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**THE MAIDEN ARCHETYPE IN MASS CULTURE CINEMA:
LIWC-22 ANALYSIS**

**АРХЕТИП «ДІВА» У ФІЛЬМАХ МАСОВОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ:
АНАЛІЗ LIWC-22**

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Modern cinema frequently employs archetypes, which are easily recognizable and repetitive characters that drive the plot and evoke the audience's response. According to Faber & Mayer, archetypes may help explain how people react to characters in media [1, p. 307]. Various authors have proposed classifications of mass media archetypes based on the characters' psychological traits. However, there has been no attempt to create a typology of psycholinguistic archetypes that would account for the language typically used by characters of different archetypes. Therefore, this paper presents a quantitative analysis of the language used by the Maiden archetype in top box office films over the past twenty-five years.

In cinematic narratives, the Maiden is a commonly found female archetype. She is typically portrayed as an optimistic character, marveling at the wonders of the world. However, when faced with the harsh realities of life, she may become depressed and disheartened. The Maiden embodies the themes of growing up, the gap between generations, first love (which

may not always be returned), leaving her parents to search for her own identity, and finding her place in the community.

The research is based on Maslow's theory that human behavior is motivated by human needs [2]. It also references Jung's theory of archetypes, which are recognizable images that repeat themselves, and Schmidt's typology of archetypes in fiction [3]. The research concludes that the Maiden is ruled by the combination of deficiency and growth needs (ruled by deficiency needs alone, the character turns primitive and flat). Being often presented as a young character, the Maiden needs her physiological, safety, and belonging needs to be satisfied (deficiency needs); she also needs to quench her thirst for knowledge, thus meeting her cognitive needs (growth needs). Schmidt suggests that the Maiden archetype embodies female characters who are naive, optimistic, dependent, connected to the Mother figure, occasionally insightful, and seeking knowledge [3].

The Maiden archetype is not very common as a leading character in the top box office films due to the popularity of the superhero action genre. However, the archetype can serve as a promising starting point for further character development [4, p. 25]. The Maiden's journey more often than not concentrates on her further transition to the Nurturer, Female Messiah, and Father's Daughter archetype.

The language categories, characteristic of the Maiden archetype in the present paper, are measured with the *LIWC-22 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count)* software [5]. The paper focuses on establishing the correlation between the archetype's behavioral features and the percentile in the *LIWC-22* language categories. The research explores the language used by 23 female characters of the Maiden archetype, picked from 35 mainstream top box office English-language films from 1999–2023. Due to the popularity of cinematic franchises, the same characters feature in several films, which accounts for the unequal numbers of the heroines and films to examine. To increase the validity of data, the paper examines only the extracts exceeding 200 words in total. The results are contrasted with the mean numbers and standard deviations of *LIWC-22* categories gathered from films and presented by Boyd et al. [6]. In cases where deviations from mean figures are found, the dominant psycholinguistic characteristics of the archetype are revealed.

The Maiden is usually depicted as a young, curious, and inexperienced girl who believes that the world is full of wonder. She opens up new horizons and strives for adventures. She needs to discover the world around her [4, p. 26], thus, she tends to have high numbers in the 'cognition', 'allure', and 'question mark' categories.

Having fun is necessary for self-actualization of the archetype. The Maiden lives a charmed, playful life, unconcerned with annoying daily

errands and problems. She stays positive. She jokes [4, p. 26]. Therefore, the research generally reveals high numbers in the 'tone positive' category.

Predominantly having been separated from her parents (due to the parents' divorce, their early demise, or other circumstances) [4, p. 26], the Maiden is looking for safety, love, and belonging. As these needs are usually provided for by her remaining family (particularly by her mother), the Maiden has high numbers in the 'family' category. She also needs to satisfy her basic needs, demonstrating high numbers in the 'need', and 'food' categories.

The narratives of learning and teaching are frequent in the cues of the Maiden characters. The Maiden is usually very insightful and often proclaims her ideas on what is right or wrong. She teaches the adults about the truths of life [4, p. 26]. She tends to be categorical and sees the world in black and white. Therefore, she has high numbers in the 'allnone', 'differ' and 'discrepancy' categories.

The Maiden needs to freely express herself and her desires, she is often blunt and has no filters while sharing her thoughts or opinions; hence, high numbers in the 'authentic' category. The Maiden is prone to intense emotional responses, both positive and negative. She is unable to hide her feelings even if she tries to. She often uses exclamations and empty adjectives to express both positive and negative emotions of joy, excitement, surprise, anger, impatience, or fear [4, p. 27]. Naively relying on emotions, the Maiden has high numbers in the 'authentic', 'feeling', 'focus present', and 'exclamation' categories; on the other hand, she cares little about everyday problems, having low numbers in the 'analytic', 'work', 'money', 'fulfill' and 'achieve' categories.

Being a teenager, the Maiden uses colloquial forms, thus having high numbers in the 'conversation' and 'netspeak' categories. Informal way of communication can be regarded as another manifestation of love for freedom, especially when she is talking to adults in formal situations [4, p. 27].

Adolescence brings her a sense of invincibility and unlimited power. The Maiden takes risks because she feels invulnerable and pushes others to follow her on her exploits. She does not realize the danger that lurks in the world [4, p. 27]. Additionally, being smothered might also force her to risky endeavors; hence high numbers in the 'risk' category.

Having faced hardships and obstacles, the Maiden might become capricious, depressed, and difficult on purpose. In such cases, she has high numbers in the 'I', 'you', 'negate', 'tone negative', and 'conflict' categories. The language used by other characters demonstrates that the family usually indulges her despondency and rebellious tantrums.

Further research aims to gather and contrast statistics on the language used by other female characters to prove the hypothesis on the qualitative and quantitative linguistic distinctions of the archetypes. The current investigation is in progress.

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