonverbal communicative tool. Therefore, the tattoo may alter how the person is received, especially during initial encounters. People make snap judgments based
on first impressions and a tattoo is something that is taken into account. Therefore, people get
tattoos in order alter their identity in an attempt to manipulate the way that they are perceived.

Aside from making a person stand out, a tattoo can have a positive effect on an
individual’s self-esteem. Getting a tattoo can make a person feel more attractive, more impulsive
or more desirable (Viren, 2011). During the study, Viren found that people reported different
feelings after getting a tattoo. While there were a couple negative outliers, the general reaction
was positive. Most of the subjects believed the tattoo was a good addition to their bodies. There
were numerous cases where the tattoo changed the way the person felt about personal
appearance. Instead of feeling timid or weak, the tattoo made the person feel strong or rebellious.
They felt that the tattoo made them different and that adds to their self-esteem. The ultimate
irony, in this case, is that people are getting tattoos in an effort to be different, while the amount
of people getting tattoos continues to rise.

Identity is just one of the reasons people get tattoos; Symbolism is another reason that
someone may get a tattoo. One symbolic trend is that the ink represents a personal change. For
example, a former drug addict may get a date tattooed on her body to remind her of the day that
she gave up drug abuse. In this way, the tattoo represents a period of personal struggle and
change (Atkinson, 2004). The tattoo may also take on a spiritual role. It can bolster the owner’s
faith or keep one grounded in his or her spirituality. Getting a cross tattoo is a common way of
representing religion on the flesh. Tattoos of this nature were generally better received by
participants in the study (Mun, Janigo & Johnson, 2012).

Memories, experiences and connections to the past are also likely symbolic tattoo
materials. An individual may get a tattoo to remember something special in their life, such as the
birth of a child or the death of a loved one. The tattoo takes on a new meaning when it represents
something the owner wants to remember. Simply looking at the tattoo can bring back a flood of memories. The permanency of the tattoo plays a role here. Because the tattoo is so permanent, it creates a visual representation of something the owner wants to remember. In essence, the owner is turning his or her body into a living photo album. Even as the memory starts to fade, the tattoo will remain, albeit in a slightly deformed manner. Although the reason for getting a tattoo varies from person to person, many tattoos have a basis as a symbolic representation of something important to the owner (Velliquette, Murray & Creyer, 1998).

Identity and Symbolism are not the only reason that people get tattoos. In recent years, tattooing solely for the aesthetic value has seen an increase. The Tattoo Renaissance of the late 1950’s, which has been continued through today, found people getting tattoos for the aesthetic value over the symbolic nature (Velliquette, Murray & Creyer, 1998). Artists such as Ed Hardy made tattooing popular and displayed its value as an art form. For example, tribal tattoos like the ones found on Mike Tyson do not have an apparent symbolic nature. It is entirely possible that the owner got them simply because of the way the tattoo looks on his skin. Tribal tattoos, however, are one of many forms of aesthetic tattooing that has marked the Tattoo Renaissance. The transition from deviant pastime to artwork made tattoos more acceptable. Although this is not the most common reason for tattoos, there is a significant amount of people who get them simply for the way they look.

As it became more accepted into popular U.S. culture, tattooing rose in popularity. The tattoo does not have to represent anything in particular, as it is now seen as “crafting your body into a moving piece of art” (Atkinson 2004, pg. 9). The human body is now a canvas. In this day and age, we have the opportunity to modify our bodies on an advanced level. We have plastic surgery, hormone replacement and even ways fix male pattern baldness. As a form of body
modification, tattooing has been elevated from deviant subculture to an art form in less than 100 years. It has even bled into the fashion world, as tattoos are becoming ever more popular. The choice to get a tattoo is as much about aesthetics as it is subject matter. Although it is an incredibly personal adornment, it is still an adornment and has a fashion factor as well.

Even though symbolic and aesthetic values are major factors for choosing to get a tattoo, there is yet another driving force behind getting inked: group identification. The need to belong gives a strong push toward a tattoo. Getting a tattoo for a group shows commitment to the group’s ideals and reaffirms the individual’s position. For example, Atkinson (2004) found that members of a group called “Straight-edge” were getting tattoos to reinforce their anti-drug lifestyle. Most of the members were very young, but held strong to their beliefs and resisted drug abuse. The tattoos gave these young people a sense of purpose and community, serving as a reminder that they are not alone in their fight against drug abuse.

On the other end of the spectrum, many gang members use tattoos to identify gang affiliation. These tattoos can show loyalty to the group or represent levels of rank within the group. Tattoos in the form of tear drops tell others that the owner has either killed a person for the gang or lost a friend within the organization. In this instance, the tattoos convey the message that the owner is tough and not to be taken lightly. The most common tattoos in the prison system study related to gang identification (Atkinson, 2004). Oddly enough, members of Nike’s corporate staff had similar ideas about tattooing. Many of these individuals have the Nike swoosh tattooed on their calves in order to promote group unity and camaraderie (Chen & Li, 2006). This team ink displays the commitment to the brand and tells others that these men are truly part of the Nike philosophy.
Coherence and unity may not be the reason people get group tattoos, though. Simply fitting in is another way that group identification causes people to get tattoos. This is especially prevalent among college students. People in this age group have the highest rate of tattoo ownership. College students may choose to get tattoos for a variety of reasons, such as psychological distress or impulsivity. It is also likely that many students get tattoos in order to appear cool. Since college is such a new experience, a student can see this time as an opportunity to reinvent his image. Getting a tattoo sends a message to his fellow students. It can make the student feel cool, tough, attractive or unapproachable. However, there is an increase in the amount of students that get tattoos in order to fit in, revealing that peer pressure is another leading factor in obtaining a tattoo (Roberti & Storch, 2005). Sometimes a student gets a tattoo simply because everyone else is doing it.
Social and Cultural Reactions

This increase in tattooing has faced plenty of cultural and institutional responses. The Honolulu Police Force recently implemented a ban on visible tattoos for all police officers (“Honolulu Police Department Tattoo Ban Follows National Trend, But to What End?”). In Honolulu, police officers are restricted from having visible tattoos. Those with tattoos must wear long sleeve shirts or make-up to cover their tattoos. This regulation could lead to potential health problems like heat stroke, yet the ban stays in place.

The HPF is not the first government agency to begin cracking down on tattoos on employees. The U.S. military has also announced restrictions on tattoos for those in active duty. A person with tattoos below the knee or elbow and above the neck will not be allowed to join the U.S. Army. Those already enlisted that have tattoos that are against regulation will be grandfathered in but will be required to hide their tattoos when in military uniform (Wing, 2013). This ban not only limits the amount of tattoos a military professional can have; it restricts the amount of people that can join the Army and protect our country.

But perhaps the biggest infringement on the tattooed community has been found in Arkansas. The Arkansas state legislature passed a bill that bans certain types of body modifications and tattooing procedures. Specifically, the acts of scarification and sub-dermal implants have been banned in the state of Arkansas (Obenschain, 2013). But this ban only affects those in the tattooing community. Lawmakers were certain to point out that the ban on body modification only affected “licensed professionals in the body-art community, so plastic surgeons can breathe easy” (Ramsey, 2013 p. 1).

With restrictions on tattoos becoming more prominent, it would seem that tattoos are perceived negatively by larger institutions. However, the increase in people with tattoos leads us
to question whose perception is really changing. Although people are cracking down on tattoos in different areas, why does the number of tattooed people continue to grow?

As tattooing continues to rise in popularity, the common perceptions of the art are bound to evolve. There are very different views of tattoos in our society. That being said, there are still many views (both positive and negative) surrounding people with tattoos. The associations between tattooing and unsavory subcultures such as gangs or sailors make it difficult for people to move past the stigmas against tattooing. In other words, it is difficult to separate the ink on the skin from the people committing crimes. Plenty of people have committed atrocities but did not have tattoos, while many peaceful cultures have celebrated tattooing as a religious or pleasant experience. However, the stereotypes must have come from somewhere and should not be disregarded. There are historical foundations for most of the negative stereotypes. Whether or not the assumptions made about these people are correct is irrelevant. The important aspect is that these are widely held beliefs and tattoos communicate these negative stereotypes in American culture.

One typical idea about the tattooed is that they are perceived to have a difficult life (Martin & Dula, 2010). It is as if the tattoo marks the person to show that their life has been rough. The tattoo is believed to indicate that the person probably has had a run-in with the law or has loose morals. Women especially suffer from this stereotype. Females with tattoos are seen as more promiscuous and masculine than the non-tattooed females. Additionally, the possession of a tattoo can lead people to believe that the individual was unsuccessful in school (Silver, Silver, Siennick & Farkas, 2011). The thought behind this stereotype is that the decision to get a tattoo could have been avoided if the person had a proper education. Even though there are plenty of
educated people with tattoos, the perception reflects the somewhat brutish history behind skin adornment.

In addition to the above perceptions, assumptions are also made about childhoods of tattooed people. Martin and Dula (2010) found two major perceptions of tattooed people in regard to their home life. In some cases, tattoos indicated that the person comes from a broken home. People with tattoos are a result of split parents or a lack of moral fiber in their family life. The mindset is that parents who took care of their children would not allow the offspring to permanently mar their bodies in such a fashion. There is also the belief that people with tattoos probably had an unhappy childhood (Martin and Dula, 2010). Getting a tattoo is a rebellious act used to separate the child from the parent. This is akin to the child who moves far away from home in order to escape her parents. All of these perceptions convey negative associations between tattooing and the person’s life. Having a tattoo, then, seems to mark the individual as a person who has not had the same opportunities in life, has struggled to get by or had an unhappy home life as a child. Again, it is important to note that these beliefs are not always true. There are plenty of people who have lived happy lives and still have ink on their skin. The existence of a tattoo on the skin does not indicate how difficult a person’s life has been. After all, correlation does not equal causation (Silver, Silver, Siennick & Farkas, 2011).

Even if a tattooed person can get past the assumptions being made about their home life, he or she must still overcome quite a few stereotypes regarding their actions. Martin and Dula (2010) highlighted different assumptions of a person’s actions based on the existence of a tattoo. First, there is the presumption that these people have poor decision-making skills. A non-tattooed person may see a tattoo on another individual and predict that the owner lacks proper decision-making skills simply because of the tattoo. Plus, there is always the stereotype of the person who
regrets the tattoo because it was acquired while she was young or potentially intoxicated. There are plenty of stories of a friend who gets a ridiculous tattoo and regrets it for the rest of their life. That is one of the biggest fears associated with tattooing, due mostly to the permanency of the action. Once it is in your skin, it is nearly impossible to remove. There have been recent developments in tattoo removal, but they are both painful and expensive. Luckily, this is not a huge concern because most people who get tattoos do not regret it.

Aside from causing assumptions to be made about a person’s past, the possession of a tattoo causes the owner’s abilities to be questioned. When a person sees a tattoo in the workforce, the owner’s work is often perceived to be of a lesser quality (Dean, 2010). This can probably be traced back to the supposition that the owner of the tattoo was unsuccessful in school. There is this idea that a person with a tattoo is not as skilled as a person without a tattoo. In this sense, having a tattoo marks the person as inferior in ability. This is eerily reminiscent of tattoos during the Holocaust, which marked prisoners as inventory and sub-human. There are additional stereotypes associated with tattooed individuals, including: incompetent, unintelligent and lacking social skills (Ruetzler, Taylor, Reynolds, Baker, & Killen, 2012). Again, most of these assumptions are not true for all people with tattoos. There are plenty of people with tattoos who do not contain qualities found in that list.

On a brighter note, the perceptions of tattooed people are beginning to change. As tattoos become more prevalent in our society, people will begin to view them in different ways. Multiple surveys conducted with college-aged adults showcased some of the positive views of tattooed people. One positive view of tattoos is that a person with a tattoo is strong (Braverman, 2012). The strength, in this case, does not necessarily refer to physical strength. He or she could be emotionally strong or simply a person of conviction. After all, it takes a lot of guts to get
something permanently adorned on the body. The connection between tattoos and strength may be historically grounded. The Maori warriors received tattoos after achieving victory in battle (Lineberry, 2007). In this sense, a person with a tattoo may be equated to a warrior, someone who is willing to fight for something about which they are passionate.

Aside from appearing strong, a person with a tattoo can be viewed as more creative. In a study conducted by Resenhoeft, Villa and Wiseman (2008), subjects were shown pictures of people with and without visible tattoos and asked to rate the personal characteristics of those pictured. These models were then ranked based on the results. The researchers found that perceptions of characteristics such as creativity were enhanced by having a visible tattoo. The existence of artwork on the skin adds to the person’s artistic appearance. Additionally, the researchers found the attribution becomes weaker or stronger depending on the design of the tattoo. A detailed, aesthetically pleasing tattoo will create the impression that the person is creative or artistic, especially if the tattoo was designed by the owner. A simple tattoo, such as some tribal designs or barbed wire around the bicep, will make the person appear masculine. In these instances, the tattoo is designed to communicate something about the owner. A person with a butterfly tattoo on her calf will be perceived differently than a person with a big dragon tattoo on his back. People with tattoos get them knowing that something will be communicated by the topic and placement of the tattoo. People will often get tattoos that they feel align with their self-perception. For example, a young woman who thinks of herself as artistic may get a beautiful piece of art tattooed on her body in order to reaffirm this belief. In this way, the woman does not need to tell people that she is artistic; her tattoo does all of the talking for her. The opposite can be true, as well. If a man feels that his masculinity is being called into question, he may get a
very manly tattoo. There is always the possibility that the possession of the tattoo is an attempt to cover up a perceived personal deficiency (Resenhoeft, Villa & Wiseman, 2008).

The age of the person viewing the tattoo plays a role in the level of perception, as well. Dean (2011) found that younger subjects did not perceive the presence of a tattoo as negatively as the older participants did. This is not to say, however, that younger subjects saw tattoos as a positive aspect. The degree of perception changed, not the direction (positive or negative). As older people with more vehement responses to tattoos start to die off, the perceptions of tattooed individuals will shift toward a more positive outlook.

Even though tattooing has been largely seen as negative, the shift toward a comprehensive understanding of tattoos is well underway. Instead of seeing the tattooed as bikers, punks, and criminals, research has shown that American culture is slowly approaching a more nuanced understanding of tattoos. This shift is reflected in the films featuring tattooed characters. Films featuring heavily tattooed characters portrayed them in a negative light, but more recent films have highlighted the complexity of the tattoo as well as the character who wears it.
Chapter 2: Method

Method

Cinema, by its very nature, “deliver(s) a contemporary experience set apart from ‘daily life’ – collectively experienced with others in a dark place dedicated to this purpose” (Hauke & Alister, pg. 2). Everyone in the theater experiences the same movie. However, we do not all experience it the same. Hauke and Alister (2001) stress that cinema involves both a collective experience as a part of a group as well as valuing the subjective point of view of the person watching the film. In this sense, cinema is both a group activity and something very personal.

Because film is a personal experience as well as a collective one, there have been many methods of understanding and analyzing film. Many methods of film analysis involve a semiotic approach, an iconic analysis, or require an understanding of the work’s use of time, space, and music (Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987). While these methods of analysis are effective and widely used, Jungian analysis is a more useful tool for understanding film as a reflection of the cultural values of the time by showing the common archetypes and roles that are present throughout the text.
To better understand Jungian film analysis, we must first have a better understanding of Jung’s views of psychology. During the time he was writing (approximately 1906-1959), Carl Gustav Jung was thought to be Freud’s natural successor as the head of modern psychology. However, there was a schism created between Jung and Freud near the end of their lives. While both types of analysis require introspection and a recounting of dreams, Freudian psychoanalysis relies heavily on the content of the patient’s dream. In a standard Freudian analysis, the psychologist would pay attention to topics or specific people in the dream. From the actions of those people or objects in the dream, the analyst would make observations about the subject based upon the content of the dream. For example, a strong female portrayed in a dream would most likely refer back to the patient’s tendency toward the Oedipus complex. Jungian analysis, however, splits from this idea of content driven dreams. Jungian thought revolves around the forms of the dream (Singh, 2009). This means that the analysis of a dream relies on common themes and characters types instead of simply personal experience.

Jung believed that Freud had created a way to understand the world of psychology outside of each patient’s personal experiences. Psychology, then, becomes a way of understanding the ebb and flow of culture through mythology and storytelling (Robertson, 1996). Mythology plays a large role in Jungian psychology. Instead of reducing bits and pieces of the patient’s dreams to repressed desires or singular objects (as in Freudian psychology), Jungian psychoanalysis “amplifies the images… by showing parallels throughout the varied mythologies of many cultures and ages” (Robertson 1996, p. 3-4). In essence, Jungian psychology extends beyond just the patient; it involves generations of stories and myths to help explain the human experience.
Jungian psychology suggests that all storytelling shares similar elements that expand from the collective unconscious of humanity. This collective unconscious spans generations and is based in common themes present in most cultures. For example, there are going to be shared stories in each culture. Many cultures have creation myths. Muslim, Christian, and Judaic creation myths follow the idea of *ex nihilo*, meaning, out of nothing. There is an almighty deity that creates the world as we know it from nothing. Although these cultures have their differences, the basic ideas for the creation of the world follow similar structures. But the religions of the book are not the only ones who share similarities in creation myths. There are creation from chaos myths, earth diver myths, emergence myths, and even world parent myths. Even though there are regional differences (Native American myths vary slightly from Eastern European myths, for example), there are still strong cases where human beings have created similar stories at very different points in history without knowing that other people were creating the same myths (Leeming & Leeming, 1994).

Jungian psychology, then, attempts to tap into those shared (almost universal) storytelling elements in order to explain the world around us. It is from this belief that Jung’s idea of forms in dreams takes shape. In every dream, there are going to be shared elements that coincide with other cultures lived experiences. These forms (called archetypes) are repeated throughout history and culture and continue to pop up in all sorts of places. But dreams are not the only place that the archetypes surface. Whether it is photography, books, or film, Jung’s forms are an ever present part of the storytelling experience (Hauke and Hockley, 2011). A list of Jung’s archetypes can be found in the Methods section.

However, we cannot make the mistake of equating media such as film or books with a dream. A dream happens subconsciously and therefore is outside the patient’s control. Film (the
primary medium of focus for this paper) is not a reflection of the film-maker’s subconscious. The director (or writer) is aware of what is happening in the story. Singh (2009) is quick to point out that we cannot analyze film the same way that we analyze dreams. Dreams can be incoherent, nonsensical and often have messy timelines. Films (for the most part) occur in a narrative fashion with similar storytelling structures. Jungian film analysis is an effective tool because of the structure of most films.

Rushing and Frentz (1991) describe Jungian archetypal art analysis as something outside of the artist’s psyche. Some art is “based on a vision which ‘is not something derived or secondary, and it is not a symptom of something else. It is true symbolic expression – that is, the expression of something existent in its own right but imperfectly unknown.’…Narratives of this sort, we would agree, reveal archetypal images that the culture needs in order to produce new solutions to existing problems, and in order to advance past its present stage of ego-consciousness” (Rushing & Frentz, 1991 p. 396). Jungian archetypes, then, are tapping into a collective unconscious outside of the artist, symbolizing something that is both known and unknown to the artist and audience alike.

In addition, much of the analysis in a Jungian method will be subjective. Any information gleaned from the film will be through the analyst’s perspective. Both movie’s context (historical, cultural, etc.) as well as the analyst’s personal context will influence the overall analysis. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Although we are not able to look at the film as a direct representation of the director’s psyche, we can understand it through the interactions between consumption and interpretation in the audience. On one hand, we understand the film using Jung’s forms while simultaneously we analyze the film based on its production and reception. In one way, films heavily influence culture. A film can change the way in which a
culture operates. However, the converse can be true as well. The film can be viewed as a cultural product that is being put forth and consumed (Singh, 2009).

With that in mind, Jungian film analysts can approach a film as a cultural product and begin to understand the world in which that film operates. The shifting portrayal of objects in the film will reflect the audience’s (and the culture’s) changing opinions on those same objects.

Jung’s collective unconscious archetypes have been used as a set of tools to help understand a film and the culture surrounding it (Hauke & Alister, 2001). Whether it’s the Frankenstein myth in Blade Runner (Rushing & Frentz, 1989), symbolism in The Song of Ceylon (Frederickson, 2001), or the Grail quest in Field of Dreams (Hollwitz, 2001), Jungian psychoanalysis remains a useful tool for understanding film.

Rushing and Frentz (2002) are well-known proponents of the archetypal approach to film analysis. One of their studies utilizes a Jungian archetypal approach to understand the images in The Matrix. In their analysis, the archetypes of the Anima, the Mother, and the Hero are all prevalent in the film. They are able to use the archetypal framework to discuss and understand the motives and actions for the characters in the film. (Frentz and Rushing, 2002) This is just one example of their many archetypal analyses.

Although Rushing and Frentz (1991, 2002) often use Jungian archetypal analysis to examine one film at a time, there is not much research concerning cross-film character analysis. While there are instances of following and analyzing the works of one specific filmmaker (Spielberg, for example), multiple film analysis is not something that is widely used (Hauke, 2001). This project seeks utilize Jungian film analysis as a way to understand characters with a shared characteristic in different films by different film-makers.
The shared characteristic that is analyzed is the presence of tattoos in film, specifically, the shifting portrayal of tattooed people. By looking at films with tattooed characters, we can see the changes in portrayal of tattooed characters and the utility of the tattoo itself. The film, then, becomes a cultural product that reflects the commonly held beliefs at the time. Conversely, the subjects in the film can be used to understand the cultural influence that the movie (and the tattoos in the movie) elicit. The portrayal of tattooed individuals in the film is indicative of some of the feelings and perceptions of tattooing during the film’s production. Just as *The Illustrated Man* reflected the cultural perceptions of tattooing at its time, contemporary films will do the same.

With that in mind, the first step was to compile a list of movies. After careful examination of the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), a total of fifteen movies known for the use of tattoos was compiled. In addition, a film compendium online was investigated for more movies. And lastly, trips to tattoo parlors in the Dayton and Cincinnati area in order to learn of other films rounded out the total list of twenty five movies spanning over thirty years.

After reviewing the plots for each film, the list was narrowed down to just nine films. The films are: *Cape Fear* (1991), *American History X* (1998), *Boondock Saints* (1999), *Memento* (2000), *Eastern Promises* (2007), *Wanted* (2008), *Black Swan* (2010), *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011), and *Warrior* (2011). The films span a total of twenty years in order to appropriately gauge the amount of change that occurs over time. This amount of time was chosen over a shorter frame because of the gradual (and nuanced) changes in tattooed characters over the years.

In order to be considered for the project, each film must contain a character that has at least one visible tattoo that plays an integral part of their story. Whether it is developing the
character, marking a transformation, or used as an actual character or foil, the deliberate use of
tattoos must have an impact on the story. Through this cross-film analysis, two research
questions surfaced:

RQ1: Are there ways in which tattoos are commonly used in film?

RQ2: Which archetypes are most frequently shown wearing tattoos?

As perceptions continue to change, tattoos are going to play different roles in film. As
mentioned previously, tattoos have a bit of a storied past in cinema. While tattoos on a character
in an older film may have symbolized that he or she was the villain (like the antagonist in the
remake of the 190’s movie Cape Fear), this may not be the case for more modern movies. The
tattoo can take on multiple roles, as a part of developing the character, as a signifier of the
character’s transformation, or as an agent of change in the story. With the perception and use of
tattoos changing throughout the history of cinema, it is imperative that the same framework be
used for each analysis. Jungian psychoanalysis provides such a framework.

The following section is a list of common archetypes as described by Jung. While not an
exhaustive list of all archetypal images, these are the ones found within the analyses. Throughout
any film, characters can exhibit parts of different archetypal images, creating hybrid archetypes.
Here are the archetypes according to the Jungian Lexicon (Sharp, 1991):

*Anima* – The Anima is the reflection of the feminine side in a man. It is the archetypal image of
the woman in a male psyche. The anima can be anything from an exotic woman or the old hag.
The old woman in the story of Hansel and Gretel serves as an Anima for Hansel. The old woman
is an Anima in how she is defined (and related to) other characters. The Anima is a
complimentary force, driving the man to be his best. The Anima relates to love and emotion.
Animus – The Animus is the counterpart to the Anima. The Animus is the masculine side of a woman. It is the archetypal image of the man in the female psyche. The Animus has a different capacity than the Anima. Instead of complimenting the woman, the Animus represents something that the female character is lacking. The Animus often gives guidance to the female character, showing the correct path to follow. The Animus relates to logic.

Anthropos – The archetypal image of wholeness. Anthropos represents primordial man. Anthropos is often similar to God or a godlike being.

Child – An image that represents both the past and the future. For the past, it represents all things that can no longer be recovered. The future, on the other hand, represents anticipation of things to come. Alienation is often a signifying factor of the Child archetype. The Child strives for independence.

Crucifixion – The archetypal motif that follows a character’s struggles against those that are in opposition. When a character is crossed by the opposition, stopped by an obstacle, a crucifixion motif is at play.

Father – The Father is the first Animus carrying image, but not strictly an Animus image. The Father represents Logos (logic) and is characterized by decisiveness and a regard for authority.

Great Mother – The Great Mother archetype is the source of a life source in the narrative. Different from the Mother archetype, the Great Mother is the power from which life stems. She can manifest in many ways, ranging from a queen to a witch. An example of the Great Mother archetype would be the use of Mother Nature as a way to describe the natural world.

Hero – The archetypal motif that revolves around overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. The Hero learns of his quest, travels toward the evil, fights the evil, is beaten (or temporarily setback), returns to the evil, and ultimately defeats it.
**Hostile Brothers** – An archetypal motif characterized by the conflict between two conflicting (but related) forces. Cain and Abel are a good example of the Hostile Brothers archetype.

**Mother** – The Mother archetype manifests based on the main character’s gender. For a male character, the Mother acts similar to the Anima. The Mother is a complimentary counterpart and gives the male character the drive to continue on his path. For a female character, the Mother affects the feminine characteristics. The Mother can either stimulate or inhibit the female instincts.

**Night Sea Journey** – This motif is associated with depression or neurosis in the story. In the story of Jonah and the Whale, Jonah getting swallowed alive is his Night Sea Journey. It is his tumbling into the unknown, the initial defeat in his battle against evil that characterizes the Night Sea Journey. The Hero must come out of the other side of the Night Sea Journey stronger than before.

**Philosopher’s Stone** – The archetypal image of wholeness. The Philosopher’s Stone is something being sought that will complete the character. Both the Hero and the Shadow can seek the Philosopher’s Stone.

**Self** – The Self is the regulating center of the character. In essence, the Self is the character’s ultimate realization of their goal. When Galahad finally recovers the Holy Grail and is accepted into Heaven, he is realizing the Self archetypal image.

**Shadow** – The Shadow archetypal image is the personification of unknown parts of the character’s psyche. It can be part of the personality that is repressed, denied, or undeveloped. It manifests itself in other characters. Darth Vader represents Luke’s desires for revenge and to join the dark side, making Darth Vader the Shadow archetype.
**Syzygy (Divine Couple)** – This archetypal motif characterizes the change from wholeness to integration and back to wholeness. The opposites that were presented at the beginning of the narrative are resolved, bringing the world back to order and wholeness. If the story has a happy ending where things return to the way they were at the beginning, the Syzygy motif is at play.

**Trickster** – The Trickster archetype is the rebel that points out the flaws in society. The Trickster can confuse, degrade, hide, or destroy parts of the world. The Trickster causes problems for the Hero. The Trickster can be the villain of the narrative.

**Wise Old Man/Woman** – This archetypal image is the personification of wisdom. It is the personification of the masculine spirit, taking the role of priest, doctor, guru, or chief. Obi-Wan Kenobi is an example of the Wise Old Man archetype in action.

**Wounded Healer** – The Wounded Healer archetype is a complex image. A person who has felt an injury but continues to heal others is an example of the Wounded Healer. The Wounded Healer seeks to relieve others’ pain in an attempt to resolve his/her own pain. The pain that the Wounded Healer feels does not have to be physical pain.

Grounded in the idea that every story (or piece of art) contains similar elements, patterns, and characters, Jungian psychoanalysis allows the opportunity to analyze different films through the same lens. Although this type of analysis has traditionally been used to look for cultural themes in just one film, a cross-film analysis will provide a fuller understanding of tattoos in cinema. Using the Jungian archetype framework provides a uniform starting point for all analyses, limiting the potential for skewed analysis based on outside factors.

Looking at the work of multiple directors over the span of twenty years will show the shifting portrayal of tattoos in film, as well as their diversity and utility as a cinematic tool. In
addition to having a fuller understanding of tattoos, it is important to note that this cross-film analysis following one character attribute is one of the few of its kind. It will further both the understanding of tattoos as cinematic tool and contribute to a relatively underdeveloped way of understanding film as a genre where both film-makers and the films influence (and are influenced by) the world around them.

While the method for the analysis is set, there a couple of limitations that must be acknowledged. The first limitation is the amount of films being analyzed. First and foremost, the amount of films being analyzed limits the applicability of this study to the use of tattoos in all films. The analysis is grounded in a solid framework, but the study of nine films does not create an understanding of all tattoos in movies. The scope of the project has forced the reduction of the list of movies from the original twenty five to just nine films. However, the depth of each analysis attempts to cover any gaps left in the lack of breadth in films studied.

The other limitation that should be addressed is found in the framework itself. While archetypal analysis has been used extensively for a few decades, there are subtle hints of sexism found in the archetypes. With that in mind, the author has tried to ignore gendered depictions of characters, choosing to focus solely on the character’s role in the story instead of the character’s sex.

With the limitations in mind, this project seeks to uncover which tattoos get used most frequently on which archetypes. Beyond that, the project makes salient the shifting portrayal of tattooed characters in film by analyzing the different uses of tattoos over a twenty year time span.
Chapter 3: Analysis

Analysis

In order to properly understand the intricacies of the stories, each film was watched twice. The first time was to understand the large plot points in the story; the second was for detailed note taking on characters, development, and tattoo usage. The methods used in this chapter closely resemble the framework outlined utilized in Hauke and Alister’s (2001) *Jung & Film: Post Jungian Takes on the Movie Image*. With that in mind, each subsection of this chapter contains the information for one movie. At the beginning of each subsection, the main characters are given descriptions concerning their personalities, roles in the film, and relationships with other characters. After the character descriptions, a detailed summary of the film’s plot is reproduced to better explain what happens in the movie. Lastly, an archetypal analysis is present at the end of each subsection. This archetypal analysis highlights the most important characters and assigns to them the archetypes that are most fitting.

*Note: for ease of use, short summaries of each film along with a table highlighting the main characters and their respective archetypes can be found at the end of this chapter.*

*Cape Fear* (1991)

Characters
Sam Bowden: Sam is a defense attorney in North Carolina. He lives with his wife (Leigh) and his daughter (Danielle). While it is hinted that Sam is contemplating an extra-marital affair with a woman at work, Sam is adamant that his relationship with his coworker is purely platonic. Sam is being pursued by a man named Max Cady, a convicted rapist who Sam unsuccessfully defended fourteen years prior.

Leigh Bowden: Sam’s wife. She is worried about Sam’s fidelity and tries to catch him in the act of cheating.

Danielle Bowden: Sam and Leigh’s daughter. Danielle is a 15 year old girl who attends the local high school. She eventually becomes infatuated with Cady and causes problems for the family.

Private Investigator Claude Kersek: Sam’s friend. Kersek helps the family pursue Cady but is ultimately bested by the convict.

Max Cady: Max is a well-read ex-convict stalking Sam and his family. Cady believes that Sam deliberately destroyed evidence in his case, resulting in his incarceration.

Synopsis

The film begins with extensive shots of the Cape Fear River in North Carolina. A hawk flies gracefully over the water as the camera zooms in on a figure in the water. An eyeball opens up under the water, revealing a shadowy form in the murky depths. The introductory credit scene ends with blood dripping into the water.

The next scene shows Max Cady working out in his jail cell. After what appears to be an extensive workout, Cady is called to the cell door by a guard. Cady puts on his shirt, hiding the numerous tattoos on his body, and leaves the cell with the guard. He is released from prison and begins walking away.
The film flashes to the Bowden house as they are preparing to leave for the movies. They finish dinner and drive to the theatre. While inside the theatre, the movie viewing experience is ruined by a man sitting a few rows in front of them. This man is none other than Max Cady, smoking a cigar and laughing uproariously at the movie. The Bowden’s decide to leave the theatre and get ice cream. However, Cady is outside the ice cream parlor and silently watches the Bowdens.

The next day, Sam is at the racquetball court playing with a woman named Lori. Lori is a coworker and clearly infatuated with Sam, flirting with him constantly. After their match, the pair leaves the court and encounter Cady sitting against his car. Cady vaguely threatens Sam and drives off in his red convertible.

When Sam returns to his home, he is helping his daughter with her homework and mindlessly hitting notes on the piano. He heads to bed and is met by his wife, Leigh. After a brief seduction, Sam and Leigh have sex and fall asleep. Leigh is startled by the sound of fireworks going off next door and goes to investigate. She sees Cady sitting on the fence in their yard, smoking a cigar and staring into their bedroom window. After searching the yard, Sam and Leigh are unable to find Cady and retreat to their home.

At work the next day, Sam confesses to another attorney that he destroyed evidence in the Cady case in order to make sure that Cady was imprisoned. Cady, who had raped and beaten a girl fourteen years ago, was sentenced to six years in prison but received more time after killing another inmate. Although Sam feels a bit guilty about destroying evidence that would have acquitted Cady, he is sure that Cady would have no way of knowing of Sam’s betrayal.

Cady stops Sam on his way home from work and says that Sam has no idea what suffering is. Cady explains his time in prison, clearly detailing the night he was sodomized by
other inmates. At the end of the conversation, Cady makes it clear that he is not looking for money or respect. He drives away without sharing another word.

The following day, Sam receives a phone call from his wife. In hysterics, Leigh conveys to Sam that someone poisoned their dog. Sam immediately believes it to be Cady and calls the police. The police collect Cady and begin his interrogation. After a strip search revealing more of his tattoos, Cady smirks in Sam’s direction. This scene is important because it shows each one of Cady’s tattoos in detail. The subject matter of his tattoos range from evangelical Biblical passages to the words “Truth and Justice” emblazoned on his chest. The chief scoffs at Cady’s tattoos, saying “I don’t know whether to look at him or read him.” But with no real crime to pin on him, Cady is released from custody.

The Bowden family later attends a parade in their town. During the parade, Sam sees Cady leering at his wife from across the street. Sam runs to the other side of the street and threatens Cady. Sam pushes Cady into the crowd and is thrown off by other bystanders. Sam collects his family and leaves the parade.

The next scene shows Lori at the bar, innocently flirting with a man she does not know. The man reveals himself to be Max Cady. After revealing that he was in prison, Cady lies about the reason for his incarceration and ultimately seduces Lori. Cady then beats and rapes her. Lori is hospitalized but refuses to testify against Cady, worrying that it might cause more trouble for Sam and his family.

Now that the reality of what Cady will do has set in, Sam begins closing off his house from the world. He shuts the blinds, puts more locks on the doors, and keeps his family from going outside as much as possible. Sam then hires friend and private investigator Claude Kersek to help with the problem. After Kersek leaves to follow Cady, Leigh confronts Sam about Lori,
Cady’s most recent victim. Leigh believes that Sam is having an affair with this woman. This belief creates a rift between Sam and Leigh, making life difficult for the whole family. Danielle is especially affected by her parents’ arguing.

Kersek continues to follow Cady, but is soon discovered. Kersek delivers a threat to Cady but is scared away by the ex-convict. Cady leaves the interaction with Kersek and follows Leigh home. Cady feigns ignorance when accused of poisoning the family dog. He jokes that it is his appearance that makes her think that. Cady suggests that his tattoos are what make him scary. He says “Guess I’m covered in too many tattoos, huh? See, there isn’t a whole lot to do in prison but desecrate your flesh.” Once Cady sees Danielle walk out of the house, he quickly drives away.

That night, Cady calls Danielle pretending to be her summer school drama teacher. After a quick conversation, he convinces Danielle that class has been moved to the theatre in the basement of the school. Danielle heads to school the next day and enters the theatre by herself. Although she is confused at first, she realizes that Cady is not her drama teacher. Cady lies about his relationship with her father and seduces Danielle on the theatre stage. After a prolonged kiss, Danielle runs away and Cady exits the stage.

When Danielle returns home, Sam decides that the best course of action is to hire some thugs to beat Cady. Kersek puts together the thugs and sets the plan in motion. Cady is then surrounded by thugs outside a building as Sam watches. The thugs begin hitting Cady with lead pipes, chains, and their fists. However, their advantage does not last long and Cady quickly overtakes them. After he defeats his assailants, Cady begins looking for Sam and proclaims that this attack has only steeled his will.
After the fight, Cady seeks legal help and successfully acquires a restraining order against Sam. The wounds he sustained during his attack are convincing enough, but Cady is able to produce a recording of Sam and Kersek threatening him and plans on bringing the case to trial.

The legal defeat convinces Sam that he needs a gun. Kersek, however, disagrees and volunteers to help stake out the Bowden house in case Cady shows up. The family hatches a plan that involves tricking Cady into thinking that Sam has left the house. The family drives Sam to the airport and pretends that he is leaving for a prescheduled work trip. Sam sneaks back into his house with Kersek and they set up the trap. The next two days show Sam and Kersek patiently waiting for Cady to approach. While there is no attack during the first two nights, Cady is able to sneak the book *Sexus* into Danielle’s possession. She squirrels the book in her room while her father and Kersek wait a third night for Cady’s attack.

The third night, Kersek hears a door open in the kitchen. He goes to check it out and is surprised by the housekeeper putting away the garbage. As Kersek sits down, the housekeeper strangles him with piano wire. After the gruesome death, the housekeeper removes a black wig, revealing that it was Cady in the house the whole night. The camera pans over to the body of the actual housekeeper on the other side of the kitchen table. Cady runs away from the house as the Bowden family discovers the two fresh corpses in their kitchen.

After the kitchen murders, the family leaves their home and travels to Cape Fear to hide out on their houseboat. The family arrives at the dock and Cady silently drops from underneath the car they were just driving. He pays for a small boat and follows the Bowden family down the river. Cady slips onto the boat in the cover of night and chokes Sam until he passes out. With a storm brewing in the background, Cady enters the cabin of the boat and forces himself on Leigh while Danielle hides in the closet. Leigh struggles and manages to break away from Cady. Cady
discovers Danielle in the closet and drags her out into the rest of the cabin. With Sam watching from outside, Cady attempts to force himself on Danielle but Leigh briefly stops him. As he is lighting his cigar, Danielle sprays him with lighter fluid and he bursts into flame. Cady jumps into the river and the family thinks they are safe.

The storm becomes too much for the small boat and they are sent crashing into shore. While the girls are thrown into the river, Cady gets back onto the boat and finds Sam. He holds Sam at gunpoint and reenacts the court scene that implicated Cady in the rape fourteen years ago. As he is preparing to pull the trigger, another gust of wind blows apart part of the boat, sending Cady and Sam crashing into the debris. A fist fight between the two men follows and Cady is ultimately lost to the river, presumably drowning in the stormy waters.

The film ends with Danielle narrating over scenes of the family reconnecting on the river’s shore. As they are crying and hugging each other, Danielle explains that the members of the family have an unspoken agreement to never talk of this night again. She ends by saying that “If you hang on to the past, you die a little every day.”

Archetypal Analysis

Sam Bowden is the Hero archetype of the story. While he is not the perfect husband and father, he tries desperately to protect his wife and daughter. Most heroes are faced with many perils (crucifixions) through the journey and Sam is no exception. He has to brave the attacks of a psychopath, the degradation of his relationship with his wife, and a storm strong enough to tear apart his boat. Sam’s first defeat is against Cady in the court room and their battle culminates in the literal Night-Sea Journey on Cape Fear.

Danielle is the Child archetype in this story. She is the thing that Sam wants to protect and the object that Cady pursues. At any given time, Danielle is a promise of Sam’s future and a
reference to Cady’s past as a convicted rapist. Danielle is the almost the same age as the child born as a result of Cady’s rape.

Kersek operates as the Shadow archetype in this story. While he is still a good person, he works outside of the law. He is working with Sam in order to protect the Bowden family but in a way that Sam would not dare do. While Sam (at first) believes that the legal system should be enough to protect them, Kersek tries to convince him that the only way to truly beat Cady is to be like Cady. Kersek sets up the trap to kill Cady, hires the thugs, and finally dies by Cady’s hand. Kersek does all of the bad things that Sam refuses to do. Kersek is all of the bad things that Sam refuses to be. Once Kersek dies, Sam the Hero unites with the Shadow archetype, allowing him to finally kill Cady.

The most enigmatic character in the film is Max Cady. Cady is characterized by the Trickster archetype. At any point in the film, Cady is shown as smart, ignorant, focused, violent, calm, and insane. He is able to quickly and easily manipulate those around him. He lies, cheats, stalks, scares, and does as he pleases throughout the film. He is the clear villain and acts accordingly. As the only tattooed character in this film, reveals a one-dimensional view of people with tattoos.

American History X (1998)

Characters

Derek: The main protagonist of the story. Derek is shown to be caring and protective. However, Derek plays two roles throughout the film. Before his incarceration, Derek is a neo-Nazi who kills two black men on his front porch. After his time in prison, Derek is shown as a changed man he tries to break his family out of the neo-Nazi regime.
Danny: Derek’s younger brother. Danny feels like he is defined by his relationship to his brother. Danny is a trouble maker is school and part of the neo-Nazi movement.

Principal Sweeny: Derek’s mentor through prison. Sweeny taught Derek in high school and attempts to correct Danny’s path as well.

Derek’s family: Derek’s family (other than Danny) consists of his mother, two sisters (Davina and Ally), and a deceased father.

Cameron Alexander: The leader of the neo-Nazi movement. Alexander taught Derek about neo-Nazism and recruits him at a young age. Alexander brainwashes young people into working for him and committing hate crimes. None of the criminal activity can be traced back to him.

**Synopsis**

The movie begins with trumpets blaring over a black screen. A black and white scene of tides crashing against the beach slowly fades in. A choir overtakes the trumpet at the beginning. The choir soon turns to sexual moaning as the scene transitions to a bedroom. The sex in the bedroom is interrupted when Danny comes bursting in to tell Derek that someone is breaking into his truck. Derek hops out of bed, revealing all of his neo-Nazi tattoos, and charges downstairs with a gun in his hand. He kicks out the front door to his home and starts shooting at the three black men who were breaking into his truck. Derek kills two of them in front of his younger brother Danny.

The next scene is in bright color and shows a conversation between Principal Sweeny and a teacher named Murray. Murray and Sweeny are arguing over the future of a student (Danny). Murray is upset that Danny wrote a report titled “My Mein Kampf” and argues for Danny’s expulsion. Sweeny refuses, instead offering to teach Danny history himself. From there, it is
decided that Sweeny is going to be teaching Danny and assigns a report about the events leading up to his brother’s incarceration and release.

Afterwards, Danny sees a few black kids beating up a nerdy white student in the bathroom. Danny stands up for the nerd and scares off the assailants. Danny calls over his shoulder on his way out that the nerd should learn to stand up for himself.

The film flashes to a police station across town. Sweeny is being introduced to a group of officers and detectives. The lead detective explains that Sweeny has been following the activity of a group of students involved in Cameron Alexander’s neo-Nazi movement. Sweeny tells the group that Alexander brainwashes students and Derek is mentioned. While Sweeny tries to convince them that Derek is not a problem, another detective plays a video of Derek spouting anti-black speech on television after his father was killed by a couple of black men. The detectives keep talking as the film switches to a flashback.

During the flashback, (shot in black and white), Danny is remembering a time when Derek was running their gang. In this memory, Derek and the rest of his followers are playing basketball in Venice Beach. After a faulty foul, Derek bets control of the court over the next game, as long as the game is blacks versus whites. A close game ensues, but Derek shoots the winning point and the black team is forced to leave the court for good.

Danny snaps back to reality when he returns home and sees Derek on the couch. Derek, who originally had his head shaved in the neo-Nazi fashion, has grown his hair out. Derek is wearing a long-sleeved white shirt, effectively hiding all of his tattoos. He looks completely different from the way that Danny has been remembering him.

During the reunion at home, Derek makes offhand comments about being mad at Cameron Alexander, but is interrupted when an old friend from the neo-Nazi group shows up.
The friend, Seth, is incredibly rude to both Derek and his family. Seth begins speaking poorly of Sweeny. Instead of joining in, however, Derek defends Sweeny and forces Seth to leave the house. As he is helping his mother with her smoking induced coughing fit, Derek explains to Danny that he just wants to protect the family and that they need to stay away from Alexander. The best way to do this is to leave Venice Beach and start somewhere new.

Danny leaves the family room and goes to write his paper. While he is attempting to write, he has another flashback to Derek before prison. In this flashback, Derek and the other members of the neo-Nazi movement are attacking a grocery store that is known for hiring immigrants. The neo-Nazi mob destroys the store and assaults the employees.

Another flashback follows, this time showing a dinner scene a few months after the father’s death. Murray, the teacher from school, is sitting at dinner next to Derek’s mother. After a discussion on affirmative action, Derek goes on a rant about the Rodney King court case. Derek believes that King was at fault and that the beating was justified. Derek’s girlfriend reinforces his assertions to an appalled Murray and mother. When the conversation gets too heated, Derek’s sister Davina stands up to him. Derek hits her and starts screaming at Murray to leave. Murray, a Jew, is offended by Derek’s tattoos and storms out of the house. While Danny is not a fan of the outcome, he is impressed by his brother’s conviction. Derek then apologizes to his mother and sister for the way he acted, once again suggesting that all he wants is to protect them.

The movie returns to present day as Danny is goofing off instead of writing his paper. He is playing with his sister, talking to his mother, and smoking a cigarette. After his mother makes a comment about Derek being back, Danny remembers the night that Derek was arrested. In this memory, Danny watches as Derek shoots one man to death and stomps on the back of another
man’s head. Derek gets arrested afterward while the family watches in fear. The movie returns to Danny writing his paper just before he packs up and leaves for a party thrown by Cameron Alexander.

There are scores of neo-Nazis at the party. Regalia are flying, slurs are being thrown around, and loud music is played in the background. Derek shows up at the party and tries to convince his old girlfriend to leave the party with him. After she refuses, he charges into the building to find Alexander.

Derek enters Alexander’s room and sees Danny sitting on the couch talking with Alexander. Derek orders Danny to leave and confronts the elderly Alexander. The two men have completely different ideas of how the conversation is going to go. Alexander wants Derek to start leading the movement now that he has been released from prison. Derek, on the other hand, wants to leave the movement and take his family with him. After a heated argument, Derek punches Alexander in the face and storms out of the office.

Seth discovers Alexander unconscious in the office and chases after Derek. When the two meet up, Seth pulls a gun and threatens Derek. Derek is able to wrestle the gun away and retreats from the scene with Danny in tow. Danny is noticeably upset with the way Derek handled the situation, so Derek tells him what really happened in prison.

The next flashback reveals Derek’s experience in prison. In an extensive black and white sequence, Derek is shown to have had a terrible experience in prison. Originally, Derek joins another white supremacy group by showing his Nazi tattoos and hoping someone else would see them. The group of whites accepts him into the group. After joining a prison gang, Derek is assigned laundry duty with a black man. Derek is silent during their first few interactions in the laundry room.
Derek notices that the whites are having dealings with the other races in prison. He is offended by the way that the whites are conducting business and confronts them in the jail yard. The other white guys say that they are tired of Derek’s preaching and threaten to shut him up. Derek starts to separate from the whites and slowly becomes closer with the black guy in the laundry room. The two are now joking around and become genuine friends.

Derek asks his new friend what landed him in prison. The black man says that he was charged with assault after accidentally dropping a stolen TV on a pursuing police officer. He has been sentenced to six years in prison and Derek is amazed at the unfair treatment of his new friend.

Shortly after that conversation, Derek is accosted by the whites in the shower. Derek is raped in the shower by his former friends and left alone afterwards. While he is healing in the infirmary, Sweeny visits. Sweeny is concerned that Danny is following in Derek’s footsteps. Derek is convinced that he cannot let Danny travel the same road so he works to be a better person.

When Derek returns to normal activity, he insults the whites in public and severs all ties. Although he expects retaliation, their revenge never comes. Derek keeps to himself, reads books provided by Sweeny, and gets through the rest of his sentence. As he is leaving, he sees his laundry friend. Derek finds out that his laundry friend, a black man, is the reason that the whites never sought vengeance on Derek. Derek leaves prison with a new perspective and is determined to get his life together.

The film returns to present day as Danny and Derek walk home. The brothers enter their house, say goodnight to the family, and begin taking down all of the Nazi paraphernalia.
However, Danny’s narration reveals that the neo-Nazi sentiments did not actually begin with Alexander or the death of their father.

The film enters its last flashback. The family is sitting around the dinner table, but this time, the father is present for the first time. Derek is in high school and explains that he has a new English teacher, Dr. Sweeny. Dr. Sweeny, a black man, has introduced Black literature into their curriculum. The father is perturbed by this, stating that Sweeny is one of those “preaching, educated blacks” that has removed the truly important stuff from the English curriculum. The father believes that it is teachers like Sweeny and programs like Affirmative Action that are making it difficult to be white in America.

Danny returns from the flashback and is shown finishing his paper. He prints off the report and leaves with Derek for school. On their way, the brothers are stopped by Sweeny. Sweeny is looking for Derek’s help in the case against Alexander. Derek reluctantly agrees to help after dropping his brother off.

At the school, Derek says goodbye to his brother and leaves to help Sweeny. Derek notices that he is being pursued by a green car and becomes suspicious. While he is checking out the green car, however, Danny is shot to death in the bathroom at school. The film ends with Derek cradling his dead brother while Danny’s voice reads aloud the last few lines of his report.

**Archetypal Analysis**

Danny is one of the protagonists in the film and the easiest to understand. Danny represents the Child archetype. In this role, he has multiple people fighting over his future. In fact, he clearly represents the past and the future. Danny represents the past because we see most of the flashbacks through Danny’s perspective. He is the one remembering most of the incidents.
Danny represents the future when he is writing his report. His narration at the end of the film expresses his newly changed views on race relations just before his death.

Principal Sweeny is shown as the Wise Old Man. Sweeny shows up at the right moments in the story and dispenses wisdom. He is someone that the protagonists look up to and is willing to share with them the knowledge he possesses. Sweeny works to help Danny and Derek indirectly by giving them the means to help themselves.

Cameron Alexander, while not having a lot of screen time, fulfills the Trickster archetype. Alexander manipulates the members of his neo-Nazi movement and lies to Danny in order to get him to partake in their parties.

Derek plays two different parts in this film. There is the present Derek and the past Derek. Present Derek is the Hero of the story. He is trying to protect his family, he battles against the evil (Alexander), and tries to save as many as possible. It is also important to note that Derek begins to hide his tattoos after his time in prison. Once he has been released from prison, Derek becomes a different person, a better person.

Past Derek, on the other hand, is the Shadow archetype. Past Derek represents all of the bad things that Present Derek left behind after prison. Past Derek is angry, aggressive with his family, and most importantly, a murderer. Instead of the caring older brother, Past Derek is selfish and focused on his neo-Nazi ideals. Additionally, Past Derek is the version that most frequently displays his tattoos. Present Derek hides his tattoos like a mark of shame.

_Boondock Saints_ (1999)

**Characters**

Murphy McManus: Connor’s brother. Murphy is one of the Saints and works with Connor and Rocco to bring down the Russian and Italian mobs.
Connor McManus: Murphy’s brother. Connor is another Saint and the brains behind their vigilante operation. Connor plans all of their attacks based loosely on things he’s seen in TV and movies.

Paul Smecker: FBI Agent tasked with pursuing the Saints. Smecker is incredibly brilliant and capable but plagued by the fact that he cannot administer justice the way that the Saints can.

Rocco: The third Saint member. Rocco works for the Italian mob until they try to kill him. He joins the Saints to exact revenge. He provides the saints with information on targets.

Il Dulce: Famed hit man for Italian mafia. Attempts to kill the Saints on a couple occasions. Eventually joins the Saints when he discovers that he is their father.

Synopsis

The movie begins with skyline shots of South Boston. As the camera flies over the city, Church music and scenery are interjected throughout. The camera cuts to two men in black coats sitting in the back of a full church. As the camera pans across the two men, their tattoos become visible. The camera zooms in on the men and the words “Aequitas” and “Veritas” are clearly seen tattooed on the men’s respective hands (Aequitas and Veritas are the Latin words for Justice and Truth). The two men, Connor and Murphy McManus, stand up in the back of the church and walk toward the altar. In front of the congregation, the two lean forward and kiss the base of the crucifix before heading out of the church. A visiting priest begins to question what is happening but is told to remain quiet by another member of the congregation.

The introductory credit sequence develops the brothers’ relationship. It shows them goofing off with friends, fighting each other, working with the people down at the docks, and generally getting along happily. It also explains that the McManus brothers are very close but were abandoned by their parents at an early age. The intro credits end with the McManus
brothers at a bar with friends on St. Patrick’s Day. The bartender announces to the small group at the end of the night that he has to close the bar indefinitely because he can no longer afford the Russian’s increased rent. As he is telling the rowdy group of Irishmen at the bar the news, three Russian mobsters enter the establishment and demand that the Irish patrons leave.

The story fast forwards to the next day when Boston police officers find two dead Russians in an alley near the bar. The cops try and figure out what happened, but FBI agent Paul Smecker shows up to offer his take on the case. Smecker, brought in because of the international nature of the incident, describes the violent crime scene and accurately predicts what happened the preceding night. Smecker turns on his walkman and recreates the crime scene in his mind.

While Smecker is analyzing the crime scene, the McManus brothers are in the hospital with a few cuts and bruises. They get released from the hospital, drop a bag of stolen goods off with the bartender, and leave to turn themselves in to the police.

At the police station, Smecker believes that he has solved the case and starts sending out officers to find them. Although the officers believe the brothers who killed the Russians are heroes, Smecker assures them that they are still in fact criminals and need to be punished. As Smecker is about to dismiss the officers, the McManus brothers enter the police station.

Smecker interviews the boys about the events leading up to the night before. The brothers converse secretly in Russian, then Spanish, and finally Italian before explaining to Smecker what happened. Their story is as follows:

The night before, the Russians entered the bar and demanded everyone leave. Rocco, one of the patrons at the bar, starts a fight with one of the Russians and a brawl breaks out. However, the Russians are heavily outnumbered and quickly defeated. The Irishmen tie one guy to the
table and light his backside on fire while the other Russian is unconscious on the floor. The Irish kick the Russians out of the bar and continue their night of revelry.

The next morning, the McManus brothers are rudely awakened by the same two Russians from the night before. This time, the Russians break into their home and hold them at gunpoint. The Russians handcuff Connor to the toilet and take Murphy to be executed in the alley. In a fit of rage and fear, Connor rips the toilet from the wall and brings it to the roof. He looks over the edge of the roof and sees the Russians holding a gun to Murphy’s head. Connor throws the toilet at one of the Russians and jumps on the other. After one is killed by the falling toilet, Murphy grabs the dead man’s gun and shoots the other. Murphy collects the Russians’ guns and wallets, lifts Connor over his shoulder, and makes a clean getaway.

After hearing their story, Smecker is forced to keep the boys overnight. During the night, Connor and Murphy wake to a large thunderstorm. Connor turns to face his brother and whispers that they should continue doing vigilante work. He quotes the priest at the beginning of the movie and says that the only thing they should fear is “the ignorance of good men.” With that, the McManus brothers decide to continue their life of vigilantism.

As they leave their cell, they are greeted by the entire police force. The police members are cheering for the brothers, calling them the Saints of South Boston. Instead of being incarcerated for murder, the police release the Saints, saying that the killings were in self-defense. On their way out of the station, the Saints hear of a group of Russians meeting that night in a building downtown and they plan their next attack.

The scene cuts to Rocco making a delivery to his boss, the Italian mob boss Papa Joe. Papa Joe seems to like Rocco and asks him to tell a joke. After an incredibly racist joke, Joe and Rocco share a laugh and Rocco exits the mob building.
The story cuts back to the Saints as they are stocking up on weapons. After showing another Irishman what the two were able to accomplish without any weapons, the gun runner is happy to offer them the pick of his arsenal. The Saints grab as many weapons as they can carry, as well as supplies like ropes and knives.

The next night, Smecker receives a phone call saying that there’s been another murder. He hurries to the scene of the crime and finds the bodies of nine dead Russians, each with his arms crossed and silver coins over his eyes. Smecker deduces that the murders have a religious angle, based on a historical Roman story where two pieces of silver were the required fee to cross the river Styx into the afterlife. After that, he looks around and recreates the crime scene in his mind.

The film jumps back to the Saints in an elevator heading down to the target’s room. As they ride the elevator, the two joke about what they are about to do. The elevator nears the end of the trip and the two Saints climb up through the utility shaft and enter the air conditioning ducts. With their guns in a bag, the Saints clamber through the ducts in an attempt to find their targets. As they get closer, the boys start arguing and eventually start to hit each other in the confined space. The struggle gets more aggressive and the boys fall through the ceiling into the room full of Russian mobsters. Dangling from their rope in the center of the room, the Saints manage to execute every mobster in the room. Only one man, the boss, is left alive after the bloodbath. The Saints force the boss to his knees and place their guns to the back of his head. After saying their family’s secret prayer in unison, they execute the man. Once everyone is dead, the Saints arrange the bodies, cross their arms, and place the coins.

As they are admiring their handiwork, the Saints hear the doorbells ring. Looking through the peephole, they realize that it is Rocco on the other side of the door, dressed to deliver room
service. The Saints, now wearing masks, open the door violently and pull Rocco into the room. They lead him to believe that they are going to kill him when Rocco reveals that he was also sent to kill the Russians.

After the first hit, the Saints return to Rocco’s house to revel in their victory. Both Connor and Murphy think that it is an easy job and are thrilled with the way things turned out. Connor explains to Rocco that he believes that Boston is full of good people with loving families who are not able to live healthy lives because they fear the criminals in the area. Connor and Murphy believe that it is their duty to “kill ‘em all.”

However, both are concerned that the Italians have set up Rocco to die. Connor explains that Rocco was sent to kill nine Russians with a gun that only holds six bullets. Rocco believes that it must have been misinformation that could have potentially led him to death. In order to clear things up, Rocco goes to talk to the Italians and see what went wrong.

Rocco leaves the apartment and heads to a local diner. He walks in and the members of the Italian mob are surprised he’s alive. They explain that Papa Joe and one of his lieutenants sent Rocco on a suicide mission in hopes that he would kill one or two of the Russians. As they laugh about how Rocco was taken advantage of, Rocco pulls a gun and shoots two men to death. He storms out of the diner and shoots the man behind the counter in a rage.

Rocco decides that he is going to join the Saints and starts feeding them information about who they can pursue next. The Saints decide to pursue the lieutenant responsible for Rocco’s last job for the Italians. The Saints follow the lieutenant to a strip club and murder him, along with five other mobsters, in the VIP room. The Saints cross the arms of the bodies and place the silver again before leaving the scene. Smecker shows up at the scene hours later and is
frustrated that he cannot figure out the pattern of violence. It is not until he stands in the center of
the room and realizes that the six deaths are a result of three men wielding a total of two pistols.

After the death of his lieutenant, Papa Joe worries that he might be next. He calls in a
professional hit man, Il Dulce (the Duke). Il Dulce is a renowned killer who has wiped out entire
buildings of people. However, Il Dulce refuses to kills women and children. After being released
from his high-priority prison cell, Il Dulce begins hunting the Saints.

Without knowing that Il Dulce is on their trail, the Saints plan their next strike. Rocco
explains to the McManus brothers that there is another Italian hit man in South Boston. This hit
man attends a poker game every Friday with other members of the mob. The Saints storm the
poker game and kill everyone in attendance. They arrange the bodies as usual and leave the
house, only to find that Il Dulce is waiting for them outside.

Il Dulce starts firing at the Saints. As they return fire, Murphy and Connor take cover in
the bushes while Rocco cowers next to the stairs. Il Dulce unloads six full guns into the side of
the house before the Saints are able to escape. But they do not escape unharmed. Murphy and
Connor receive bullet wounds in the shoulder and leg respectively. Rocco loses a finger in the
firefight.

The scene cuts and flashes to Smecker standing in front of the crime scene. The house
that once held the poker game is covered in blood and bullet holes. Smecker listens to his
walkman as he tries to figure out what happened here. He is unable to figure out what happened
and cannot generate any DNA samples from the blood. Frustrated, Smecker collapses in the
bushes and finds Rocco’s finger. After testing it for DNA, he realizes that Rocco is the third
member of the Saints and remembers him from the McManus brothers’ initial self-defense story.
Smecker now knows that the McManus brothers are responsible for the string of violent murders in the city but chooses not to do anything.

Later, the Saints are seen healing their wounds in Rocco’s apartment. They use a hot iron to cauterize any open wounds from their exchange will Il Dulce. Rocco blames the firefight on Smecker, but the McManus brothers state that they refuse to kill Smecker because he’s a good man. The Saints only target bad men.

The next morning, Rocco drops the brothers off at church. As he is leaving, Rocco notices that an intoxicated Smecker is entering the church as well. Rocco takes a priest hostage and follows Smecker into a confessional. As Smecker is speaking to the priest, Connor threatens Rocco and demands that Rocco leave the agent and priest alone. As Connor and Rocco are negotiating their roles in the Saints, the two overhear Smecker’s conversation with the priest. Smecker is convinced that the Saints are doing the right thing and tells the priest that he is not going to try and stop them. Satisfied that their identities and mission are protected, Rocco and Connor meet up with Murphy and leave the church.

The next night, the Saints attempt to kill Papa Joe at his house during a party. However, the Saints are captured, tied up, and tortured. Papa Joe kills Rocco in front of the Saints and leaves the room. As Papa Joe is leaving the house, he warns the other mobsters that Il Dulce is still free and will most likely come to kill the Saints, his primary targets. Papa Joe leaves and the mobsters continue to beat the McManus brothers. A few minutes later, the doorbell rings. One of the mobsters leaves the room to answer the door and finds a woman waiting for him. The woman (Smecker dressed in drag) seduces the mobster and kills him. Convinced that he is helping the Saints, Smecker continues searching the house and kills two more mobsters. As he is closing in on the brothers, Il Dulce appears and knocks him out (assuming that Smecker is a woman).
During Smecker’s journey through the house, the McManus brothers manage to free themselves from their bonds and kill their torturers. They are cradling Rocco’s body and reciting the family prayer for him as he bleeds out onto the concrete floor. Il Dulce enters the room and hears the prayer. He recites the end of the prayer with them, leading the boys to discover that he is their father.

The final scene of the film occurs three months after Rocco’s death. Papa Joe is on trial for murder but is expected to walk free. The Saints (now including Il Dulce) enter the court room and interrupt the proceedings. Smecker watches from the hallway as they force Joe into the center of the room and hold their guns to his head. Vowing to hunt the wicked, the Saints recite the family prayer and execute Joe in front of everyone.

**Archetypal Analysis**

While Connor and Murphy McManus are the protagonists of the film, agent Paul Smecker is the true Hero archetype. Smecker follows the hero’s struggle, including fighting for a righteous cause and suffering a defeat at the hands of his opponents (he cannot figure out who is causing the murders and it causes him great anguish). In the end, Smecker watches as the Saints carry on with their vigilante work.

Rocco, while a member of the Saints, plays a different role. Although he is not a bad guy, Rocco fulfills the Trickster archetype. Rocco is constantly telling jokes, but it is his irrational behavior that marks him as the Trickster. In the grand scheme of the film, Rocco manipulates the McManus brothers and convinces them to kill the people that crossed him.

Il Dulce is an interesting character in the film. At first, he is the antagonist. He hunts the Saints (and others before them) with a brutal efficiency. Once he joins the Saints, however, his
countenance changes. The McManus brothers discover that he is their father and Il Dulce fulfills the Wise Old Man role. He starts offering advice and guides the brothers toward their justice.

Lastly, the McManus brothers fill the Shadow archetype. While they are protagonists in the movie, the brothers act as the Shadow to Smecker’s Hero. Smecker has a strong sense of duty and believes that the legal system is enough to punish the wicked. However, he realizes that the justice system may never quite do everything it needs to. The McManus brothers are everything that Smecker is not. They are decisive and able to act outside the law. The tattooed McManus brothers are able to deliver on the “Veritas and Aequitas” in a way that Smecker can never accomplish.

**Memento (2000)**

**Characters**

Leonard: Leonard is the main character of the movie. He suffers from a specific form of mental disability that stops him from creating new memories. While he remembers everything leading up to the rape and assault of his wife, Leonard has been unable to form new memories since the incident. Leonard has the potential to forget exactly what is happening to him at any point. Routine and experience help him navigate the perilous world. The movie revolves around Leonard’s quest for vengeance against the man he believes to have killed his wife, John G. Leonard uses Polaroid’s and tattoos as a way to remember things. He is covered in cryptic and violent messages.

Teddy: Teddy is an undercover police officer actually named John Gammel. Teddy helps Leonard with his search for his wife’s attacker. Teddy is afraid that Leonard will discover that his real name is John G. Teddy tries to help Leonard whenever he can because he feels guilty that he could not solve Leonard’s wife’s murder case.
Nathalie: Nathalie is a person that helps Leonard at first. However, Nathalie turns out to be an evil character that uses Leonard’s condition to exact revenge against Teddy and a few other people. Nathalie is the manipulative and dangerous girlfriend of a small-time drug dealer.

Sammy Jankis: A man with the same condition at Leonard. Sammy Jankis was unable to cope with his condition and was ultimately institutionalized. Leonard originally believed that Jankis was lying about his condition but comes to believe that the condition is very real.

**Synopsis**

*Memento* is told in a reverse fashion. The movie technically begins with the final scene as the director walks the audience backwards through the story. In an attempt to recreate the feeling of losing memory, each scene chronologically occurs before the scene after it (if the scenes were shot in the order of 1,2,3, then they are presented as scenes 3,2,1). Because of this storytelling technique, a reproduction of the synopsis may be a bit confusing. Each of the paragraphs will represent a new scene in the film. A new paragraph marks a point where Leonard forgets everything that has happened thus far. For convenience, there is a chronologically correct explanation of the plot at the end of this synopsis.

The film begins by fading in on a Polaroid featuring a dead body with a bullet wound in the head. Shot in reverse, we see the image start to fade from the photograph. The bullet exits the wound and returns to the gun; the head wound closes up. The audience sees Teddy on the ground, begging for his life, as Leonard prepares to pull the trigger. The scene is displayed as a murder in reverse.

The scene ends and Leonard is waking up in a non-descript motel room. He is trying to figure out where he is when he hears a knock on the door. Teddy is standing outside the motel room and convinces Leonard to travel with him to an abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of
town. Leonard is wary of Teddy but travels with him. Leonard shoots Teddy again and the scene cuts.

Afterwards, Leonard wakes up in a motel room. He is looking at the mirror across from the bed and starts examining the tattoos. Every time Leonard wakes up, he forgets everything he has learned in the preceding part of the story. The tattoos are used as a way to keep him on track. He notices a few of the tattoos, including “Remember Sammy Jankis” on his hand, “The Facts” on his thigh, and “John G Raped and Killed My Wife” across his chest. These are all clues to his wife’s murder and tattooed in reverse so Leonard can read them in the mirror.

Leonard examines his dossier of criminal activity that he has been collecting and reviews the case. He believes that Teddy (actually named John Gammel) is the man who murdered his wife. Leonard is out for vengeance and meets a woman named Nathalie in a local diner to plot his revenge. Nathalie delivers Teddy’s license plate information to Leonard but is interrupted when Leonard starts recalling his wife before the murder.

The next scene shows Teddy and Leonard sitting at lunch together. Teddy tells Leonard that Nathalie is a dangerous person but Leonard’s notes convince him to ignore Teddy’s cautions. Instead, Leonard goes to Nathalie’s house and ends up staying the night.

Leonard returns to the discount motel from the first scene and asks to be shown to his room. He discovers that the clerk has been renting Leonard a new room each time in an attempt to make money. While Leonard does not appreciate being used, he tells the clerk that he likes the honesty and starts to move all of his belongings into one room. Leonard lies down in his bed and wakes up next to Nathalie in her home.

Nathalie explains to Leonard that a man named Dodd hit her. Leonard, who has no recollection of who Nathalie is or why he’s there, follows Dodd and beats him senseless.
Leonard forgets everything again and wakes up in his motel room. Leonard begins examining his surroundings again and finds a man bloodied and bound in the closet. Leonard sees the name “Dodd” written on the Polaroid around the man’s neck and searches through his dossier. He sees that Nathalie asked him to find Dodd. As he is on his way to see Nathalie, he forgets again.

Now, Leonard is being chased by Dodd through a trailer park. Dodd is shooting a pistol at Leonard as he is trying to escape. Leonard follows Dodd back to the discount motel and lays a trap for him. Unfortunately, Leonard forgets what he is doing there and takes a shower instead. Dodd interrupts the shower and Leonard knocks him unconscious with an empty whiskey bottle.

The film flashes to Leonard outside a decrepit building burning all of his wife’s belongings. He answers his cell phone and begins talking about his investigation. The person on the other end of the line says that he is a cop (Teddy) and tries to understand what Leonard is doing.

Leonard forgets the conversation is happening and begins retelling the story of Sammy Jankis. Before Leonard lost his memory-making ability, he was an insurance claims investigator looking into the case of a man named Sammy Jankis. Sammy was in a car accident that left him without the ability to create new memories. Leonard believed that Sammy’s condition was psychological, not physical, so he denied Mr. and Mrs. Jankis their insurance claim. Eventually, Mrs. Jankis believes that Sammy is faking his injury and concocts different ways to test her theory. She finally believes that Sammy will snap out of it when her life is in danger. She tricks Sammy into giving her too many insulin shots and she dies trying to prove her point.

As Leonard is leaving a house, he discovers Teddy waiting for him by his car. Teddy tries unsuccessfully to convince Leonard that Nathalie is a drug trafficker and that Leonard should not trust her. However, Leonard’s trusty dossier reminds him that Teddy is not to be trusted.
Leonard finds himself sitting on the couch in someone’s home. Nathalie returns with a black eye and a bloody lip. She claims that Dodd beat her. Leonard storms out of the house to confront Dodd.

Leonard wakes up in Nathalie’s bed and retells the story of his wife’s murder. He remembers two men breaking into his house and sexually assaulting his wife. Leonard follows them into the bathroom and has his head smashed into the mirror. Leonard’s last memory is staring into his wife’s lifeless eyes as she lies next to him on the bathroom floor.

The movie cuts back to Leonard sitting on Nathalie’s couch. The two get into an argument and Nathalie reveals that she is using Leonard because he forgets everything. Nathalie insults his wife and blames Leonard for Jimmy’s death. Jimmy, Nathalie’s drug dealer boyfriend, went missing after he was supposed to meet with a man named Teddy about a drug deal. The argument escalates and Leonard hits Nathalie. Nathalie laughs as she leaves the house and waits in her car. After Leonard forgets what has happened between them, she returns to the house with a fresh black eye and bloody lip, claiming that Dodd beat her. Leonard leaves to exact vengeance on Dodd.

Leonard finds himself at a bar somewhere in the city. A woman behind the counter, Nathalie, offers him a drink on the house and laughs as Leonard takes a sip. She notices that Leonard really cannot remember anything and accuses him of killing her boyfriend Jimmy. Leonard is confused and leaves the bar.

The next scene shows Teddy following Leonard into a tattoo parlor. Leonard is getting a new clue tattooed onto his thigh. Teddy suggests that Leonard leave town and hands him a note that mentions a bar named Ferdy’s. Leonard leaves the tattoo parlor and heads for the bar, where he is confronted outside by Nathalie.
Teddy shows up outside Leonard’s motel room and gives him the equipment required to kill a man. Teddy and Leonard show up at the abandoned warehouse at the beginning of the film and await Jimmy. Leonard forgets what he is doing and Teddy slips out the back.

Jimmy enters the warehouse and attacks Leonard. Leonard gains the upper hand and pins Jimmy to the ground, holding him at gunpoint. Leonard commands that Jimmy strip down. After Jimmy gets undressed, Leonard hits him in the head and tosses him down the stairs. Leonard forgets what he is doing when he hears Jimmy’s head hit the concrete and realizes that he has just killed a man. Leonard runs outside and finds Teddy waiting.

Leonard calls for help and Teddy rushes in to see what happened. After confirming that Jimmy is dead, Teddy tells Leonard that the two of them had planned this together. Leonard is angry and attacks Teddy. However, Teddy explains that he has been helping Leonard the whole time.

Teddy explains what has really happened to Leonard after the injury that took his memory. After the assault, Teddy tracked down one of the assailants. Leonard and Teddy worked together and were able to figure out who the other person was. Leonard got the phrase “John G. Raped and Killed my Wife” tattooed on his chest after the discovery. Together, the men track down and kill the original John G. Teddy, fearing that Leonard may forget that they did this, produces a photo that shows Leonard right after his vengeance has been exacted. However, Leonard has no recollection of getting revenge and believes that Teddy is lying to him. Teddy explains that Sammy Jankis was never really married. Leonard has created an elaborate backstory for a man in an institution. The story of Mrs. Jankis’s death was actually what happened to Leonard’s wife. His wife survived the assault that night and had to live with Leonard and his
destroyed memory. Leonard accidentally killed her by giving her too much insulin. He was acquitted of murder because of his condition.

After hearing all of this information, Leonard believes that Teddy is a liar and begins plotting Teddy’s death. Although the real John G. had been killed over a year ago, Leonard decides that Teddy will be his new “John G.”

***Chronologically correct version***

While trying to stop the sexual assault of his wife, Leonard sustains a severe head injury that ruins his ability to make new memories. Leonard’s wife believes he is faking it and concocts a plot where Leonard accidentally kills her. Although he is technically a murderer, he cannot remember actually hurting his wife. Leonard creates the false memory of Sammy Jankis in order to cope with the loss of his wife. However, his memory loss causes him to believe that his wife was murdered during the assault. With the help of Officer John “Teddy” Gammel, Leonard tracks down the two assailants. Teddy and Leonard exact revenge on both men. Afterwards, Teddy uses Leonard to start killing other “John G’s.” After Leonard kills a drug dealer named Jimmy, the duo separate. Leonard believes that Teddy is lying to him and seeks help based on things he finds in Jimmy’s clothing. The clues bring him to Ferdy’s bar, Nathalie’s place of employment. Nathalie figures out that Teddy and Leonard killed her boyfriend Jimmy and plots her revenge. She uses Leonard’s condition to turn him against Teddy and eventually sets into motion the events that lead to Teddy’s murder. The story ends with Leonard killing Teddy in the same warehouse where Jimmy was killed a few days earlier.

Archetypal Analysis:

Teddy is one of the good people in the film. During the natural progression of the movie, Teddy plays a few different roles. At first, Teddy is the Trickster role. Leonard believes that
Teddy is manipulative and lying. However, Teddy’s true nature is revealed at the end of the film. Teddy’s protective nature and strict loyalty to the confused Leonard make him a Father archetype. He uses his knowledge of Leonard’s condition as well as the criminal activity in the area to give Leonard a sense of purpose and to guide him through the struggles of losing his memory.

Nathalie has the reverse trajectory. The beginning of the film depicts Nathalie as a good person. She is helping Leonard find his justice. The audience discovers later that Nathalie is actually an evil person. She uses Leonard’s condition against him, plotting vengeance against Teddy, and ultimately trying to kill both of them. Nathalie’s lying nature places her in the Trickster archetype.

Sammy Jankis serves as Leonard’s inspiration for the film. While Sammy is not an active character, he is portrayed as Leonard’s Shadow. Leonard describes Sammy in a way that highlights the negative aspects of their condition. Sammy is unable to live in the real world because he is unorganized and does not trust his instincts. Sammy is not really Leonard’s Shadow so much as he is the manifestation of Leonard’s inability to deal with the condition.

During Leonard’s flashbacks to his wife, he fondly remembers the time he spent with her. All of the scenes depicting them (with the exception of her assault) are happy and idealized. When Leonard and his wife are shown together before the accident, they are representing the Syzygy motif (the Divine Couple). Together, they are the depiction of wholeness. Leonard goes down a bad path once his Syzygy motif is disrupted.

The last and only tattooed character, Leonard, plays four major archetypes. First, Leonard fulfills the Hero role throughout the film. Leonard is the one out seeking justice for the loss of his wife. In addition to seeking justice, Leonard is not content to sit by while others are hurt. He
seeks to protect Nathalie, even though he is unable to truly help himself. Through his attempts at helping Nathalie, Leonard feels more like the Wounded Healer than the Hero. Granted, he is still working to get revenge, but his actions are now for others and not for himself. Once Leonard is defeated by Nathalie, he starts to shift again. Instead of being the Wounded Healer, Leonard is the Child that needs direction. Both Nathalie and Teddy seek to give Leonard the direction that he desperately needs. Teddy represents Leonard’s past and gives him all the information contained in the dossier. Nathalie interferes with Leonard’s future and ultimately causes Teddy’s death.

Interestingly enough, Leonard’s final archetypal motif occurs long before the story takes place. During the flashbacks to his life before the accident, Leonard is shown as a content person in a happy marriage. This idealized image of life acts as the Anthropos archetype. Although not a god-like being, Leonard’s memory of himself before his accident is what he constantly strives to be. In his Anthropos state, Leonard is happy and whole.

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*Eastern Promises* (2007)

**Characters**

Anna: Midwife of Russian descent. Anna is one of the protagonists in the film. She works at Trafalgar hospital and attempts to solve the mystery surrounding Tatiana’s death. Anna ultimately saves Tatiana’s baby Christina.

Tatiana: A fourteen year old girl who was raped before the film takes place. Tatiana gives birth to a child, Christina, before she dies of pregnancy complications. All she leaves behind is a diary written in Russian detailing the last events of her life.

Nikolai: Nikolai is a Russian mobster and the other protagonist in the film. Nikolai is calm, collected, strong, and covered in tattoos. The tattoos on Nikolai’s body describe what has
happened to him in his life. Near the end of the movie, the audience discovers that Nikolai is an undercover KGB agent and overthrows the Russian mob boss, Semyon.

Krill: Krill is Semyon’s son and a lieutenant in the Russian mob. Krill is a repressed homosexual whose feelings for Nikolai get in the way of his judgment. Krill’s homosexual tendencies cause tension between him and his father.

Semyon: The leader of the Russian mob. Semyon owns a restaurant that houses most of their organizations criminal activities. Semyon is accused of raping Tatiana and is the biological father of her daughter, Christina.

Stephan: Anna’s uncle and the person who initially translates Tatiana’s diary. Stephan is protective of his family and goes to great lengths to keep the Russian mafia away.

**Synopsis**

The movie begins with a scene in a barber shop. A young man is running through the empty streets as a man named Azim is giving a haircut to a patron. The young man, Azim’s son, bursts into the barbershop and locks the door behind him. Azim tells the young man to keep quiet as he finishes the haircut. Azim talks to the patron about how irresponsible his son is. The son, who speaks with a stutter, slowly walks over to the patron and slits his throat while Azim holds him down. The two carry the body into the back room of the barber shop.

With the rain pouring outside, the camera shifts to a pharmacy a few streets down. In the pharmacy, a young girl named Tatiana is staggering around the feminine care aisle. She walks up to the front desk and asks for help as a pool of blood starts to form around her feet. The pharmacy clerk rushes her to the hospital.

Anna, a midwife at Trafalgar Hospital, is on call the night that Tatiana is brought in with pregnancy complications. The doctors are able to save the baby but Tatiana dies during
childbirth. Anna finds Tatiana’s diary and decides to have it translated from Russian to English. Anna brings the diary to her uncle Stephan for translation, but Stephan refuses to read a dead girl’s diary.

Desperate for the translation, Anna goes to the address printed inside the diary and discovers that it is a Russian restaurant owned by a man named Semyon. Semyon denies knowing who Tatiana is but offers to translate the diary anyway. He invites Anna to return to the restaurant tomorrow so he can help her with the translation. As Anna leaves the restaurant, she is stopped by Nikolai. Nikolai, a driver for the Russians, offers to buy her a drink before she goes home. Anna declines and returns to her mother’s house.

At dinner, Anna has another conversation with her uncle about translating the diary. Again, he refuses to help. He also claims that Anna’s curious nature led to the disintegration of her relationship with her now ex-boyfriend. Stephan says that it is for the best anyway, because a bi-racial relationship like the one Anna was in is always doomed and is the main reason that Anna had a miscarriage a year prior. Disgusted by her uncle’s ignorance, Anna leaves the table and heads to bed.

The scene then cuts to a dinner party hosted by Semyon at his restaurant. In attendance are Semyon, his son Krill, Nikolai, Azim and his son, and a few other Russian people. During dinner, Azim motions for Krill and Nikolai to follow him. Azim leads the two to a freezer in the back of the restaurant. Inside the freezer, Nikolai and Krill and introduced to the body of the patron from the beginning of the film. Nikolai rolls up his sleeves to begin taking care of the body and reveals a few of the tattoos covering his arms. Nikolai then processes the body, which includes removing finger tips and teeth, and leaves with Krill to dispose of it. Together, they throw the body into the river running through town.
The next day, Anna is spending time with Christina, Tatiana’s baby, when she decides that she should have Semyon decipher the diary. She leaves the baby at the hospital and drives her motorcycle to the Russian restaurant. She shows up before the agreed upon time and Semyon is unable to help her with translation. Disappointed, Anna leaves and runs into Krill and Nikolai outside the restaurant. Krill is drunk and stumbles inside, but Nikolai offers to help when Anna has motorcycle trouble. After unsuccessfully jump-starting her bike, Nikolai drives Anna home in his car.

Later that night, the police discover the body of the patron washed up on the shore. The only way they are able to identify the man is by the tattoos on his body. According to the detectives, “in Russian prisons, your life’s story is written on your body in tattoos.” The tattoos on the dead man are the only identifying mark and help the detectives figure out what happened.

After Anna is dropped off at home, she discovers that Uncle Stephan has been secretly reading Tatiana’s diary. In the diary, he finds sordid stories of rapes, drugs, and prostitution. He believes that the diary should be returned to the Russian mafia so that his family can stay safe. Anna refuses and brings photocopies of the diary to Semyon.

The movie switches back to Nikolai and Krill at a whore house. Krill explains that this is his father’s special whore house and that all the women are hand-selected by Semyon himself. In order to prove he is a true member of their organization and not a homosexual, Krill demands that Nikolai have sex with one of the girls in front of him. While Krill never explicitly states that he is gay, there are rumors spreading around the organization. Krill watches Nikolai have sex with the young girl at the brothel before drunkenly staggering away. As Nikolai is getting dressed, he apologizes to the girl. He hands her a stack of money and a train ticket out of the city before closing the door behind him.
Next, Anna is shown at the hospital, perusing Stephan’s notes about the diary. She reads that Krill recruited Tatiana from her small Russian village to become a prostitute. She was told that she would be able to sing in his father’s restaurant for more money than she made working in the fields. However, she arrives at the restaurant and is immediately forced into prostitution. Anna learns that Krill attempted to rape Anna, but was interrupted by Semyon. Instead, Semyon decided that he should be the first person to have her and forces Krill to watch as he violates Tatiana. While Anna is reading the notes, Semyon enters the room and tries to convince Anna to relinquish the diary. He offers to provide Anna with Tatiana’s next of kin so the baby can have a home. After she refuses, Semyon approaches the baby, smirks, and leaves the hospital.

Back at the restaurant, Semyon finds out that Nikolai and Azim helped orchestrate the murder in the barber shop. Semyon threatens to beat Krill but Nikolai intervenes and calms the two down. After Krill leaves, Nikolai vows to protect Krill when the dead man’s family seeks vengeance.

Nikolai leaves the restaurant and goes to meet Anna and her family at a local diner. Nikolai is able to convince Anna and the family to give up the diary, but does not give them the location of Tatiana’s family. Uncle Stephan spits in Nikolai’s face and threatens to hurt him. Stone-faced, Nikolai takes the diary and leaves the diner. After reading it, Nikolai returns the diary to Semyon at the restaurant.

Semyon is still fuming about his son’s rash actions. Semyon discovers that Krill orchestrated the murder because someone was spreading rumors about their family. After pressuring him, Nikolai confesses that the rumors were that Krill was a drunk and gay. Nikolai defends Krill’s honor and Semyon leaves the table to burn the diary. As he is walking away,
Semyon demands that Nikolai get rid of Anna’s uncle because he now knows too much about Semyon’s criminal life. Nikolai pays Uncle Stephan a visit to kill the man.

Nikolai decides to return Anna’s motorcycle and tracks her down at the hospital. He delivers the motorcycle as well as the information regarding Tatiana’s next of kin. Anna asks Nikolai about her uncle’s whereabouts but Nikolai denies knowing where he is. Nikolai warns Anna that the Russians are dangerous and leaves the woman at the hospital.

Meanwhile, Azim’s son is murdered in a local cemetery in order to send a message to Semyon and his family. Azim is told that he has to deliver Krill to the enemy or he will be killed like his son. Scared for his life, Azim turns to Semyon and asks for help. Together, the two hatch a plan to save what is left of their respective families.

The next scene shows Nikolai’s promotion into the family. Nikolai is shown standing in his underpants in front of a group of older Russian men, including Semyon and Azim. While he is standing in the spotlight, all of his tattoos are visible. Each tattoo tells a different part of his life story. In the end, the council decides that Nikolai has earned his promotion and tattoos the lieutenant stars onto his shoulders and knees. In order to celebrate his promotion, Azim and Nikolai go to the local spa to relax.

Azim and Nikolai enter the spa and head for the sauna. Once they are in, Azim claims to have forgotten something and heads to the locker room. Two large men dressed in all black are waiting in the locker room. Azim points toward the sauna and says “Krill is in there.” The two men slowly walk into the sauna and attack Nikolai, believing him to be the person who killed their brother at the beginning of the movie. After a violent struggle, Nikolai kills both of the men and winds up in the hospital.
Anna is on duty in the hospital the night that Nikolai is brought in. She questions Nikolai about what happened and he explains what is going on. Nikolai paid Uncle Stephan to leave the country instead of killing him. He was then framed as Krill by Semyon and Azim. After surviving the attack, he plans on taking down Semyon and placing Krill in charge of the organization.

The detectives from the first murder show up at the hospital and start questioning Nikolai. Nikolai reveals that he is actually an undercover KGB agent and that he is close to toppling the Russian mob. With Nikolai’s secret help, the police are able to pin the Tatiana’s rape on Semyon. All they need is to prove Semyon’s paternity of the child. The police go to the restaurant and collect Semyon’s blood sample. Worried that he will get caught for the rape, Semyon sends Krill to dispose of the child.

Anna and Nikolai work together to track down Krill and baby Christina. The duo finds Krill at the same spot that Nikolai used to dispose of the first body. Krill is obviously disturbed at the thought of killing a baby but wants to maintain loyalty to his father, Nikolai is able to calm him down and convince him to return the child to Anna. Together, Nikolai and Krill plot to take over the business. By returning Christina, Semyon’s paternity will be proven and he will be imprisoned. Nikolai and Krill embrace before walking off down the dark alley. Nikolai stops by Anna, thanks her for her help, kisses her passionately, and leaves with Krill. The film ends with Anna and Christina playing in a home setting one year later. The two seem happy together as the scene transitions to Nikolai sitting alone at a table in the restaurant. Tatiana’s voice describes her reason for leaving her village as the screen fades to black: “That is why I left; to start a new life.”

Archetypal Analysis
Anna is the Hero archetype in *Eastern Promises*. Anna is led by a strong sense of justice and wants to protect Christina. She puts herself into increasingly dangerous situations to find justice for a dead girl. In the end, she even adopts Christina.

While Christina does not actively play a large role in the film, she fulfills the Child archetype. She is the object of Christina’s protection. Christina represents the past (Tatiana’s rape and the criminal organization) and the future (Anna’s chance at a happy family, the possibility of stopping future rapes happening in this organization). Christina is what both the good and bad people are seeking.

Semyon and Uncle Stephan play strangely similar roles. Both men operate as the Wise Old Man archetype. Each gives guidance to their respective family members. However, the difference between the two is their motivations. Semyon gives advice to family members that will directly benefit him. He uses Krill, Nikolai, and, Azim to better his position in life. It is because of this that Semyon also shows characteristics of the Trickster archetype. Stephan, alternatively, gives advice to protect his family. He tries to persuade Anna to give up the diary and even threatens to fight Nikolai to protect her. His protective nature, adherence to old-world beliefs, and words of guidance also give him the appearance of the Father archetype.

Nikolai is an interesting case. At first, he is displayed as Krill’s Shadow. Nikolai is doing all of the things that Krill cannot do. Nikolai disposes the body, sleeps with a woman, and earns Semyon’s favor. However, once we discover that Nikolai is actually a good person trying to overthrow the mob, it becomes clear that Nikolai is operating as Anna’s Animus archetype. The heavily tattooed Nikolai is the complementary force to Anna’s heroic efforts. Anna is determined to save baby Christina. Nikolai discreetly provides her with the tools required to save the baby.
Nikolai is the reason that Anna succeeds in her quest. He’s also the reason that she survives the ordeal.

Wanted (2008)

Characters

Wesley: Wesley is the protagonist of the story. He is a quiet, nervous account manager for a large corporation. He eventually becomes fed up with the life he is living but cannot do anything about it. While grocery shopping he is attacked by an assassin and saved by Fox. Fox convinces him to join the Fraternity, a thousand year old organization of assassins.

Fox: Fox is one of the assassins in the Fraternity. She is covered in tattoos and trains Wesley to fight. Fox is an orphaned as a young child after her parents are burned alive in front of her by a man that was passed over by the Fraternity.

Sloan: The leader of the Fraternity and the person who officially recruits Wesley into the organization. Sloan has secretly been killing off opposing members of the Fraternity and has betrayed Wesley and his father, Cross.

Cross: The only assassin to survive Sloan’s betrayal. Wesley is trained to pursue and kill Cross because Wesley believes that Cross murdered his father. However, Cross turns out to be Wesley’s father and saves him from death multiple times.

Synopsis

The movie begins with Wesley sitting unhappily at an office birthday party. A group of people is surrounding a large red-headed woman with a birthday cake. Wesley’s narration describes his current life situation. He works in a dead-end job for a terrible boss; his father abandoned him as a child; his girlfriend is cheating on him with his best friend Barry; he constantly has panic attacks; and he believes himself to be too much of a coward to stand up to
anyone. The scene ends with the large woman (Wesley’s boss) blowing out the candles on her birthday cake.

In the next scene, a man in a suit is gathering information about a missing person. As he is talking to the receptionist on the top floor of a building, a bullet flies in through the window and kills the receptionist. Three snipers on the rooftop across the street open fire on the man in the suit. The man runs down the hallway, pivots, and charges toward the window. He leaps through the window with superhuman speed and flies across the incredibly large gap between buildings. During his flight, time slows down and he is able to shoot two of the snipers before landing on the other building. He hunts down the third and kills him. After killing the snipers, the man in the suit receives a phone call. The voice on the other line tells him that the snipers were a decoy. The man in the suit looks down at the X marked on the floor and is surprised by the sniper bullet that enters the back of his head, killing him. The trail of the bullet is traced a few miles back to a building next to the train tracks.

The scene cuts out and shows Wesley waking up next to his girlfriend in their small apartment. His cheating girlfriend complains about how loud the train is while Wesley tries to go back to sleep. Wesley gets dressed and leaves for work. The beginning scene of Wesley at work is repeated a few times to show how repetitive his life has become. The small montage is interrupted by a scene featuring Wesley walking home from work. He stops at an ATM to get money and finds that he has less than twenty dollars in his bank account. Frustrated, he walks over to the pharmacy store across the street to see if he can fill his prescription for anti-anxiety medication.

In the pharmacy, Wesley is able to get his prescription filled but is confronted by a beautiful woman. The woman, Fox, explains to Wesley that his father, whom he never met, was
just murdered the day before. Wesley is incredulous at first, but does not have time to question her. Fox throws him out of the way and shoots at a man standing in the next aisle. The man in the next aisle is none other than the one who shot Wesley’s father in the previous fight scene. Fox and Wesley escape the pharmacy, hop into her exotic car, and narrowly escape the man’s pursuit.

Wesley wakes up in a warehouse full of scary looking people. Fox is sitting in the corner as a man named Sloan explains to Wesley that he is the son of a skilled superhuman assassin. Sloan hands Wesley a gun and demands that he shoot the wings off of a few flies hovering near the trash can. After threatening to shoot him if he cannot accomplish the task, Sloan pressures Wesley into attempting the shot. Wesley has an anxiety attack, causing his perception of time to slow. With time slowed down, Wesley is able to shoot the wings off of the flies.

Sloan smiles as he shows Wesley around the warehouse. Sloan describes his group as the Fraternity, a group of assassins that keep the world in order. Fox remains in the background, displaying her tattoos and playfully watching Wesley as he examines different parts of the warehouse.

The scene fades to black and Wesley reawakens in his apartment with his girlfriend next to him. He believes the whole interaction to be a dream, but discovers the gun that Sloan handed him in the pocket of his jacket. Wesley hides the gun and leaves for work. He stops on the way and checks his ATM balance. The night before, his ATM balance was less than twenty dollars. Now, the balance reads at well over six million dollars. With a lot of money in the bank and a better understanding of his anxiety, Wesley’s confidence starts to rise. He goes into work, tells off his boss, and strikes the man who is sleeping with his girlfriend. Wesley walks out of the office and down to the street to find Fox waiting for him.
Fox drives Wesley to an old textile factory on the far side of the city. Sloan is there, coordinating the efforts of the textile workers. The factory operates as a front for their assassin activities. Sloan decides to fully induct Wesley into the Fraternity and the training montage begins.

The training montage features sequences of Wesley’s training to become an assassin. During the montage, Wesley is introduced to a handful of characters. The first person that Wesley meets is the Repairman. He ties Wesley to a chair and beats him, constantly asking why Wesley is joining the Fraternity. After his beating, Wesley is introduced to the Butcher. The Butcher teaches Wesley how to properly use knives and other weapons in hand to hand combat. The Butcher also handily beats Wesley. Wesley wakes up a few hours later in the recovery bath, a special treatment designed to rapidly heal the wounds of anyone injured. A man called the Russian runs the bath and helps everyone heal. After the bath, Wesley is introduced to the Gunsmith. The Gunsmith teaches Wesley to shoot a gun, and more importantly, use his assassin powers to curve the bullets trajectory. This order of interactions is repeated multiple times in a row to show Wesley slowly improving his assassin skills.

The montage is interrupted to show another Fraternity member murdered by Cross, the man who killed Wesley’s father. Wesley is angry that he is not out searching for Cross, but Fox convinces him that he’s not ready. The training montage continues and Wesley finally becomes competent enough to take on his first contract.

Sloan introduces Wesley to the Loom of Fate, a device used to designate who the next target will be. Sloan generates Wesley’s first target. With Fox in tow, Wesley heads out into the city to make his first kill. Once they arrive at the scene, Wesley is unable to pull the trigger and the first target gets to live.
Fox scolds Wesley for not having the strength to kill the target. She tells him the story of a little girl who had her entire family burned alive in front of her because a Fraternity assassin did not have the courage to pull the trigger on a contract. As she walks away, she describes the burns that the murderer left on the little girl. Wesley sees those same burns on Fox in the next scene. Wesley and Fox return to the first contract. Together, they ride on top of a train and shoot the target through the window as the train passes. With this first kill, Wesley has officially become part of the Fraternity.

The story shows another montage. This time, Wesley is fulfilling contracts for the Fraternity. He pulls off complex kills and becomes an accomplished assassin in a very short amount of time. It becomes apparent that this line of work is very natural for him. So natural that the Loom of Fate decides that it is time for Wesley to pursue Cross. After Wesley leaves the room, the Loom of Fate reveals Fox’s next contract is to kill Wesley. Slightly disturbed by this news, Fox loads her gun and follows Wesley out of the building.

Wesley begins pursuing Cross by identifying the type of bullets he has been using during his assassinations. Wesley identifies the type of bullet and tracks down the man who makes them. The man, known as the Bulletmaker, agrees to help Wesley trap Cross. Together, they plan to kill Cross at the train station. However, the Bulletmaker betrays Wesley and Cross escapes on the train. Wesley latches on to the last train car and chases Cross through the train. Their fight ends up causing the train to go off its tracks over a bridge, killing scores of innocent people. As Wesley is hanging for his life on the edge of the train car, Cross runs forward and grabs his hand. Instead of accepting Cross’s help, Wesley shoots him in the chest and climbs up the rest of the train car. Fox appears on the train car and aims her gun at Wesley. She explains that Cross is
actually Wesley’s father and that she is here to make sure they both die. Wesley grabs Cross’s body and jumps off the train into the river below the bridge.

Wesley wakes up in a new house to the familiar sound of a train rattling by. As he sits up in a smaller version of the recovery pool, the Bulletmaker enters the room. The Bulletmaker explains that Cross was truly Wesley’s father and never wanted an assassin’s life for his son. All Cross wanted to do was protect Wesley. The Bulletmaker gestures outside and Wesley realizes that Cross had been living on the opposite side of the street from him all this time.

Cross had figured out that Sloan was manufacturing fake assassin contracts for the Fraternity to carry out. Years ago, the Loom of Fate had generated Sloan’s name. Instead of ordering his own death, he started making his own contracts. Cross figured out Sloan’s betrayal and fought back. However, Sloan recruited Wesley because he knew that Cross would never harm his own son. In the end, Wesley ended up killing his own father because of Sloan’s betrayal.

Wesley devises a plan to take on the Fraternity and kill Sloan. After collecting loads of explosives, Wesley ties hundreds of rats with small bombs and releases them into the textile factory. The rats eventually explode, causing chaos to ensue. During that chaos, Wesley charges into the textile factory and singe-handedly wipes out most of the Fraternity’s forces. On the way, Wesley kills the Repairman in the room that he was initially trained in. After the Repairman’s death, Wesley is stopped by the Butcher. The Butcher fights Wesley in a close combat knife battle. Even though he gets badly cut, Wesley finally bests the butcher and heads toward the Loom of Fate. He is stopped in the library by Fox, the Gunsmith, Sloan, and the remaining Fraternity members. Wesley tells them about Sloan’s betrayal, but they refuse to join Wesley’s side. They have all become Sloan’s accomplices and would rather live in shame than own up to
their crimes. Sloan escapes out the back door as the rest of the Fraternity members prepare to shoot Wesley. Fox, on the other hand, smiles at Wesley and shoots the Gunsmith in the head. She curves the bullet’s trajectory in such a way that it kills everyone in the library, including herself. Wesley chases Sloan out the backdoor but it is no use. He has already disappeared.

A few months pass by and Wesley is seen sitting at his old desk in the office. The lights are dim and Wesley is busy typing away. The empty office looks eerie as Sloan slowly approaches Wesley from behind. He pulls the gun to the back of Wesley’s head just as Wesley turns around. The person in the chair is not Wesley and says that he is just the decoy. Sloan looks down at the floor and sees that he is standing on an X painted into the carpet. As he looks up, a bullet enters the back of his skull and kills him. The trajectory of the bullet is traced back to Cross’s house. The film ends with Wesley releasing the cartridge from the gun and staring into the camera.

**Archetype Analysis**

Wesley is the Hero archetype in this story. He is questing to find his father’s killer. Throughout his quest, he is trained by others, defeated by Cross, and ultimately achieves his goal. Once he has defeated Sloan at the end of the film, Wesley fully realizes the Self archetype and ascends to the highest ranks of the assassins. Wesley’s story is the quintessential Hero tale.

His father, Cross, on the other hand, fulfills two Archetypes. At first, Cross is shown as the Shadow. He is the evil opposite to Wesley that is going around and killing other Fraternity members. However, the story progresses and the audience members realize that Cross is actually a protecting force in Wesley’s life. Cross fills the Father archetype in the second half of the narrative. Cross spends his life protecting Wesley while maintaining the strict historical
precedents of the Fraternity’s code. It is Cross’s reverence for the old ways that get him in trouble with the Fraternity in the first place.

Sloan plays two archetypes as well. Sloan’s first archetype is that of the Wise Old Man. He gives the others guidance on contracts, decides who is ready, and helps train new members. Sloan is the central advice giver in the Fraternity. However, once we learn of his betrayal, it is apparent that Sloan is actually the Trickster. In order to benefit himself, he has continued to manufacture fake contracts. He uses lies and deceit to protect himself.

Fox, the tattooed female assassin, clearly demonstrates the Anima archetype. The Anima archetype is the complementary female counterpart to the male hero. In this story, Fox is everything that Wesley is not. When Wesley is anxious, she is calm. When Wesley cannot kill, Fox does not hesitate to pull the trigger. Fox trains Wesley to be the best assassin that he can be. It is not until Fox is killed that Wesley’s true potential as an assassin is realized and he becomes whole.

Black Swan (2010)

Characters

Nina (the White Swan): Nina is the protagonist of the film and the lead role in “Swan Lake.” She is portrayed as serene, fragile, and pure. Nina is the embodiment of the White Swan in the movie and acts the part both on and off stage.

Lily (the Black Swan): Lily is Nina’s understudy for “Swan Lake.” Where Nina is portrayed as pure and fragile, Lily is shown as the party girl. Lily is loud, crass, wild, and has tattoos running down her back. She is shown as Nina’s opposite throughout the story.
Beth: Beth is the former star of the play and a disgraced ballerina. Beth loses her mind after being cut from the production cast. She was also the woman that Nina looked up to as a budding dancer.

Tomas Leroy – Leroy is the director of the production. He is known for making sexual advances on the women in the dance troupe. He has an alleged sexual relationship with Beth, makes advances on Nina, and ultimately is caught having sex with Lily.

Erica: Nina’s mother. She creates an emotional dependency in Nina and treats her like a child. Eventually, Nina breaks free of her mother’s psychotic behavior, causing Erica to temporarily lose her mind.

**Synopsis**

The film begins with a ballerina dancing against a spotlight. Her graceful movements are in time with the orchestral music playing in the background. As the music intensifies, a shadowy figure appears and begins dancing with the ballerina. The figure, dressed as a shadowy wizard with a bird-like features, dances aggressively with the ballerina until fading off screen.

Nina wakes up in her bed and realizes that the dancing was all a dream. She gets dressed and leaves for work at the dance studio. Nina takes the subway train and notices a girl on the far end of the train car. Without giving her much thought, Nina exits the train and soon approaches the dance studio. As she is warming up, the girl from the train arrives, breathing heavily. The girl explains that her name is Lily and she is the newest member of the dance troupe.

The dance troupe warms up in the practice hall and Director Leroy walks among them. He goes around and taps all of the dancers that he wants to advance to the next round of auditions. Both Lily and Nina are among the women who are auditioning for the role of the Swan
Queen. The camera pans over to a woman named Beth, the former Swan Queen, as she storms out of the studio when she realizes that she has been removed from her position.

Later that day, Nina is auditioning for the role of Swan Queen. Her performance goes well, but she is interrupted by Lily’s late entrance and almost falls. Leroy tells Nina that she would have the part if he was only casting the White Swan, but he must find someone who is able to embody both the White and Black Swan during the stage performance. Disheartened, Nina leaves the studio and heads home to see her mother, Erica.

While at home, Erica does her best to support the now sobbing Nina. Nina, who is distraught over the way her audition went, leaves the living room and heads to her bedroom. She begins practicing pirouettes until she injures her foot. Erica bandages Nina’s foot as the scene ends.

The next day, Nina and Lily are at rehearsal. Lily makes a mistake and swears loudly, getting the attention of both Director Leroy and the pianist in the background. Perturbed that rehearsal is being interrupted again, Leroy asks everyone to leave but requests that Nina remain. Leroy decides to give Nina another audition and wants to see her perform as the Black Swan. Nina dances for Leroy, but is deemed too technical and not sexual enough. Leroy approaches Nina and kisses her, only to be bitten in retaliation. Leroy seems satisfied with the interaction and leaves.

After rehearsal, Nina is stretching in the hallway when the performance’s roles are posted on the wall. The other dances start congratulating Nina as the new Swan Queen, but Nina steals away and calls her mother with the news. Overjoyed that she received the part, Nina returns to the dressing room and discovers that someone has written the word “Whore” in lipstick on her
mirror. As Nina leaves the studio, she notices red scratch marks on her shoulder but continues toward her home.

At practice, Leroy continues to push Nina toward the Black Swan. He says that her White Swan is perfect, but she needs to learn to dance like the White Swan’s evil twin. After a few unsuccessful attempts, Leroy drags Nina to the large practice hall. Leroy holds Nina close as they watch Lily dance carefree in the middle of the room. Lily’s dancing is full of smiles, laughter, and sexual overtones. Leroy tells Nina that he wants her to be more like Lily before he leaves the room.

That night, Nina attends a Gala with Director Leroy. Although it is a formality, Leroy acknowledges the crowd and bids farewell to the old Swan Queen, Beth. Beth storms out of the room before Leroy announces that Nina will be the new Swan Queen and will be leading the production this season. As everyone is cheering, Nina notices that her finger is bleeding. She leaves the room and heads to the bathroom to stop the bleeding. Instead of stopping the bleeding, Nina tugs at the wound, pulling the skin off her finger. She has a minor panic attack and realizes that there never was a wound on her hand. Shaken, she tries to leave the bathroom but is stopped when Lily tries to enter.

Nina quickly excuses herself from Lily’s presence and sneaks out into the alley. While in the alley, she is accosted by Beth, the former Swan Queen. Beth accuses Nina of sleeping with Leroy for the part and threatens to hurt her. Leroy steps out into the alley and stops interaction from escalating. After calming down Beth and calling her a cab, Leroy invites Nina over to his apartment for a drink. Nina accepts and they walk to his home.

While in his home, Leroy offers Nina a drink and bluntly asks if she enjoys sex. Although she is taken aback, Nina admits that she does enjoy it and casually sips her drink. Leroy says that
Nina needs to tap into that energy if she wants to appropriately play the Black Swan. He gives her the homework of masturbating when she returns home. Slightly confused, Nina leaves Leroy’s apartment and heads home.

When she returns home, Nina is greeted by her mother’s somewhat psychotic ramblings. Her mother is incredibly protective and begins to coddle Nina. She drags Nina to the bedroom, clips her nails, undresses her, and tucks her in to bed. All things that would be perfectly fine if Nina were still a child. As an adult, however, Nina is taken aback and tries to separate from her mother.

The next morning, Nina wakes up and decides to take Leroy’s advice. She begins touching herself, but the moment is lost when she rolls over and sees her mother asleep in the chair on the other side of the room. Nina then receives a phone call. The unknown person on the other end of the call tells Nina that Beth was hit by a car last night. The members of the troupe think that she may have done it to herself.

Hearing about Beth’s accident, Nina gets dressed and leaves for the hospital. Once she finds Beth’s hospital room, Nina enters and sees Beth asleep in bed. Nina sets a bouquet of flowers on the desk and goes to wake Beth when she sees the condition of Beth’s legs. When Nina pulls back the blankets for a better view, she is terrified of the bolts and corrective instruments jutting out of Beth’s legs and she immediately flees the room. Nina returns home and finds her mother crying in a room covered in paintings of Nina done in various styles.

At rehearsal the next day, Leroy tries again to get Nina to dance like the Black Swan. This time, he seduces Nina, kissing her heavily and running his hands between her legs. Just as the interaction is about to escalate into something more sexual, Leroy backs away and tells her that he just seduced her. He wants her to do the same to the audience.
As Leroy is leaving the studio, Lily enters and sees that Nina is distraught. The two sit on the floor in the studio and talk about what is going on with Leroy. Lily and Nina share a cigarette before Nina notices more blood on her hand. She leaves again for home and tries to stop the bleeding.

When she gets home, Nina decides to take a bath. As she is taking a bath, she begins to touch herself again. As she approaches her sexual climax, she has a vision of her mother looming over her and starts screaming. After she has stopped screaming, she sees that there is yet again blood seeping from her body. She leans forward and sees that the scratches have gotten worse, now to the point where they have begun bleeding. She cleans off the blood and heads to bed.

Nina wakes up the next morning and leaves for rehearsal. Leroy tries yet again to change Nina’s performance. Instead of making sexual advances, he yells at Nina for being too frigid. He calls her weak and a coward. Lily steps in to help, but Nina rejects her assistance and retreats from the studio.

At home that evening, Nina and her mother are fixing Nina’s dance shoes. Erica tells her daughter about her experience as a dancer. Erica was a ballet dancer in the city before she became a mother. Erica was impregnated by the director and had to quit dancing. As Nina leans forward to grab a shoe to repair, Erica notices the scratches on her back and has another psychotic break down. She starts screaming at Nina for picking at her skin. Just as Nina is about to leave the situation, Lily shows up at the house and apologizes for interfering with Nina’s rehearsal. Nina accepts the apology and the two leave for dinner and drinks, despite Erica’s objection.

At dinner, Lily acts in a sexual manner. She invites two strangers to sit with them and quickly seduces one of them. Lily tells Nina that she should relax and drugs both of their drinks.
Before the effects of the drugs kick in, Nina is shown having a boring conversation with one of the guys at the bar. She notices that her mother keeps calling but ignores the phone. Afterward, the drugs finally take their toll and Nina has her first drug experience. Nina and Lily start dancing in the back of the club until Lily disappears. Nina goes to find her and ends up outside. Lily soon follows and the two decide to leave.

Nina and Lily take a cab home. During the ride, Lily reaches over and starts sexually stroking Nina’s hand. At first, Nina rejects the advance but ultimately submits to Lily’s advances. The duo returns to Nina’s home and are met with Erica’s angry insults. Ignoring the insults being hurled at them, the two women head into Nina’s bedroom and bolt the door behind them. The next scene features a graphic sexual encounter between the two women. During the experience, Nina finally has an orgasm as the tattooed Lily lies next to her. Afterward, Nina imagines Lily smothering her with a pillow, but quickly ignores the thought and falls asleep.

The next morning, Nina wakes up late and notices that Lily is no longer there. Afraid that she was going to miss rehearsal, Nina rushes out of the house and to the ballet studio. She sees Lily warming up and yells at her for leaving early. Lily is visibly confused and says that she did not go home with Nina the previous night. Nina realizes that she imagined the whole experience and leaves out of embarrassment.

When she returns home, Nina goes on a rampage. She enters the bathroom and tries to make herself vomit. When she cannot seem to puke, she runs into her bedroom and starts to destroy all of the childish parts. She wrecks part of her bed, the stuffed animals in the corner, and lastly, the ballerina music box that has always been on the nightstand. She angrily goes to sleep after the outburst.
The next scene shows the first full rehearsal of the production. Nina makes an incorrect move and begins to hallucinate slightly. She leaves the studio and heads to her dressing room. Inside the dressing room, she starts to notice more scratches on her back. As she starts to pick at them, another dancer shows up at the door to announce that Lily has been made Nina’s understudy. Nina believes that Lily is out to get her and decides to stay late to practice more. As she is working on the final dance routine, she looks at her reflection. The reflection starts to move independently and mocks Nina’s movements. The lights in the studio flash off, causing Nina to look for an alternate light source. She enters the backroom and finds Leroy on top of Lily. After watching the two for a bit, Nina sees herself under Leroy instead of Lily and runs out of the room.

Nina has decided that she needs help to fend off Lily’s attack, so she heads to the hospital to see Beth. Beth is sitting in a wheelchair looking at the window as Nina enters the hospital room. Nina asks Beth about her role in the performance, causing Beth to go in another rage. Instead of offering help, Beth starts screaming that she just wanted to be perfect and stabs herself in the face with a nail file. Nina runs out of the room in fear as Beth continues to sob and scream, repeatedly stabbing herself until the scene fades out.

Nina rushes home, imagining all the way that Lily is following her. When she finally enters her bedroom, she sees Lily lying in her bed. Nina runs to the bathroom and vomits uncontrollably. After vomiting, she retreats into the room filled with pictures of her likeness. As she spins in the room, the pictures and paintings start to come alive. With the paintings moving and laughing, Nina looks at the scratches on her back and realizes that she is sprouting feathers. She grows feathers all over her arms and back. Nina begins to grow taller until her knees snap and she falls to the ground, ending the mutation.
Nina wakes up the next morning to her mother cradling her head. Erica found Nina unconscious in the middle of the living room and carried her to bed. Erica also took the liberty of calling the dance studio and tells them that Nina would not be able to perform on their opening night. Nina fights out of her mother’s embrace and leaves for the dance studio.

At the studio, Nina hurriedly puts on her make-up and prepares for the first curtain opening. As she is standing on the side of the stage, Leroy whispers in her ear “that the only person standing in your way is you. Lose yourself.” With that, Nina dances onto the stage but hears nothing but laughter in her head. As she is being lifted up for the last dance number of the scene, she loses her balance and falls to the ground. The curtain closes and Nina retreats to her dressing room to change make-up.

Lily shows up in Nina’s dressing room and starts shouting that this was supposed to be her part. The two women fight and crash into the mirror. While rolling on the ground, Nina reaches forward and grabs a shard of the mirror. Using the shard, Nina stabs and kills Lily. She takes the body, drags it into the bathroom, and closes the door. Even though she sees blood seeping out from under the door, Nina leaves the room and heads back to the stage.

While on stage, Nina finally embodies the Black Swan. In her mind, she grows feathers and wings and dances beautifully. For the performance’s audience, however, Nina is simply dancing on stage against a spotlight, similar to the introduction scene. Once she leaves the stage, she smiles flirtatiously at Leroy and heads to her dressing room.

Once she starts removing her makeup for the final act, she hears a knock on the door. She opens the entrance to her dressing room to find Lily on the other side. Lily congratulates Nina on a fantastic performance and leaves, causing Nina to go into a panic. Nina runs to the bathroom and quickly opens the door, revealing that there was no body. Nina looks around and finds the
shards of the mirror on the ground, but cannot find the piece she used to stab Lily. She had imagined stabbing Lily before the previous dance scene. Nina winces in pain and looks down at her stomach. She reaches down and pulls a shard of the mirror out of her stomach. Instead of seeking medical attention, Nina finishes putting on the last of her makeup and heads back to the stage for the final act.

While she is dancing during the final act, a blood stain starts to grow on her stomach. She continues dancing and finally finishes the last move of the dance. As she falls off screen onto the mattress below, she mutters to herself that she has finally become the Swan Queen. Leroy rushes to congratulate his Swan Queen, but sees her bleeding out on the floor behind the stage. He calls for help, but Nina dies shortly after she is discovered. The last words that she whispers into Leroy’s ear before she dies are “I was perfect.”

**Archetypal Analysis:**

Nina is presented as the Hero of the narrative. Nina struggles against various forces in her life. She experiences a “crucifixion” at multiple points during her ascension to the Swan Queen. The biggest crucifixion is in the multiple fights she has with her mother, Erica. Nina is the pure of heart Hero that faces narrative crucifixion and ultimately triumphs over evil. In the end, Nina becomes the Self archetype. She has overcome all evil and is united with her true self as the Swan Queen. Nina dies shortly after realizing her full potential.

Nina’s mother, Erica, represents the Mother archetype. For female characters, the Mother archetype either helps or inhibits their growth. In this case, Erica is an inhibiting force in Nina’s life. Nina must overcome her mother’s protective nature in order to realize her potential. Erica restricts Nina’s growth, coddles her like a child, and is a negative part of Nina’s story.
Beth, the former Swan Queen, operates as Nina’s Shadow archetype. Beth is the embodiment of all things that Nina does not want to become. Beth is self-destructive, angry, and bitter about the way her career has ended. At first, Nina is jealous of Beth’s success but soon realizes that the drive to be perfect is Beth’s downfall. Instead of working to avoid a fate similar to Beth’s, Nina continues down the same path that leads to her ruin (and coincidentally her realization of the Self archetype).

Leroy, the sexual director, strangely enough fulfills the Father archetype. The Father archetype normally offers guidance and protection to the Hero. Leroy spends most of his time in the narrative trying to get Nina to reach her full potential while protecting her purity. Although his methods are often sexual, he uses them as a way to get the absolute best out of his dancer.

Lastly, there is Lily, the tattooed Black Swan of the film. Lily is the embodiment of the Animus. While Beth is Nina’s Shadow, Lily represents everything that Nina lacks. At first, Nina is shown as naïve, fragile, and pure. Lily, on the other hand, is sexual, strong, and crass. Lily is essentially the opposite of Nina. At the end, Nina imagines killing Lily. It is this imagined slaying that helps Nina realize her true potential. She has to (in her mind) kill her Animus before she can finally become the Swan Queen. It’s important to note that as the only tattooed character, Lily is portrayed as the bad girl while Nina (who is not tattooed) is shown as the good girl.

_The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo_ (2011)

**Characters**

Mikael: Mikael is a disgraced reporter and one of the protagonists in the film. Mikael wrongfully printed a story accusing a businessman named Wennerstrom of embezzling money. After the press found out that Mikael’s story could not be proven, he was fired from his job at _Millenium_
Magazine and ends up in the employ of Henrik Vanger, researching the death of Harriet Vanger. Mikael has a confirmed affair with the editor of Millennium.

Lisbeth: Lisbeth is Mikael’s enigmatic partner. As a researcher, Lisbeth is second to none. However, her strange appearance and unorthodox methods make her difficult to work with. She eventually develops feelings for Mikael and leaves his company when she finds they are not reciprocated.

Harriet: Harriet is the murdered girl that Mikael and Lisbeth are investigating. Believed to be murdered at the age of 15, Harriet actually escaped her family’s home with the help of her older cousin.

Henrik Vanger: A retired CEO of Vanger Enterprises and Mikael’s new employer. Henrik believes that Harriet was murdered 40 years ago and has hired Mikael to figure out what really happened. Henrik is an older gentleman who wants nothing more than to right the wrongs of the past.

Gottfried Vanger: Gottfried is a former Nazi sympathizer and serial murderer. Mikael and Lisbeth discover that Gottfried murdered a score of women during the late 1940’s and early 1950’s until he died. The murders were all based on biblical passages. Mikael also discovers that Gottfried has a history of sexually abusing his children, Harriet and Martin.

Martin Vanger: Martin is Gottfried’s son, Harriet’s brother, and the current CEO of Vanger Enterprises. Martin has continued his father’s legacy of murder and sexual abuse since his father died in the 1960’s. He tries to scare Mikael into giving up the search, but ultimately tries to kill him when he discovers the truth.

Synopsis
The first scene of the movie features Henrik Vanger overlooking a snowy landscape. He answers the phone ringing on his desk and begins holding a conversation with the person on the other end of the line. Although the audience cannot hear what the other person is saying, it is clear that someone has sent Henrik a birthday present he was not expecting. He suspects that someone is trying to torture him as he overlooks the present, a framed print of a leaf.

After the initial credits roll across the screen, the scene flashes to Mikael leaving his office. Mikael is being pursued by members of the press, asking all sorts of questions about the story he recently published. Mikael briskly walks by them all and heads into a local diner. While at the diner, a news story plays in the background, explaining that Mikael’s most recent published story inaccurately accused a man named Wennerstrom of embezzlement. The company that Wennerstrom works for has since pressed libel charges against Mikael, causing Mikael to fall into financial insecurity.

The next scene shows Lisbeth entering a building in London. Lisbeth, with her partially shaved head, facial piercings, and scores of tattoos, is completely out of place in the professional work setting of the building which she has entered. As she is riding the elevator up to her desired floor, a dual scene is shown with two men discussing her. The first man tells the second that Lisbeth’s appearance makes the other workers feel uncomfortable so she normally works from home. Lisbeth is an investigator for the organization and is currently writing up a report based on Mikael.

Lisbeth begins delivering her report to the two men in the office building. She is able to give them incredibly detailed information about Mikael’s professional and personal life, but finally admits that she believes him to be an honest and good person. The two men seem satisfied with her report and allow her to leave. Lisbeth returns home and continues researching Mikael.
Her computer screen reveals that she is able to access Mikael’s email. She sees that Mikael is still suspicious of Wennerstrom’s seemingly criminal activities and decides to conduct her own investigation. She breaks into Wennerstrom’s apartment complex and places a hacking device into his internet modem.

After showing Lisbeth’s break in, the story switches to Mikael at his family Christmas party. Mikael talks to his 16 year old daughter for a little while but stops to take a phone call. Mikael leaves the room to answer the phone and is invited to Hedestad, a small town in Norway, to discuss a potential employment opportunity. Although he’s not enamored with the idea of being in Norway in the middle of winter, he agrees and leaves the next morning.

Mikael arrives in Hedestad by train. The man on the phone picks him up and takes him to the Vanger family’s residential island. There, Mikael is introduced to Henrik Vanger. Henrik, the aged former CEO of Vanger Enterprises, explains that he wants Mikael to investigate the disappearance of his niece Harriet. Henrik believes that one of his family members killed Harriet on the island in the 1960’s.

A flashback follows, showing the details of Henrik’s story. Harriet enters the kitchen during an important business discussion. She asks to speak to her uncle Henrik about something and goes up to her room when he refuses to speak at that very moment. After Harriet goes to her room, the people in the kitchen are informed of a car accident on the bridge leading to the home. The family rushes to the scene and helps in any way they can. No one in the accident dies despite the damage done to the cars and the bridge. The commotion on the bridge settles and the family returns to the house. Harriet is nowhere to be found. The police look for her for three days before giving up the search; Harriet’s body is never found.
Henrik’s story is enough to convince Mikael to take on the case. He returns to his former office at Millennium and collects his things, much to the dismay of his editor and lover. Mikael takes his office equipment and clothing and leaves for Hedestad to stay in Henrik’s guest cottage on the island.

Mikael arrives in Hedestad and begins setting up the cottage. He quickly realizes that the living arrangement is rough. There is no heat, the windows are not sealed properly, and there is a stray cat living somewhere in the house. Mikael befriends the cat, starts a fire in the fireplace, and struggles to keep warm. Throughout his first night in the cottage, he tries to use his cell phone but is disappointed to find that he cannot get service in this remote part of the country. Dejected, he heads into town to buy groceries. Even in town, his phone does not get any service. Mikael returns with groceries to find the groundskeeper at his cottage with a truck full of documents concerning Harriet’s disappearance.

Mikael spends the evening reading through Henrik’s preliminary investigation and decides he needs more information. He starts by interrogating Henrik. Henrik is forthcoming with all information and he even gives small biographies of each inhabitant on the family island. Although the biographies are too long to list here, it is important to note that there are small alliances throughout members of the family. A rift was created after Harriet’s death, causing most family members to stop interacting with each other. Henrik and his nephew Martin are the only two that are still in close contact.

Still searching for a lead on the case, Mikael interviews the officer on patrol the night that Harriet disappeared, Officer Morell. Morell is eager to help but cannot provide any new information. He directs Mikael to a list of names and numbers found in the back of Harriet’s diary. He believes that the list is comprised of Harriet’s friends and their phone numbers. As
Mikael is preparing to leave, Morrell comments that this is his “Rebecca” case. A senior officer in Morell’s police department had a murder case that plagued his career. The senior officer was never able to solve the murder of a young girl named Rebecca. From then on, Morell referred to Harriet’s disappearance as his “Rebecca” case.

In the meantime, Lisbeth is shown visiting an older man at his home. She lets herself in to his apartment and discovers him unconscious on the floor. She calls an ambulance and accompanies him to the hospital. Lisbeth reveals to the nurse that the old man is her legal guardian and that she is a ward of the state.

With her guardian incapacitated, Lisbeth is forced to seek legal counsel with another man, Erik Bjurman. Erik now controls all of Lisbeth’s money. In order for her to access any of the money she owns, she has to seek his approval first. She now is given a living stipend instead of being paid directly. Frustrated with this turn of events, Lisbeth storms out of the office. On her way home, she has her purse snatched by a thief. Instead of letting him get away, she pursues and knocks him unconscious on an escalator in the subway station.

Mikael, on the other hand, is busy pursuing other ends of the investigation. He decides to meet with Harriet’s brother, Martin. Martin is the current CEO of the family business and wants to help with Mikael’s search. He promises to help in any way that he can. Martin directs Mikael to Cecilia, Harriet’s cousin. Cecilia accuses Mikael of trying to corrupt the family’s uneasy peace and refuses to help with his investigation. Mikael leaves Cecilia’s house and returns to his cottage.

The movie switches back to Lisbeth’s perspective. She has returned to Bjurman’s office and is asking for money to buy a new computer. Bjurman agrees, but forces her to perform oral
sex in his office. Once the act is over, he signs the check and sends her on her way. Lisbeth’s
tattoo is clearly visible as she leaves his office.

In her next scene, Lisbeth calls Bjurman in order to get money for food. Because of how late it is, he suggests she meet him at his home. Lisbeth agrees and heads over to Bjurman’s apartment. This time, Bjurman’s intentions are more dubious. He forces Lisbeth onto his bed and chains her down. Then, he strips her down and rapes her. The camera turns to Lisbeth’s jacket and the audience hears Lisbeth screaming off camera. After Bjurman has finished taking advantage of Lisbeth, he signs the check and offers to drive her home. Lisbeth silently takes the money, collects her things, and leaves Bjurman’s apartment.

While Lisbeth is experiencing money trouble, Mikael is still busy searching for a lead. This time, he is on a plane headed to London to speak to Harriet’s cousin and the last person to see her alive, Anita. Anita left the family island when she turned eighteen and moved to London with her now deceased husband. Mikael questions Anita about the night that Harriet disappeared, but more importantly, wants to know what Harriet was like. Anita describes Harriet as contradictory. She would oscillate between sexual, withdrawn, religious, and outspoken. But remembering Harriet proves to be too much for Anita and she asks Mikael to leave.

When Mikael returns to Hedestad, he finds the editor of Millenium meeting with Henrik and Martin. The Vangers decide that they are going to invest in Millenium and save it from its financial troubles. The story makes the news reel that night and catches Lisbeth’s attention. Lisbeth finishes hacking Wennerstrom’s email and finds that he is worried about this new partnership.

As Mikael is reviewing the information that Henrik prepared, he becomes fixated on a picture of a parade that happened the day before Harriet’s disappearance. In this photograph, he
Mikael is able to sift through the photos and finds Harriet in a few of them. By sequencing the photos, Mikael sees that Harriet was enjoying the parade from the side of the road until she sees something and leaves shortly after.

The next scene shows Lisbeth’s revenge against her rapist. She calls and sets up another meeting with Bjurman, but shows up early so he cannot prepare. When he lets her into his home, Lisbeth uses a tazer to knock him unconscious. Bjurman wakes up and finds that he has been chained up on the floor in his bedroom, completely nude. Lisbeth stands over him, her eyes painted black and her clothing looking scarier than usual. First, Lisbeth reveals that she was able to record Bjurman’s sexual assault using a camera she had stored in her jacket that night. After that, she forces Bjurman to watch said video. Next, she takes a large phallic object and jams it up his anus. She leans forward and gives him an ultimatum. She wants complete control of her finances, a clean record with the state, and promises to do much worse to him if she ever catches him doing something of this nature to another woman. If Bjurman does not agree to her demands, she will post the video of his rape online and return to make his life miserable. At the end of her threat, she sits on his chest and tattoos the phrase “I Am a Rapist Pig” across his torso.

Mikael returns to the cottage with the photos and is met by his daughter, who decided to visit on her way to church camp. She stays at the cottage for dinner and asks about his case. Mikael gives her vague details but does not go into much depth. Instead, he apologizes for being an absentee father and the fact that he never promoted religion in the house. She accepts his apology and the two leave for the train station. As she is boarding the train, she tells Mikael that she is glad he has started turning to God. Confused, he asks what she means. The daughter
reveals that the list he had taped to the wall, the same list found in the back of Harriet’s diary, was actually a list of Bible books and chapter numbers. Mikael rushes home and starts investigating the Bible passages. Each name on the list relates to a book, each number refers to a specific chapter. The passages mentioned are extremely violent and describe what should be done to those that sin.

Excited that he has finally discovered something new, Mikael leaves for Henrik’s home. He is stopped on the way by Martin, who explains that Henrik has just had a heart attack and is to be hospitalized. Mikael is distraught by the news, but decides that he needs a research assistant. Martin mentions that they hired a very talented investigator from London to conduct Mikael’s background check. Mikael believes that this is the person he needs to work with and leaves for London.

Mikael arrives in London and is seated in the room where Lisbeth gave her first report. While Mikael has been able to discover that Lisbeth is the person who studied him, he cannot find any information on her. Mikael threatens to press legal action against Lisbeth’s employers if they do not relinquish information on the person who clearly hacked into Mikael’s personal email accounts. The employer agrees to Mikael’s demands and hands over Lisbeth’s home address.

Mikael drives to Lisbeth’s apartment and knocks on the door. A surprised Lisbeth climbs over her partner in bed and gets dressed while walking to answer the door. Mikael explains that he is there to talk to her about a job and confronts Lisbeth about the depth of her report. Mikael lets himself into the apartment with a bag of food and starts making the table. Lisbeth convinces her partner to leave and sits down to hear Mikael’s story. Before he can even begin telling her
what he knows, Lisbeth walks away and begins her own research. She is able to quickly figure out everything that Mikael knows up to this point in the story.

Together, the two investigators begin chasing down new leads. Lisbeth starts searching through Hedestad’s criminal records. She discovers that there were a string of murders in Norway from the 1940’s to the late 1950’s. These murders incredibly graphic and reveal the sinister nature of the unnamed serial murder. There was never a connection drawn between the kills until Lisbeth checks each record.

Lisbeth drives her motorcycle out to Mikael’s cottage and explains that all of the murders she uncovered relate to the Bible passages that were in the back of Harriet’s diary. Together, they figure out that Harriet was following the murders closely. Each murder was a Jewish woman and they all had names from the Old Testament. After this revelation, Lisbeth goes to sleep on the couch and Mikael retires to his bedroom.

The next morning, Mikael wakes to the sound of Lisbeth typing furiously on her keyboard. She has been reviewing Mikael’s encrypted notes and begins to put the pieces of the puzzle together. Mikael decides to step out for some fresh air and discovers the stray cat that has been occupying the cottage has been killed and left on his door step. The cat’s body has been mangled to loosely resemble a swastika. With that discovery, Mikael and Lisbeth split up again to conduct their research.

Mikael heads to a local retirement home to see if he can find anyone who has pictures from the parade. He finds a widow at the retirement home who is able to produce photos that reveal what Harriet saw. Unfortunately, Mikael is unable to figure out what it was that scared Harriet into leaving. During his walk home, Mikael is shot at by an unknown assailant. The bullets fly directly over his head and the shrapnel from their impact leave a bleeding cut on
Mikael’s face. He ducks into cover and sneaks into the woods. Mikael takes a dark passage home and is able to avoid further damage.

While Mikael is interviewing the widow, Lisbeth is delivering another warning to her rapist. She tells him that he has to make good on his side of the bargain or she will be back to hurt him further.

Lisbeth returns to the cottage to find Mikael bleeding from the eye. She takes him to the bathroom and stitches his wound shut with dental floss. Mikael takes to nursing his wounds and Lisbeth leaves the cottage to set up security cameras at strategic locations. When she returns, she follows Mikael into the bedroom and they have sex.

The next morning, Mikael and Lisbeth visit Martin to gain access to all of the Vanger Enterprise’s records. Martin relents and grants Mikael and Lisbeth the permission they seek. Lisbeth leaves for the Vanger Enterprise headquarters and begins rifling through the company’s records for any clues. Mikael decides he should visit Gottfried’s brother instead. Gottfried’s brother, also a Nazi sympathizer, speaks fondly of Harriet and Martin, but admits that his brother had a drinking problem and bragged constantly. The brother shows Mikael pictures of Harriet and Martin as children before asking Mikael to leave.

The scene cuts back to Lisbeth searching through records. She stays long after the record clerk and keeps looking for clues. During her overnight stay, she notices that the initial string of deaths occur up until Gottfried’s death in 1959. A few years later, the murders start again. This is around the same time that Martin returned from school. Panicked, Lisbeth rushes back to the cottage.

Mikael reviews the photos he received from the widow and sees a young Martin Vanger was what scared Harriet into leaving the parade. Convinced that Martin has something to do with
Harriet’s disappearance, Mikael investigates Martin’s house. While inside, Mikael finds a gun rack missing a rifle. He continues to search the house until he hears Martin return home. Mikael tries to sneak out the back, but Martin catches him just as he exits. Martin invites Mikael back into his home and the two speak in the kitchen. Martin has figured out that Mikael was investigating him and pulls a gun. Martin admits to shooting at Mikael earlier that week and leads him to the basement. Once the two men reach the basement, Martin uses a gas to incapacitate Mikael.

Mikael wakes up a few minutes later strapped into a noose, sitting in front of a camera in an all white room. The room is covered with saws, blades, guns, restraints, and souvenirs from previous kills. Martin turns on the camera and begins interrogating Mikael. During the interrogation, Martin admits that Gottfried murdered all of the women in the back of Harriet’s diary and left their bodies in various parts of the country. Martin, on the other hand, has continued Gottfried’s murderous ideas but in secret. Martin lures the women into his home, brings them to the basement, rapes them, kills them, and drops their bodies into the ocean. Once he has finished explaining his process, he continues the interrogation. He ends the conversation by asking about Mikael’s investigation into Harriet’s disappearance. When Mikael says that he believes Martin killed Harriet, Martin laments that he had hoped Mikael would uncover what truly happened to his darling sister. Convinced that Mikael is no longer of use, Martin wraps a plastic bag around Mikael’s head and attempts to suffocate him.

Lisbeth returns to the cottage, eager to tell Mikael that she figured out that Martin is the killer. However, she finds that Mikael is nowhere to be found. She checks the camera footage and sees that Martin showed up at the cottage with a gun and leaves shortly after. Lisbeth realizes that Mikael is probably in trouble and heads to Martin’s house. She breaks in through the
back door and starts combing the house. She finds the two men in the basement. Martin is too busy suffocating Mikael to notice Lisbeth sneaking up behind him. She strikes Martin in the head with one of the tools he has lying around his torture dungeon. Assuming that Martin is unconscious, Lisbeth rushes to Mikael and removes the bag. Martin stands up and makes a break for the door. Lisbeth grabs a nearby gun and asks Mikael’s permission to kill Martin. Mikael agrees and Lisbeth chases after Martin.

Martin starts to get away in his car. Lisbeth gives chase on her motorcycle. The chase culminates when Martin misjudges the distance between his car and the bridge. He hits the barrier with his car and crashes into a giant propane tank next to a convenience store. The explosion destroys his car and kills Martin instantly. The scene fades to black and Lisbeth gets back on her motorcycle and heads back to Mikael.

The next scene shows Mikael and Liz in bed. Mikael, the clean and upstanding journalist, interrupts sex with the tattooed and unpredictable Lisbeth to discuss the case. Together, they realize that Harriet never died, she simply left the island. After they finish intercourse, Mikael asks Lisbeth about why she helped with his case. Lisbeth explains that she was the victim of sexual abuse as a child. When no one would help her, she attempted to kill her abuser (her father). She concocted a plan that involved burning her father alive. She was unable to kill him, but did manage to burn 80% of his body.

Mikael and Lisbeth leave Hedestad and head to London to confront Anita, the person responsible for helping Harriet escape the island. During the conversation with Anita, he realizes that she is in fact Harriet posing as her cousin. Harriet admits that she took on Anita’s identity shortly after Anita and her husband died. Harriet explains to Mikael that Gottfried used to sexually abuse her and Martin. One particularly bad night, she decided that she had enough and
ran out of the house. Gottfried pursued her down to the docks. Harriet hid behind a barrel and struck her father in the back of the head with an oar. Gottfried fell unconscious into the water and drowned. Harriet turned around to find Martin watching the entire incident. From then on, Martin began raping Harriet as their father had. Eventually, Martin left for school and Harriet believed that to be the end of the abuse. At the parade, however, Harriet saw Martin from across the street and left for her home. She tried to tell Henrik that she was being abused but was dismissed. After the dismissal, Harriet and Anita devised the plan to smuggle Harriet off the island.

Now that Mikael and Lisbeth solved the case and got rid of Martin, they decide to reunite Henrik and Harriet. They bring Harriet back to the island. Henrik is overjoyed to finally have his favorite niece back and the healing process beings. With that, Lisbeth and Mikael leave Hedestad for good.

On their way back to London, Lisbeth asks if she can borrow 50,000 Euros from Mikael. Although he is skeptical at first, he agrees and gives her the money. Lisbeth uses the money to create a disguise. After she confirms in Wennerstrom’s email that he is in fact embezzling money, she dons her disguise and makes it look like Wennerstrom is emptying his bank accounts and trying to leave the country. Once Wennerstrom’s reputation has been ruined, the police start looking into his case and discover that he has been stealing money from his company. Destitute and on the run, Wennerstrom ends up with the wrong crowd and gets shot to death during his escape.

Lisbeth returns the money she borrowed to Mikael and visits her former legal guardian. As the two are playing chess, she admits to him that she has started developing feelings for Mikael. She buys Mikael a present and drives to see him at his home. When she arrives, she
catches Mikael leaving the house with the editor of *Millennium* on his arm. Disheartened to find Mikael with another woman, Lisbeth throws away his present and drives away. The movie ends with Lisbeth riding her bike down a snowy street.

**Archetypal Analysis:**

Mikael is the Hero of the film. Although he is not necessarily a paragon of virtue, his motives are pure. Mikael faces multiple crucifixions during his journey and his final interaction with Martin serves as his Night Sea Journey. Mikael defies the odds and comes out alive on the other side.

Martin, on the other hand, is characterized as the Trickster archetype. He spends the entire film helping Mikael in any way he can, only to try and kill him once he gets close to discovering the truth. Martin distorts the truth, hides his murders, and actively opposes the Hero, all characteristics attributed to the Trickster.

Harriet operates as the Child archetype and the Philosopher’s Stone archetype. For Henrik, she is the object of his past. He wants to figure out what happened to her and strives to bring justice to her death. When he finds out that she is still alive, Harriet becomes the future of which he has always dreamed. Together, they are able to start a new life. Once they are reunited, Henrik has finally obtained his Philosopher’s Stone and can lead a happy life.

As far as Henrik is concerned, he operates as the Wounded Healer. For forty years, he has agonized over the death of his favorite niece, Harriet. Even though he has a heavy heart, he continued to support his family. Not only that, he continued the search for Harriet long after everyone else had given up. Even when it started to cause a rift between members of his family, Henrik continued his search.
Last but not least, we have the enigmatic Lisbeth. As the only tattooed character, Lisbeth is of particular importance to this project. In this film, Lisbeth operates as the Anima to Mikael’s Hero archetype. Lisbeth is different from Mikael in almost every imaginable way. When Mikael is taking legal means to investigate, Lisbeth threatens people and hacks into computers. Mikael is portrayed as wholesome and good, while Lisbeth is shown as his opposite. Lisbeth is the complementary force to Mikael. Mikael is stuck in the investigation until he enlists her help. With Lisbeth’s assistance, Mikael is able to reach his fullest potential.

*Warrior* (2011)

**Characters**

Tommy: Tommy is Paddy’s youngest son and Brendan’s brother. Tommy is competing in the Spartan Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) tournament. Before returning to fight, Tommy was a marine serving in Iraq. After his squad was wiped out during a bombing, Tommy fled the military. Tommy has the most tattoos of any character in the movie.

Brendan: Brendan is Paddy’s oldest son and Tommy’s older brother. Brendan is a family man. He has a wife and two children to support. When the bank threatens to take away their house, Brendan takes a break from his job as a high school physics teacher. Brendan has one tattoo and fights to support his family.

Paddy: Paddy is Brendan and Tommy’s estranged father. His sons and wife left him when his alcoholism got out of control. Paddy is currently three years sober and works to reunite his family. Both his sons resent him heavily for the way he treated them. Paddy agrees to train Tommy for the tournament.

Frank: Brendan’s close friend and personal trainer. Frank is a respected member of the MMA community and signs Brendan up to fight in the Spartan tournament.
Tess: Tess is Brendan’s wife. She is against Brendan’s decision to fight for money, but continues to support her husband after he enlists in the tournament.

**Synopsis**

The introductory credits are shown over various skyline shots of an industrial Pittsburgh. As the camera glides over the city, church bells start chiming in the background. The scene cuts to a congregation leaving the church after mass. Paddy is one of the last people to leave the church. He climbs into his old car and begins his drive home, all while listening to “Moby Dick” on tape.

Paddy returns to his home and finds a hooded man sitting on his front porch. As Paddy gets closer, he recognizes the man as his son Tommy. Paddy has not seen Tommy in over two decades. Paddy invites Tommy into his home. Once inside, Tommy pressures his formerly alcoholic father into drinking with him. Paddy declines and reveals that he is almost three years sober. This fact seems to enrage Tommy, who starts screaming at his father about how poorly his mother was treated. The scene ends with Tommy looking at pictures of his brother’s family on the mantle. As he walks out of the house, Tommy calls over his shoulder that he liked his father better when he was a drunk.

The movie cuts to a birthday party for a child in Philadelphia. Brendan sits with his daughters as they take turns painting his face. Eventually, his wife Tess is able to convince the girls to leave him alone and they go open presents. After the party ends, Tess and Brendan begin talking about financial troubles. Brendan has taken a second job as a bouncer in order to make enough money to support his family. Tess is worried about him because she believes he consistently gets in fights with local drunks, but Brendan convinces her that he really spends
most of his time grading at the bar. Their conversation reaches an amicable end as they climb into bed.

The next day, Tommy goes to join the local gym. This gym, called Colt’s, used to belong to a family friend and is where Tommy used to train with his father. Now, the gym is owned by a bunch of MMA fans preparing for a huge tournament called Sparta. The tournament has a grand prize of $500 million.

Tommy starts training by himself in Colt’s gym. He notices that there is a sparring match between a Mohawk clad man called Mad Dog and a novice. After Mad Dog dispatches the novice, Colt has trouble finding anyone else who will spar with the gym’s champion. Tommy convinces Colt to let him fight Mad Dog. Mad Dog tries to intimidate Tommy but gets deftly beaten by the newcomer. Tommy defeats Mad Dog in the ring in less than thirty seconds. A bystander catches the entire fight on video and uploads it to the internet. The fight ends and Tommy goes right back to working out.

The next scene shows Brendan teaching his high school physics class. He shows the class a fun experiment concerning the laws of motion. After class, however, Brendan travels to the bank. At the bank, Brendan is applying for another loan but gets denied because he refinanced his house earlier that year. Worried that he will not be able to make enough money for his family to continue their level of comfort, Brendan leaves for his second job. At this point, it is revealed that Brendan is not actually a bouncer but an amateur MMA fighter. On weekends, Brendan fights in amateur MMA matches to make extra money. In this fight, Brendan gets roughed up by another fighter but finally comes out on top.

When Brendan returns home, Tess is distraught at his condition. With a black eye and a busted lip, Brendan is a sight to behold. However, he refuses to lie to Tess and explains that he
has been fighting on the side. Tess scolds him for acting recklessly but is slightly relieved to see that Brendan is able to eke out enough money to keep paying on the mortgage.

The next morning, Paddy is seen eating breakfast at a small diner in Pittsburg. Tommy walks in and sits across from his father. Tommy has decided that he wants to enter the Sparta Tournament and wants Paddy to train him. However, he is quick to point out that this is not an olive branch extension; Tommy knows that Paddy is a great trainer and only wants to train. Paddy agrees to train him and starts by immediately adjusting Tommy’s diet.

At the same time, Brendan is teaching his class in Philadelphia. Unfortunately, one of his students has an older brother who recognized Brendan at the amateur fight. Shortly after, the principal comes knocking on Brendan’s door and asks to see him in his office. Brendan is scolded for fighting on the side. The principal believes that it is setting a bad example for the students, so he suspends Brendan for the rest of the semester without pay. Furious that he is being reprimanded for trying to support his family, Brendan leaves the school and heads home.

Realizing that he now has no other option, Brendan goes to his friend Frank’s gym and asks for training. Frank is hesitant to start training Brendan because of Brendan’s family situation, but ultimately gives in when Brendan explains that they are about to lose their house. Frank agrees to train Brendan under the condition that Brendan only fights in amateur bouts.

A third perspective is taken at this point in the film. A video of Tommy beating Mad Dog in the ring has gone viral on the internet, causing people all over the world to start to question who Tommy is. A soldier in Iraq recognizes Tommy and tries to get in contact with the original poster but is unable to get any further from that distance.

The story returns to Brendan at home with his family. He notices a familiar car outside and leaves the house to check out the visitor. Paddy has driven to Philadelphia to try and
reconnect with his son. Paddy explains that he has officially been one thousand days sober and asks for Brendan’s forgiveness. Brendan, who is noticeably bitter about the past, yells at his father for intruding into his life. Defeated, Paddy goes to leave Brendan’s house, but stops to tell him that Tommy has returned home. Brendan does not seem interested in this information and goes back inside, leaving Paddy alone in the driveway.

When Paddy returns home, he hears Tommy on the phone with a woman in El Paso. The woman is named Pilar and is the widow of one of Tommy’s close military friends. She is in tears when she hears Tommy’s voice, but he promises that he will help take care of her and her family in any way that he can. He hangs up the phone and heads up to his room without saying a word to his father.

The next few scenes create a training montage following both Tommy and Brendan. For Tommy’s montage, he is shown lifting weights, sparring, and training with Paddy. Tommy is primarily silent and looks angry most of the time. However, any time he is in the ring with another person, he has an uncontested victory. Brendan, on the other hand, is shown winning different fights with Frank at his side. Brendan’s triumphs end with smiles and cheering instead of Tommy’s silent victories. At the end of the montage, Brendan decides he wants to fight in the Sparta tournament. Frank refuses to let Brendan fight until an injury causes Frank’s best fighter to withdraw. With no other options, Frank relents and lets Brendan enter Sparta. While both Brendan and Frank are excited at the prospect, Tess is angry about the decision and refuses to support it.

And with that, the Sparta tournament begins. The setting changes to Atlantic City as a red carpet event unfolds on the main strip. The tournament, a single elimination event featuring sixteen of the world’s toughest MMA fighters, brings a lot of attention to the city. With cameras
flashing and press swarming the contenders, the fighters make their way down the red carpet. Announcers off screen talk about the qualifications of each fighter, but do not have anything to say about Tommy. At this point, he is an unknown fighter recognizable only from a video online. Other notable fighters in the tournament are Brendan, Mad Dog, and the Russian champion Koba. After the fighters enter the building, Tommy spies Brendan and flees the scene.

That night, Brendan and Tommy run into each other on the beach outside their hotel. From a distance of about twenty feet, the brothers get in an argument about their childhood. Brendan feels that Tommy’s absence the last few years was unjustified. Tommy, on the other hand, believes that Brendan is the one that abandoned them. He tells Brendan “You’re my big brother, and you bailed on me.” Although the two have not spoken to each other in many years, the reunion is anything but happy.

The next day, the tournament officially begins. The first match of the tournament is Tommy against an unnamed fighter. The announcers are divided on their opinions of Tommy. One believes that Tommy is a real contender while the other thinks Tommy’s victory over Mad Dog was a fluke. As they finish their conversation, Tommy walks out of the locker room and into the ring. Where most fighters have music playing during their entrances, Tommy has chosen a silent introduction. With hundreds of cheering fans watching the fight, Tommy’s opponent enters the ring. As the referee starts the fight, Tommy’s opponent attempts to intimidate him. The fight begins and Tommy knocks out his opponent in one punch. Before waiting for the referee to announce his victory, Tommy rushes out of the ring and back to the locker room. The crowd goes crazy and the announcers admit their confusion concerning Tommy’s actions.

Brendan’s fight is next. Brendan enters the arena to Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy.” The announcers are surprised by his music choice but believe that Brendan is going to lose in the first
round. The first round of the fight goes poorly and Brendan gets pinned to the ground in a headlock. The bell rings, signaling that the first round is over. In the second round, Brendan is able to dodge a punch and pin his opponent in an arm bar (a type of advanced MMA hold where one fighter pins the other by holding his arm behind his back). Brendan’s opponent taps out and the fight is over. The crowd erupts as Brendan smiles at the camera.

The next four fights are shown as another montage. Mad Dog and Koba both participate in separate fights. Mad Dog savagely beats his opponent. Koba, on the other hand, menacingly approaches his opponent and ends the match with a single kick. Both men advance to the next round. After those two, Brendan and Tommy win their respective fights. Brendan’s victory is another close call while Tommy quickly dispatches his opponent. After those two fights, the announcers state that the tournament is over for the night and that the final four participants are Tommy, Brendan, Mad Dog, and Koba. The fights are to resume the next morning.

That night, the reporters for a local news station find out that Tommy is a former marine. The soldier that recognized Tommy earlier comes forth and announces that Tommy saved his squad after their tank was thrown into a body of water. Tommy swam out into the water and manually opened the tank hatch. The soldier thanks Tommy on national television and Tommy becomes a war hero overnight.

This new development makes it hard for Tommy to sleep, so he heads down to the hotel’s casino and sits at the slot machines. Paddy follows and tries to convince his son to rest up before the big fight. Even though Paddy is genuinely concerned about his well-being, Tommy disparages his attempts at being a father and screams at him until he leaves. Tommy is left sitting near the slot machines, mindlessly staring into the whirling lights.
Tommy returns to his hotel room early in the morning and hears Paddy shouting in the other room. Tommy enters the room to investigate and finds an incredibly drunk Paddy, listening to “Moby Dick” again. Paddy is shouting at the book, angry that Ahab cannot seem to catch the white whale. The shouting turns to hystericis and Paddy starts to lose control. Tommy embraces his father and brings him to bed. He lays Paddy down and cradles his father’s head, doing his best to calm the drunken man. The camera zooms out and the scene ends.

Next, the crowd is preparing for Tommy’s third fight. Tommy begins to enter the arena in silence, but this time, a military choir has arrived and sings during his entrance. Although it disrupts his normal routine, Tommy is not affected by the choir’s presence. He approaches the ring with a stony face. Mad Dog is waiting for him, snarling as Tommy finally enters the ring. Mad Dog has spent the entire tournament thus far speaking ill of Tommy and telling everyone who will listen that he is going to beat the silent fighter within an inch of his life. The referee brings both men to the center of the ring and begins the fight. In seconds, Tommy defeats Mad Dog and exits the ring quickly and quietly.

With Tommy’s third fight over, Brendan and Koba enter the ring for their fight. Koba, who has been lauded as the greatest fighter Russia has ever produced, mercilessly beats Brendan in the first and second round. Brendan manages to survive and gets a pep talk from Frank. Frank points into the audience and shows Brendan that Tess has come to support her husband. Frank tells Brendan that this fight is no longer for them; it is for her. Brendan is fighting for his home. And if he does not defeat Koba, he will not have a home to return to. With his will steeled, Brendan stands up for the next round with the giant Russian. Koba commands the third round, but makes a fatal error that gives Brendan the chance he needs. Brendan flips Koba and pins him.
with another arm bar. After a full minute of excruciating pain, Koba finally taps and Brendan wins the round.

As the final fight between Brendan and Tommy approaches, the news stories surrounding Tommy continue to circulate. Eventually, Pilar is interviewed and she explains what happened to Tommy and her husband. It is revealed to the crowd that Tommy is actually a military deserter who was able to save those men in the tank only because he was leaving the front line. Not only that, but the crowd learns that the two final fighters, Tommy and Brendan, are brothers. This fact sends a shockwave through the crowds both in the audience and watching remotely. Military police officers show up at the fight to arrest Tommy as soon as the fight is over.

This revelation does not deter the two brothers as they enter opposite sides of the ring. The final fight between Tommy and Brendan is a nail biter. Both brothers are ready to finally fight each other. The first round goes poorly for Brendan. Tommy lays a beating on Brendan, but Brendan manages to survive the round. The second round does not go any better for Brendan. Once again, he gets hit a lot and is bleeding heavily. During the third round, Brendan is able to pin Tommy, but Tommy breaks free of the hold before the bell rings. In the fourth round, Brendan gets Tommy in another arm bar, but this time applies more pressure and breaks Tommy’s elbow. Even with a broken elbow, Tommy refuses to tap out and the round ends. In the final round of the fight, Tommy fights Brendan with only one arm. Brendan keeps trying to convince Tommy to quit, but he refuses each time. Eventually, Brendan realizes that there is no convincing his stubborn brother. He apologizes to Tommy before landing a kick to Tommy’s head, knocking him out of the fight.

Brendan approaches his defeated brother and helps him to his feet. The two hug in the center of the ring, apparently forgetting all of the negative feelings they have amassed over the
years. Together, the brothers walk out of the ring and down toward the locker room with the crowd cheering behind them.

**Archetypal analysis**

This movie develops three main characters. The first character in this movie is Paddy, the brothers’ father. Paddy fits into the Wounded Healer archetype. Paddy has spent the last few decades of his life in isolation from his family. He has been dealing with his alcoholism alone and has slowly gotten better. Even though he has a gaping hole in his life, he tries his hardest to mend the broken relationships between his sons. Even after they berate and isolate him further, he continues to try and help, even when his help is clearly unwanted.

Together, Tommy and Brendan fulfill the archetype of the Hostile Brothers. Just like the Biblical Cain and Abel, Brendan and Tommy are competing against each other. Brendan, who always felt like the underdog, worked hard to get his father’s attention and approval. Now that they are both grown adults, they continue to literally fight each other for the same prize. Their constant competition, both inside and outside the ring, depicts them as Hostile Brothers who ultimately resolve their differences.

While Tommy is an important part of the story, Brendan is the real Hero archetype. Brendan is shown as the wholesome brother who is working to save his family. Brendan has to consistently overcome obstacles (crucifixions) and eventually has to defeat not only the strongest man in Russia but his own brother. Brendan works tirelessly to be the best and his potential as Hero is realized at the end of the film.

Tommy, the younger and heavily tattooed brother, operates as Brendan’s Shadow archetype. Tommy is the antithesis to everything that Brendan does. While Brendan walks in to the ring listening to Beethoven, Tommy enters in silence. Brendan leads a wholesome life with a
loving family; Tommy has been on the run from the military for a while. Even their clothing reflects this. Brendan wears white shorts in the ring while Tommy wears black. Tommy is Brendan’s opposite in so many ways and acts as a reflection of the negative path Brendan might have taken after he left their alcoholic father.

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**Movie Synopses (Condensed)**

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1) *Cape Fear* (1991): Sam is a lawyer who unsuccessfully defended a convicted rapist fourteen years ago. After the convict (Max) is released from prison, he stalks Sam and his family in attempt to get revenge on the man who had him sent to prison. Max, a well-read and heavily tattooed convict, follows Sam’s family with calculation and aggression.

2) *American History X* (1998): A former neo-Nazi works to protect his brother. Derek, the eldest brother and former skinhead, is out on parole and determined to make sure that his brother does not follow down the same path. Derek is the tattooed protagonist in this story, working to protect his family and hide the shame he has emblazoned on his chest.

3) *Boondock Saints* (1999): Two tattooed Irish brothers accidentally kill members of the mafia. After that, the brothers are determined to clear out the rest of the mafia from Boston. The film follows their vigilantism as they methodically kill off the rest of the mob while being pursued by an FBI agent.
4) *Memento* (2000): This movie follows Leonard as he tries to piece together the memory of his murdered wife. As a former insurance investigator, Leonard has the skills required to solve the murder. However, he is unable to form new memories due to an injury, so he uses tattoos as a way to keep pieces of the mystery with him at all times.

5) *Eastern Promises* (2007): A midwife named Anna seeks to uncover the mysterious death of one of her patients, Tatiana. Tatiana was one of the prostitutes owned by the Russian mafia. After accidentally revealing that she knew about the murder to a member of the mafia, Nikolai. Nikolai is covered in tattoos that reveal his associations with organized crime and become part of the story.

6) *Wanted* (2008): Wesley is a financial account manager who hates his job. After deciding that he’s finally had enough, Wesley decides he wants to quit his job. However, he is unable to summon the courage and continues his pitiful existence. After a failed attempt on his life at a local grocery story, Wesley decides that enough is enough. He is saved by a professional assassin named Fox and joins a group of assassins call The Fraternity. The film follows Wesley in his pursuit of the man who murdered his father.

7) *Black Swan* (2010): A beautiful and delicate ballet dancer (Portman) wins the lead role in “Swan Lake.” As her progression into ballet stardom continues, she slowly loses her mind and becomes more and more like the tattooed antagonist, the Black Swan (Kunis).

8) *Warrior* (2011): Two brothers compete against each other in a mixed martial arts tournament. While the family is broken, the tournament ultimately brings them together. The film follows the two brothers. The first brother is Brendan. He is a public school teacher fighting to make money for his family. The other brother, Tommy, is a tattooed ex-marine who is fighting for fame.
9) *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011): Mikael attempts to solve the mystery of a missing girl from over 40 years ago. He is assisted by Lisbeth, a tattooed punk-rock hacker. Together, they uncover a web of mystery and corruption larger than either had suspected.

For convenience, a table has been included to show each of the main characters and their archetypal motif throughout the films. Tattooed characters are marked with an asterisk (*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie</th>
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<th>Character</th>
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<tr>
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Chapter 4: Discussion & Implications

Discussion

A Jungian Archetypal analysis reveals five interesting patterns found throughout the nine movies. While the intent of this project was never to quantitatively analyze the films, it is interesting to note the distribution of archetypes amongst the tattooed characters. From this analysis, tattooed characters fill a limited amount of different archetypes. They are: Trickster (1), Shadow (3), Anima/Animus (4). It is important to mention that these numbers are lacking one film, Memento. While Memento offered useful information in terms of analysis, the only tattooed character shifts wildly between four different archetypes. That being said, it is difficult to classify Leonard as just one archetype. He was not included in the previous distribution because of his multi-faceted story arc.

It is no coincidence that the tattooed characters fall into one of these three archetypes. It is through the use of these archetypes that we see the main use of tattoos in film: character development. The tattoo becomes a tool to develop the character. This chapter highlights five different trends found throughout the analysis: Character Motivation, Capacity for Violence, Tattoos on the Shadow, Tattoos on the Trickster, and Tattoos on the Anima/Animus.

Character Motivation

The first trend to be discussed involves the motivation for the tattooed characters. As research has found, one of the reasons for getting a tattoo is because of its symbolic importance to the owner (Velliquette, Murray & Creyer, 1998). The tattoos in these films operate in much the same way. While most of the non-tattooed characters work for a certain set of goals
(protecting family, serving the law, helping others), tattooed characters had one of three motivations in these movies. The first motivating factor for characters was vengeance. Of the nine films analyzed, four of them featured tattooed characters seeking vengeance for past aggression. The first instance is Max Cady seeking revenge against Sam Bowden and his family. Cady believes that Sam is responsible for his incarceration. Cady got the tattoos on his body to remember the pain he suffered. The tattoos represent Cady’s anger and thirst for vengeance. During the police station scene, the Biblical passages invoking thoughts of vengeance are clearly seen tattooed on Cady’s arms and stomach.

Cady is not the only character seeking vengeance. Leonard, the protagonist from *Memento*, spends the entirety of the film seeking vengeance for the death of his wife. Just as Cady’s tattoos are a manifestation of his anger, Leonard’s tattoos are literal reminders of what happened to him. He uses his tattoos as a way to remember the past and reintroduce the anger into his psyche. Even when he exacts his revenge, Leonard continues on the war path because of the reminders emblazoned on his chest.

Like Leonard, Fox has a permanent mark on her skin that reminds her of the past. However, Fox’s brand on her neck was not voluntarily obtained. Even though the mark she bears was given to her, Fox wears it proudly as she continues her vengeance-laden assassin handiwork. The desire for vengeance that drives her to complete assassin contracts is permanently plastered on her neck.

The last character motivated by vengeance is Lisbeth, the enigmatic investigator from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Lisbeth was sexually abused as a child. Even at a young age, Lisbeth attempted to exact revenge on the person abusing her. Once she had successfully done so, she continued to find vengeance on behalf of others. She is motivated to help Mikael find
Harriet’s killer because of the fact that the killer has a history of raping and killing women. Lisbeth sees herself in these women and is motivated by a strong passion for vengeance.

Of the motivating factors, vengeance is the most obvious when it comes to tattooed characters. However, two of the characters are motivated by personal reasons. Lily in *Black Swan* has her back tattooed, but her actions in the movie are not motivated by vengeance. Instead, Lily’s actions seem to be entirely selfish. In fact, the only time she really shows compassion for another person is when she apologizes to Nina. But even then, she tricks Nina into going out that night and missing rehearsal the next day. Tommy, the younger brother from *Warrior*, is driven by his sense of guilt. His tattoos bear no meaning in the development of his character, but Tommy is marred with regret for things he has done in the past. He hangs on to his memories and continues to fight through the tournament out of a sense of guilt that he survived in Iraq.

The most common motivating factor behind the tattooed characters was the idea of justice. Eight of the movies featured characters who were motivated by their sense of justice. This justice could be a result of many things. Whether they were seeking personal justice or justice for others, the tattooed characters almost always followed their own moral compass. While justice and vengeance are closely related, it is important to note that a person can seek justice without suffering aggression from another. Additionally, a person seeking vengeance might not be looking for justice. In many of these films, though, the characters seeking vengeance believe that their cause is just. For instance, Max Cady believes that he suffered an injustice at the hands of the legal system and Sam Bowden. While Cady is also motivated by vengeance, the scales of justice tattooed on his chest indicate that he also feels entitled to more than just hurting the Bowden’s. Cady uses everything at his disposal within the legal system.
before ultimately resorting to physical violence because he believes that he is the righteous hand of God. Cady believes he is administering justice to a crooked lawyer.

Additionally, Leonard seeks justice for his dead wife. Even after being told that he is the one who killed his wife, he continues to seek justice. His quest, while well-intentioned, turns out to have been accomplished long ago. Leonard believes that his cause is just, but he ends up murdering an innocent man because of it. His quest is based on his idea of what is right. Even though it is flawed, his moral compass guides him to seek justice (and vengeance) for the death of his wife.

Lisbeth and Fox both continue their fights long after they achieve personal vengeance. Fox works as an assassin long after she hunts down the man who murdered her parents. In a similar vein, Lisbeth gets her revenge early in her life. Both women continue their respective lines of work because they believe it is the just thing to do.

Although vengeance plays a role in the search for justice, some characters seek justice simply because of their own moral convictions. In *American History X*, for example, Derek tries to shut down Cameron Alexander’s neo-Nazi movement. After learning about the injustice his laundry friend had suffered in the outside world, Derek works with his family and friends to level the playing field and make his part of the world a better place. Derek even agrees to work with the police in order to serve justice to those who deserve it. Alexander never directly hurt Derek or his family, but Derek’s sense of justice forces him to help in the final attempt to shut down Alexander’s movement.

The McManus brothers are another pair of tattooed people that follow their own sense of justice. Throughout *The Boondock Saints*, Murphy and Connor administer justice in their own fashion. Even their tattoos reflect that. The Saints have the words “Truth” and “Justice” tattooed
on their hands in Latin. In their minds, the Saints operate as the literal hands of Justice, administering punishment to the wicked.

But justice is not limited to vigilantism or those working within the limits of the law. In *Eastern Promises*, Nikolai is an undercover KGB agent working to shut down the Russian mafia. Once he reads Tatiana’s diary, he immediately sets into motion the events that will remove Semyon from power. Even when it has the chance to blow his cover, Nikolai makes the decisions that help people instead of hurting them. The tattooed characters are shown operating outside the law but within their own sense of justice. Wearing a tattoo in these films quickly shows that the character is different or abnormal.

Tattooed characters in the analyzed films are highly motivated. Their tattoos usually indicate their feelings or motivations. Some are motivated by vengeance, while others have more personal reasons to push through the narrative. But most of the tattooed characters are motivated by their personal sense of justice. It is this sense of justice that propels the story forward. Whether the justice is a result of worldview or an aggression from their past, eight of the nine movies showed tattooed characters working tirelessly to achieve their individual justices.

Although the characters follow their own moral compass, their intentions seem justified to the audience. Leonard is searching for the man who murdered his wife, Nikolai is trying to overthrow a crime family, and the McManus brothers turn to vigilantism to solve their community’s problems. However, it is important to note that these acts of personal justice are just that: personal. These characters have turned to a method outside of the law to pursue their own sense of justice. This may be an indicator of tattooed people existing as a fringe group, an idea that will be discussed later in this chapter.
While it may be a result of the movies selected, each tattooed character in the film had an innate capacity for violence. The tattoos eventually show the audience that this person has the potential to commit acts of aggression against others. As Lin (2002) found, one of the most common uses for tattoos historically was on warriors. Compared to their non-tattooed counterparts, the tattooed characters are incredibly violent when it suits their purposes.

The first instance of violence comes from none other than Max Cady. Cady is originally imprisoned for a violent crime. While the audience does not know if Cady had tattoos before going to prison, it is clear that his capacity for violence has increased during his incarceration. And as his capacity for violence increases, so do the amount of tattoos on his body. During his incarceration, Cady kills at least one other inmate in an incredibly violent fashion. After he is released, Cady continues flaunting his tattoos and attacks a law-abiding family.

In *American History X*, the character of Derek is split between his past and future selves. The Present Derek hides his tattoos and tries his best to avoid violence. The only scene where Present Derek engages in a violent act is when he and his family are threatened at the neo-Nazi party. When another tattooed person pulls a gun, Present Derek (symbolically clad in white) has to wrestle the gun away. Even then, he does not willingly hurt anyone. The real violent form of Derek is his past version. Past Derek wears his Nazi tattoos with pride. And with that, Derek commits multiple violent acts, including the murder of two men and the assault of a slew of grocery store employees. Derek’s transition from past to present (and ultimately, the transition from willingly showing his tattoos to shamefully hiding them) is indicative of how violent he is at any given point in the movie.
The Saints are another set of people that have a history of violence. In fact, their entire presence in the movie is based on their willingness to hurt others. Although they are still out working toward justice, the fact remains that both Murphy and Connor are good at hurting and killing people. The scenes where they commit their most violent crimes always show at least one tattoo. When they are executing Papa Joe, for example, the tattoos on their necks can be clearly seen. During the fist fight in the bar, the audience can see the tattoos on their forearms and hands. Conversely, Smecker works against the two brothers and does not have a visible tattoo on his person.

Leonard’s brand of violence is slightly different from the rest. Leonard’s violence starts to really take place after he gets tattooed. During his flashback scenes, Leonard is shown as a caring husband and efficient employee. The non-tattooed Leonard attempts to fight off the men attacking his wife but is easily beaten. During his search for her killer, Leonard starts getting more and more tattoos. By the end of the movie, Leonard kills at least two people and has struck at least three. Non-tattooed Leonard is unable to effectively fight back, but Leonard with tattoos is surprisingly adept at violence.

In *Eastern Promises*, the audience knows that Nikolai is a good person. He goes to great lengths to protect Anna’s uncle and ultimately helps save a baby. However, the amount of tattoos Nikolai has is indicative of how violent he can be. Admittedly, Nikolai does everything he can to avoid violence, but sometimes it appears inevitable. The point that Nikolai is most violent occurs in the spa after he is inducted into the mafia. A naked and very tattooed Nikolai kills two men in the spa. He stabs one of the men in the base of the skull and strangles the other one on the floor of the sauna. Nikolai tries to avoid violence but his status as a warrior is solidified when he singlehandedly kills two assailants, all while his tattoos are open for the world to see.
The hostile brothers in *Warrior* are the epitome of male violence. The two quite literally beat each other senseless. While Brendan does have a small tattoo on his bicep, he is shown as less violent than his heavily tattooed brother Tommy. Tommy has the ability to administer violence at an alarming rate. When he was a soldier, he was trained to kill. Now that he is an MMA fighter, he gets paid to hit other people.

Tattooed women, however, display different patterns of violence. Fox’s violence is calculated and quick. As an assassin, she has to kill with a cold efficiency. Even though she has the training to commit brutal acts of violence, the scenes that truly test Fox’s capacity show her quickly and efficiently dispatching opponents. There is no savagery in the way that she fights. It is graceful and quick. In a similar fashion, Lisbeth’s capacity for violence is incredibly calculated. Her attack on her rapist is clearly pre-meditated. She knows exactly what she is going to do before she gets there. More so, she commits these acts with a clear goal in mind. Her efficiency rivals that of Fox. However, it is interesting to note that when Lisbeth wants to commit the greatest act of violence possible (killing another man), she asks permission of her male (and non-tattooed) counterpart, Mikael. The last tattooed female character, Lily, does not directly hurt another person. However, Nina imagines that Lily is actively trying to interfere with her plans. It is not until Lily is introduced into Nina’s life that Nina starts to act strangely. The violence between the two is psychological, not physical, but culminates in Nina’s imaginary fight against Lily before the final death scene.

Even though there are distinct differences in the portrayal of violence between men and women, every tattooed character in the films analyzed engages in some form of violence. The violence can be pre-meditated, a sudden outburst, psychological, or stem from a long-standing
rivalry. However the violence occurs in these films, it is almost exclusively carried out by people with tattoos.

_Tattoos and the Shadow_

Of the nine movies analyzed, one of the most common occurrences for tattoos on characters was found in the Shadow archetype. The Shadow archetype acts as the opposite to the Hero. The Shadow represents all of the negative aspects of the Hero that the Hero represses. For example, Darth Vader operates as the Shadow archetype to Luke Skywalker. Vader is a manifestation of Luke’s repressed characteristics. If Luke were to give in to the rage that consumes him after his family’s death, he would become like Vader. The Shadow archetype, while not always as dramatic, serves as the counterpart to the Hero. Often times, the tattooed characters work as the foil to the non-tattooed individuals and propel the story forward.

The first instance of a tattooed Shadow archetype can be found in Derek’s split character representation. As Derek and Danny are remembering the past, the audience is introduced to Derek’s darker side. The violence, hatred, and bigotry associated with Past Derek are seen in his actions and the tattoos on his body. When Derek returns from prison a changed man, his tattoos are hidden from view. Even though the audience knows that they still exist, Derek has since repressed (or even destroyed) the hatred that once consumed him.

The Saints operate as a Shadow archetype as well. Murphy and Connor McManus are Smecker’s Shadow. Agent Smecker wishes to administer justice. He does this through legal means. However, he realizes that the Saints are doing the exact same thing and chooses not to pursue them. Near the end of the film, Smecker gives in to temptation and tries vigilantism himself. By dressing as a woman, he is able to conceal his identity and personally engage in slight vigilantism. The final scene of the film shows Smecker idly watching as the Saints
publicly execute Papa Joe. Smecker allows the Saints to execute Joe, silently acknowledging their crusade and allowing part of the Shadow archetype to take over his personality.

Tommy is the last tattooed character to act as the Hero’s Shadow. In every fight scene in *Warrior*, Tommy is shown as Brendan’s opposite. Brendan as the Hero wears white, struggles to win, and ultimately overcomes all obstacles for his families well-being. Tommy, on the other hand, wears black, wins without contest, and fights out of guilt rather than the desire to protect. Brendan is shown as a wholesome father, a dutiful husband, and a beloved physics teacher. Tommy is represented as a miscreant. He gets in fights, he is a military deserter, and he is ultimately arrested at the end of the movie. Tommy is the final obstacle that Brendan must overcome during the course of the movie.

In this analysis, tattooed characters often represent the Shadow archetype. The tattooed are the representation of the repressed characteristics of the Heroes in each film. Past Derek is the literal manifestation of Present Derek’s bigotry, the Saints administer Smecker’s justice, and Tommy opposes Brendan in the final fight. Each Shadow stands opposite to the Hero, but does not necessarily oppose the Hero. The Shadow simply represents something that the Hero has hidden from view.

*Tattoos on the Trickster*

The Trickster archetype was present in the majority of the films analyzed. The Trickster is often the force that attempts to stop the Hero. While the Shadow represents an opposite/repressed characteristic in the Hero, the Trickster actively opposes the Hero and tries to
undermine the quest. In this analysis, only one tattooed character operated as the Trickster archetype: Max Cady.

Cady is an excellent example of the Trickster archetype. First, Cady uses deceit to ingratiate himself in the family. He calls Danielle late at night and lies about being her drama teacher. From there, he seduces the young girl and disrupts the Bowden family dynamic. Second, Cady’s distorted worldview is ever present in his actions. One characteristic of the Trickster is that they distort the truth and other’s view of the world. Cady is no exception. He convinces Danielle that he is the good guy. Additionally, Cady seduces Lori when she is at her weakest point. He momentarily turns her against Sam and takes advantage of her weakness. Lastly, the Trickster is unpredictable. Cady’s reactions and methods are impossible for the Bowdens (and the audience) to follow. All the audience knows about Cady is that he is seeking vengeance. However, the audience has no way of guessing the lengths to which Cady is willing to go. Cady kills two strangers just to scare the Bowdens into leaving their home. As the oldest film in the analysis, Cape Fear shows a more conservative view of tattoos. Cady’s tattoos highlight his violent and evil characteristics.

Although only one film analyzed shows the tattooed characters as Tricksters, there are a few other examples that follow a similar path. Due to time and financial constraints on the project, these films did not make the final round of analysis but deserve an honorable mention because of their focus on tattoos as evil character development. Tattoo (1981) follows Karl, a tattoo artist who decides that a woman he sees must bear his mark. He pursues the woman, deceives those around her, and ultimately traps her. She is saved but not before the psychological damage is done. Another film, Red Dragon (2002), follows FBI agents as they pursue a heavily
tattooed serial killer. This serial killer uses deceit in much the same way that Cady does. He is a
criminal mastermind that stops at nothing to kill his targets.

These movies were included in this section of the discussion because they both hold
significant details regarding tattoos and the Trickster. Tattoo is one of the first large scale
productions that actively showed a tattooed main character. Karl is clearly depicted as a villain in
the film. He is depicted as a Trickster in the film. In Red Dragon, the tattooed villain is a
criminal mastermind. He is always one step ahead of the FBI agents pursuing him. The scary
tattoos on the villain indicate his sinister intentions.

Even though tattoos on the Trickster were not as prevalent as other archetypes, their
presence forms an interesting component in the discussion of character development. For Cady’s
character (and the villains in Tattoo and Red Dragon), the tattoos let the audience know that the
character is an evil presence. However, tattoos on the Trickster were the least common use of
tattoos in the archetypal analysis of the films in this study.

Tattoos on the Anima/Animus

In this analysis, tattoos were most commonly found on the Anima/Animus. As the most
common representation of tattooed characters, it is important to describe their roles in the
respective films. The Anima and Animus are two opposite archetypes that serve similar
functions. First, the Anima is the representation of the female in a male Hero. The Anima serves
as a complementary force in the Hero’s quest. Often times, the Anima is the driving force that
pushes the Hero to his best. With the help of the Anima, the Hero is able to realize his fullest
potential.

In Wanted, the tattooed Fox operates as Wesley’s Anima archetype. Throughout the film,
Fox is a complementary force that supports Wesley from the background. Initially, Fox is
everything that Wesley is not. She is calm, collected, and incredibly efficient. Fox saves Wesley’s life on multiple occasions, trains him to be an assassin, and ultimately kills herself so that Wesley can realize his fullest potential and kill Sloan. Without Fox’s help, Wesley would have died in the first few minutes of the film.

The other instance of the Anima archetype can be found in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Lisbeth operates as Mikael’s Anima for the second half of the film. Mikael is a good person who wants to help Henrik’s family. However, Mikael is unable to unravel the mystery surrounding Harriet’s death alone. Once he enlists Lisbeth’s help, he is able to accomplish his goal. Lisbeth is Mikael’s opposite in almost every conceivable way, yet her presence is a complementary force on Mikael’s quest. Although Mikael finally solves the mystery, Lisbeth arrives in the final moments and saves his life. Without Lisbeth, Mikael is unable to accomplish his original goal of ousting Wennerstrom as a corrupted businessman. Lisbeth is able to do what Mikael cannot and helps him realize his ambitions from the beginning of the film.

The counterpart of the Anima, the Animus, serves a similar purpose in the films. The Animus acts as the counterpart to the Anima and is the archetypal image of man in the female psyche. However, the function is slightly different. Where the Anima acts as a complementary force, the Animus usually represents something that the female is lacking. In the analyzed movies, the Animus guides the female Hero instead of complimenting her.

In *Eastern Promises*, Nikolai is the Animus to Anna’s Hero archetype. Although Nikolai is initially viewed as a bad person, his demeanor says otherwise. He constantly (and secretly) helps Anna through her quest. Whether he is providing her with information, protecting her from other mafia members, or helping her recover baby Christina, Nikolai is a guiding force in Anna’s
struggle. The movie revolves around Nikolai’s subtle help from the shadows of the murky Russian crime syndicate.

Although the Animus is usually reserved for male characters helping females, *Black Swan* alters the way in which the Animus is represented. Admittedly, Lily is a female character. However, when shown in opposition to Nina, Lily is a masculine influence. Lily drinks, smokes, curses, and is sexually promiscuous. Although these are not qualities restricted to just men, she is inherently more masculine than the timid, fragile, and traditional Nina. In this mindset, Lily represents literally everything that Nina lacks and wants to acquire for her role as the Swan Queen. In her role as the Black Swan, Lily represents everything that Leroy wants Nina to be. Lily’s influence is present throughout the film. At first, she is the dancer that Nina is compared to. Afterward, Lily is the person who convinces Nina to leave her home and go to a bar. Lily’s image is what pushes Nina to break free from her mother’s grasp and reach sexual maturity. And it is Nina’s imaginary slaying of Lily that finally allows Nina to ascend to her Self archetype as the Swan Queen.

In this analysis, tattooed characters were most likely to represent the Anima and Animus archetypes. This means that tattoos are used to develop characters in opposition to traditional values. For instance, Nina represents traditional feminine ideals. She is sweet, naïve, and fragile. When she is combined with Lily, she becomes that which she has sought from the beginning of the movie. Wesley is weak and afraid of everything. But when Fox helps him, he becomes the assassin he was destined to be. The tattooed characters are not shown as the Heroes, but they are what help the Hero finish the quest. The tattoo becomes a marker for the character’s complexity. While they usually are operating in a way that helps the Hero, the tattooed Anima/Animus is a character of depth; the tattoo signifies this depth.
Now that the trends found throughout the analysis have been brought to light, the initial research questions come to the forefront of the discussion. This research project came into fruition with two research questions in mind. For reference, they are:

RQ 1: Are there ways in which tattoos are commonly used in film?
RQ 2: Which archetypes are most frequently shown wearing tattoos?

The preceding analysis highlight the different trends found throughout the nine movies. However, the research questions proposed earlier in the project reflect different trends in the use of tattoos.

RQ1: Tattoos were commonly used in one of two ways. Throughout the films, tattoos were used to indicate different thematic motifs. One motif present in a few of the films was the idea of permanence versus change. Tattoos were constantly being used to show some level of permanence with the character. Essentially, the tattoo shows some bastion of the past. The tattoo is something that the character either cannot or has chosen not to get past. They are trying to move from their injured past to their just future. Leonard’s tattoos in *Memento* were the only sense of permanency he had in his life. Cady’s tattoos represented his adherence to his old life. They were a constant reminder that he felt cheated and sought revenge. In a similar way, both Lisbeth and Fox had markings on their skin to keep them focused on their respective missions. The permanency of the tattoo indicated that the character had a firm grounding in something that happened in the past.

The characters that hid their tattoos were all trying to move forward. Brendan, the father and fighter in *Warrior*, had a tattoo on his bicep. However, it was never in view during the scenes where he was with his family or at work. The only time we see the tattoo is when he is fighting. Brendan does not want to fight any more but he has to in order to support his family. He
hides his tattoo and shows that he has moved past fighting, unlike his tattooed brother, Tommy. Similarly, Present Derek hides his tattoos out of shame. He is shown in the present day with a long-sleeved white t-shirt. His tattoos are only seen during flashbacks and when he shamefully stares at them in the mirror. Derek is another character who hides his tattoos in order to show that he has changed.

Another motif at play throughout the films is the competition between order and chaos. The tattooed characters often represented the more chaotic parts of the film. For example, Wesley is a mild-mannered account manager in a white collar office setting. Everything is incredibly ordered and monotonous in his life. It is not until he meets the tattooed Fox that his life takes a crazy turn. Fox disrupts Wesley’s ordered (and boring) existence. In The Boondock Saints, the tattooed McManus brothers introduce a dose of vigilante-inspired chaos to South Boston. Their actions, while praised by the public and police alike, create a chaos that has to be resolved by Agent Smecker. And lastly, the Bowden family is orderly and calm until Cady and his slew of tattoos become a focal point for the family’s disguised problems. And in The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Lisbeth plays Mikael’s opposite in every conceivable way. The only thing the two have in common is a desire to find the truth. Mikael’s methods are precise and above the law while Lisbeth usually takes a darker and more violent approach to finding the truth.

Although tattoos were used to indicate different thematic motifs, tattoos were mainly used as a tool to further develop characters. The tattoo held different meanings for each character. For Cady, tattoos signified his evil intent. The officers at the police station scoffed at his appearance. Even Cady agrees with Leigh’s sentiments and says that the tattoos make him look scary. In Cape Fear, the tattoos covering Cady’s body are meant to instill fear in the other
characters (and the audience). Tommy is another character whose tattoos serve an aesthetic purpose. Unlike Cady, Tommy’s tattoos are not necessarily part of his life story. Instead, Tommy’s tattoos show that he is someone to be feared. The tattoos on his body seem to indicate his prowess in the ring and his violent nature. While they serve no purpose in the story, the tattoos make Tommy look like a fighter.

However, Cady and Tommy’s fearsome tattoos are not only one way that characters are developed through body modification. Another way that the directors and writers used tattoos was to mark a tragedy in the character’s past. Fox has a permanent mark on her neck that signifies her dark past. Lisbeth’s tattoos represent the abuse she suffered as a child. Leonard literally tattoos his body to remember the things that he has discovered. Nikolai’s tattoos tell his entire life story. But the most compelling case belongs to Derek in *American History X*. Derek’s tattoos represent all of the things that he no longer wants to be. For Derek, the tattoos are a permanent reminder of the bad things that he has done. He is ashamed of his tattoos. His shame is shown on his skin for the world (and the audience) to see. The tattoos mark the characters in two ways. The first being the obvious mark on the skin. The tattoo serves as a mark that make that character abnormal or the other. But the second mark shows the link to the past that the character is unable to escape from. Fox, Nikolai, and Derek are all haunted by their past. The tattoo marks them as a tattooed person as well as someone physically marred by their past.

A third motif found in the films can be found in the struggle between surface-level interpretations and deep understanding of the tattooed characters. When a tattooed character was introduced into the film, they were often shown negatively. The McManus brothers introduction shows them squatting in an abandoned building in South Boston. Lily in *Black Swan* shows up late for her first dance rehearsal. Even Nikolai is forced to hide his tattoos in the presence of his
bosses, yet he is the one they call to clean up the mess. The tattoo is used to immediately identify the character as a bad person. This is not to say that the character is evil, but the tattoo is used as a marker to designate the unconventional, the weird, or the alternative character. The characters seem to walk the line between good and evil; each character (except Cady) pursues a positive ending through unconventional means. From there, the film makers go to great lengths to show the depth of the character. Eight of the nine films showed that the tattooed characters had more depth than just the marks on their skin. The surface-level interpretation gives way to a complexity of character development. The McManus brothers, although rough around the edges, are friendly with each other and the community, ultimately helping everyone they care about. Lily is shown as a harlot but immediately comes to Nina’s aid whenever needed. And Nikolai’s tattoos give him a terrifying presence, yet he is the reason that Anna and the baby survive the ordeal. The film makers used the tattoo to show that this character is different, yet the film reveals there is more depth to the character. It seems that this reflects the changing perception of tattoos; While tattoos were a marker for the deviant subclasses, now they hold a more ambiguous meaning. Instead of the tattoo marking a bad person (Cady), a tattoo is just a surface level trait that may or may not reveal something about the person wearing it (Nikolai).

The last way that tattoos were used to develop characters can be found in the isolating nature of the ink itself. While the tattoos tend to make the character stand out from the rest, it also separates the character from others. For all of the movies analyzed, the tattooed characters often played the role opposite their non-tattooed Hero counterparts. For instance, Lily in *Black Swan* plays Nina’s opposite. The tattoos are a mark on her body that indicates that she is inherently different from Nina. Tommy’s tattoos in *Warrior* function in a similar way. While they do enhance his overall appearance, the tattoos indicate that Tommy is playing the role
opposite his wholesome brother Brendan. Even the Saints’ tattoos show they are on the fringe. Smecker, the man sworn to uphold the law, does not show a single tattoo. But the Saints work outside the law and their tattoos reflect that.

RQ2: As discussed earlier in the analysis, the tattooed characters in these movies fit most commonly into one of three archetypes: Trickster (one instance), Shadow (three instances), and the Anima/Animus (four instances): Although this project was never intended to be quantitative in nature, it is hard to ignore the fact that, while there were tattooed protagonists in these films, there were no instances of a tattooed Hero archetype. This is important to note because it holds certain implications for the fate of tattooed people. Although the feelings toward tattoos may be changing, there are still commonly held misconceptions that must be overcome. The tattooed characters in recent films are not evil but misguided. They operate on the fringe of society or outside of the law, implying that there is still a significant connection with the negative heritage of tattoos. There are a few instances where a tattooed character exhibits Hero-like behavior. First, Brendan has a single tattoo on his bicep. The tattoo is rarely seen outside of the ring and pales in comparison to the tattoos on his brother. Second, Derek in American History X has tattoos, but they are never seen. When he fulfills his Hero archetype duties, he is hiding the tattoos from view but he is still intimately aware of them. Lastly, the closest approximation to a tattooed Hero in these movies can be found in Leonard and Lisbeth. However, the viewers realize by the end of the movie that Leonard killed his wife and ultimately murders an innocent man, hindering the possibility of classifying him as a Hero. Conversely, Lisbeth displays many of the Hero’s qualities (saves Mikael, seeks justice for other women) but her actions outside of the law, such as her illegal methods of collecting information and the torture of her rapist, place her more closely to the Shadow and Anima archetype.
Implications & Conclusion

While it is dangerous to assume that the overall depiction of tattoos has changed, it is safe to say that the use of tattoos became more nuanced in the films analyzed. The depiction of tattooed people seemed to change naturally every three films. In the first three films (*Cape Fear, American History X, The Boondock Saints*) tattoos are used to show that a character has a tendency/ history of violence. The next set of films (*Memento, Eastern Promises, Wanted*) show tattooed characters as good people who make bad decisions. The last set of films (*Black Swan, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Warrior*) use tattoos to show the character in opposition to the Hero.

The earliest film, *Cape Fear*, shows Cady’s tattoos purely as a point of fear and contempt. Everyone who sees his tattoos makes an offhand comment about them. Cady’s tattoos simply indicate that he is a scary person. However, the next film chronologically, *American History X*, uses tattoos to show the character’s progression through the film. The tattoo is viewed negatively at first due to the association with neo-Nazism, however, Derek’s insistence on hiding the tattoo show his characters transformation throughout the film. The tattoo becomes a marker for Derek’s new life. *The Boondock Saints* also use tattoos to show that the Saints are different. While they are morally ambiguous characters (good people doing bad things), their tattoos are only shown when they commit acts of violence. In the first three films alone, the tattoo transforms from a one-dimensional marker of evil to showing ambiguity and change in characters.

The next three films introduce more complications into the use of tattoos. In 2000, *Memento*’s protagonist Leonard is the most complex character in terms of the archetypal...
analysis. He shifts between four archetypes, all of which are completely different. The tattoos on his body mark him as an enigmatic character. The people that see his tattoos are always perplexed by their presence. Leonard is shown as a confused character but never an evil one. *Eastern Promises* reveals a bit of a twist on the use of tattoos. Nikolai is incredibly tattooed and shown to be cold, calculating, and ruthless throughout the film. However, the audience discovers at the end of the film that Nikolai is actually a good person. The tattoos are a misdirection to hide that Nikolai is a good person after all. The last movie in this set, *Wanted*, follows a similar trajectory. Fox is shown as Wesley’s Anima throughout the film. Once she is ordered to kill Wesley, she tries to do so with ruthless efficiency. At the end of the movie, though, Fox is given the opportunity to either kill or save Wesley. Instead of shooting him, she kills all the other assassins and gives Wesley his last chance at a normal life outside The Fraternity.

The three most recent films present the most nuanced representations of tattooed characters. Lily in *Black Swan* has tattoos that only show her in opposition to Nina. Lily is not a violent person, nor does she cause much trouble for anyone else. Her tattoos indicate that she is different from Nina. Most of the violence that Lily “commits” occurs in Nina’s fractured psyche. Lisbeth, the Anima from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, is covered in tattoos and frequently acts as Mikael’s complementary partner. When Mikael cannot solve the case, Lisbeth steps up. When Lisbeth hits a block in her research, Mikael helps. However, Lisbeth has to ask permission to act in the end. Lisbeth is always shown as Mikael’s opposite. Lastly, Tommy and Brendan in *Warrior* are always shown as opposing forces. With the exception of their reunion at the end of the film, the two brothers are different. Tommy is gruff and violent while Brendan is kind and only fights for his family. In the end, Brendan and his wholesome appearance defeat the opposing tattooed brother.
The use of a tattoo to show complexity in a character is becoming more common. The trend over time is that the tattoos become more nuanced and complex as cinema evolves. In 1991, Cady’s character and tattoos are one-dimensional while Lisbeth and her tattoos in 2011 are complex and reveal great depth. The nine films analyzed used tattoos as a way to create more complex characters for the stories. A character’s entire background story can be told with ink on flesh. More complex characters will help create interesting stories. It is no coincidence that the tattooed characters often held multiple archetypes. The tattoo serves as a red flag, although mostly a misdirecting one. The audience sees the character and judges based on appearance. Their notions of the character are then disrupted, revealing more depth to the character than previously thought.

Although the tattoo is being used to create complexity within a character, tattoos in the real world can do the same. In a highly individualized culture, tattoos can add complexity to a person. As the research suggests, identity is one of the main reasons that people get tattooed. Real people and cinematic characters have tattoos for similar reasons: the tattoo promotes individuality. It sets the person/character apart from the rest of the world. In film, the tattoo was found most commonly on the Shadow and the Anima/Animus. These are qualities that a person may want to have or reveal. The tattoo is a perfect way to show complexity or edginess without having to actually do anything. A person wearing a tattoo is showing the world individuality and complexity without speaking a word.

Getting a tattoo helps promote individuality in both characters and people, however, the analysis of these films reveals that the negative associations with tattooing still exist. Each time a tattooed character was introduced, they were shown in a negative light. The film maker has to explain the tattoo or the character before the opinions start to shift. Tattooing in real life might
have to follow the same trajectory. People continue to get tattoos to promote individuality, to show commitment to others, to make themselves feel better, or to remember something important. But just like in film, the negative association with the art of tattooing must be overcome before the person can be accepted. Otherwise, the tattooed people may feel isolated or on the fringe, just like the characters in the films.

As the film *Frankenstein* revealed commonly held notions of fear for the future, movies about tattoos may be revealing other notions. As we move forward, the tattoo becomes more nuanced and complex. In the early 1990’s and similar to the way Cady is viewed in *Cape Fear*, the tattoo was somewhat one-dimensional. Cady’s character is evil and his tattoos reflect that. While this is not to say that tattoos were believed to be evil at that time, the tattoo was a one-dimensional indicator of Cady’s personality. However, as time goes on, the tattoos grow to signify a depth to the character. By 2011, the tattooed characters are not evil at all; they’re just complex. These films are showing the increasingly nuanced perceptions of tattooed individuals.

The use of tattoos in film has changed over time. While it is unfair to suggest that the change has been dramatic or positive, the tattooed characters have been shown to exhibit multi-faceted personalities and backgrounds. The role of that tattoo will most likely continue to change as film evolves. For future research, it would be interesting to replicate this study with a different set of movies twenty years from now. While the changes are incredibly gradual over time, the shift in tattoo use is apparent when comparing movies created twenty years apart. Whether it was Cady’s homicidal tendencies or Lisbeth’s desire to help other women, tattoos show versatility in character development that is unmatched in cinema. Tattoos can change a perfectly likeable character to a neo-Nazi in just one scene.
As film makers create more complex characters that combine multiple archetypes, it seems natural that some people will want to do the same. While there are some archetypes that are desirable, sometimes the cool characters are the Shadow or the Anima/Animus. If someone wants to be like their favorite character or to show some level of edginess or rebellion, a tattoo is a perfect way to display that without having to change the way the person acts. The tattoo can serve the same function both on and off screen.

The tattoo has become a device used by film makers to develop a character to new level. Instead of having the character’s back story told in great detail, a quick tattoo reveal can tell the audience all they need to know. In this way, the tattoo has become another way to flesh out a character. This is very similar to the use of color in film. Film makers use color in all sorts of ways. White often represents wholeness, purity, or goodness. Black, on the other hand, usually revealed a different set of traits. The color black used to show the evil characters. But this is no longer the case. The lines between good and bad in cinema are blurring. Good and evil are no longer black and white; it is more of a gray area. No longer does the good guy wear a white hat while the evil character wears a black hat. White or black now can now show some level of moral ambiguity or even a transition from one state to another. Just like the symbolic use of color in cinema has changed, tattoos are becoming a new way to represent characters with more depth instead of a one-dimensional marker for the bad guy in film. The tattoo is used just as diversely as color scheme. Maybe tattoos are the new way to create color on a character. Maybe ink is the new black.
References


The girl with the dragon tattoo [Motion picture on DVD]. (2011). Bettendorf Public Library.


