

Intro: *How are archetypes relevant in popular culture and how is the underdog's journey a reflection of these relevant societal archetypes?*

Archetypes are a crucial element used to emphasize the diversity of behaviour within individuals in a society. When Malcolm Gladwell, author of *David and Goliath*, states, “a woman who walks away from the promise of power finds the strength to forgive - and saves her friendship, her marriage, and her sanity”, (Malcolm Gladwell, chapter 8) readers learn that less potency can be beneficial. Archetypes, specifically the underdog, is an important element to society because it allows struggling individuals to find inspiration within a character, to improve certain aspects of life and further proceed towards self development. Rocky, written by and starring Sylvester Stallone, is a film that deepens the conflicts that a low-class Philadelphian boxer must face in order to prosper and initiate his path towards self worth. As the underdog, the protagonist must prove determination to defy the audience by winning the match, as well as conquer all struggles within himself, including struggles relating to his fighting capabilities and to his character as a whole. Because of this, the audience is more inclined to encourage an underdog fighter than a fighter with plenty of experience, since there would be a deeper, hidden meaning behind a victory if it were unexpected. Archetypes are necessary for establishing diversity between individuals in a society because including a wide range helps the audience form extensive connections and relationships with the characters.

When archetypes are present in modern society, the world is introduced to the divergence of characteristics, appearances, and goals concerning separate individuals. When a couple mourns over the loss of their daughter in *David and Goliath*, an experienced man helps them realize that “they could lose their health and their sanity and each other if they allowed their daughter’s murder to consume them”, (Malcolm Gladwell, chapter 8). This quote directly connects the book to the movie because both have a significant presence of a mentor, a character who develops the protagonist and helps them

obtain their goals. In the film *Rocky*, Mickey is the mentor because he trains Rocky and teaches him to push past his limitations, realize his worth, and ultimately return as a better fighter with a stronger demeanor than he had initially. The underdog's journey would have been extremely unsuccessful without proper guidance from his mentor, which demonstrates that a variety of archetypes are vital in order to produce a film that is unexpected and worth watching. With a mixture of effective character archetypes in media, different audiences learn to empathize with individuals in dissimilar situations. In *David and Goliath*, readers are introduced to the caregiver archetype when Candace fails to return home one night and Wilma Derksen begins to worry that, "Candace hadn't dressed warmly," so "she began to pace between the window in the front of the house and the kitchen window in the back overlooking the alleyway", (Malcolm Gladwell, chapter 8). From this quote, it is evident that Wilma Derksen is very similar to Adrian, the caregiver in *Rocky*, who continuously worries for Rocky and tries her hardest to assist him in any way possible. When Adrian goes out with Rocky for the first time, she is overly reticent and wants nothing to do with him; however, as the film continues, the audience learns that she has a very emotional and compassionate side which she uses to help Rocky understand his worth and improve his overall character. Since each individual has diverse past experiences and personalities, by including a wide variation of character archetypes, society is more inclined to learn about and relate to characters who think and behave a certain way, although it may be against their beliefs. The underdog archetype is a crucial element to media because it displays realistic systems of growth and change within an individual, which can stretch beyond film to inspire those in society. The stories of two different parents in *David and Goliath* show that everyone copes with loss in separate ways and that people can "feel differently about what could be accomplished through the use of power", (Malcolm Gladwell, chapter 8). In Gladwell's piece, the underdog ignores her power and unexpectedly conquers her adversity, whereas the one who uses power to his advantage, discovers a negative turn in events. In the film, watchers learn that Apollo Creed experiences his ultimate downfall when he allows his power to consume him; whereas Rocky succeeds after accepting his lack of ability and trying to improve on his own. The crowd witnessed an unexpected victory on Rocky's behalf, because although he did not win the overall match, he was able to persevere despite the pain and

exhaustion, and proceed towards several additional matches than expected. This proves that power is not always as beneficial as it may seem, and that nothing can defeat an individual with a strong work ethic. Not only are archetypes effective for building a diverse and enriched society, but also for developing a world of characters that allows individuals of all backgrounds to find a way to connect and empathize with each one.

Archetypes help emphasize the diversity within the society by creating variations of personality traits and experiences that most individuals can relate to in one way or another. When the audience is able to explore a deeper meaning within media, it can feel more personalized and can increase the overall significance of the piece in their lives. A quote in the journal that is very important because it can relate to everyone is, “we have all done something dreadful in our lives, or have felt the urge to”, (Malcolm Gladwell, chapter 8). Archetypes are an integration between modern day society and characters in media that are often used as a method to connect and create closer relationships within individuals by accepting similarities and differences in personalities, experiences, and opinions.