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THE TROUBLED TEEN PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ARCHETYPE: LIWC-22 ANALYSIS

ПСИХОЛІНГВІСТИЧНИЙ АРХЕТИП «ПРОБЛЕМНА ЮНАЧКА»: АНАЛІЗ LIWC-22

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Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) is a popular method used in language analysis to understand the link between verbal behavior and psychology. LIWC works by counting the words used in a text, allowing researchers to analyze the underlying messages or emotions. This approach provides a statistical and quantitative understanding of language that is too subtle to be detected by the naked eye [1, p. 24]. However, the 'words as

attention' model is too simplistic and cannot fully capture the complexity and functionality of verbal behavior [1, p. 26]. Therefore, combining narrative analysis with LIWC can lead to more promising research outcomes.

The paper aims to define the linguistic markers of the Troubled Teen cinematic archetype with the LIWC-22 software. Schmidt [2] has defined the archetype and its main psychological characteristics. In popular box office movies, the Troubled Teen is rarely portrayed as a villain. Instead, the focus is on her journey of coping with life's challenges and overcoming trauma. Often the person she hurts most is herself. The archetype is characterized by an angry, selfish, and reckless behavior, which involves pursuing dangerous entertainments and substance abuse. The Troubled Teen is anti-establishment and has a strong disdain for rules and authority. Jaded, depressed, and disillusioned with the world, she does not care about the future. Due to her behavior, she often finds herself in front of a judge. She is very self-centered when it comes to her problems and exhibits passive-aggressive behavior, expecting to be left alone while simultaneously wanting to be cared for [2, p. 77–86].

This research examines the language patterns of ten popular movie characters who represent the Troubled Teen archetype. These characters include Riley from "Inside Out," Martha Kaply from "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle," Johanna Mason from "The Hunger Games" series, Bella Swan from "The Twilight Saga: New Moon," Moaning Myrtle from "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets," Cassandra Cain from "Birds of Prey," MJ from the "Spider-Man" series in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Valkyrie from "Thor: Ragnarok," Negasonic from "Deadpool," and Tyla from "The Suicide Squad." This paper explores thirteen segments of 7755 words run by LIWC-22 in 116 psycholinguistic categories. The results are contrasted with the mean numbers and standard deviations of LIWC categories in movies collected and presented by Boyd et al. [3]. The deviations from the mean figures in the language used by the archetypal characters demonstrate the typical psycholinguistic features of the examined archetype.

The 'Analytic' category captures the degree to which people use words that suggest formal, logical, and hierarchical thinking patterns [4]. Low numbers in this category indicate that the Troubled Teen relies more on intuition than formal thinking. 'Clout' refers to one's relative social status, confidence, or leadership skills [4]. Numbers below standard in the category suggest that the Troubled Teen has low social standing in the family or group and depends on others. She may feel powerless and go along with the flow. Low numbers in the 'clout' category also align with the theory proposed by Schmidt et al. [5, p. 19] that greater 'clout' is generally associated with friendships in everyday life. As the Troubled Teen is usually a loner who

prefers to suffer in silence and be left alone, she may not have any friends. Low numbers in the 'friend' category support the conclusion.

The 'Authentic' category reflects the degree to which a person is self-monitoring. Lower numbers in 'authentic' suggest a more guarded, distanced form of discourse [4]. In the extracts analyzed, the numbers in 'authentic' are high. This means that the characters openly express their opinions, often complaining about the difficulties in their lives or speaking unpleasant truths to those around them. The Troubled Teen characters are portrayed as having no filter and intentionally hurting others' feelings. This aligns with Edelstein's argument that teenagers become more straightforward with others over time and are quick to criticize [6, p. 65].

Although LIWC-22 includes both positive tone and negative tone dimensions, the 'tone' variable puts the two dimensions into a single summary variable. The algorithm is built so that the higher the number, the more positive the tone. Numbers below 50 suggest a more negative emotional tone [4]. The analyzed material has an average 'tone' value of 39, which is lower than the mean figure. This indicates that the Troubled Teen characters are generally depressed and suffering. These findings confirm the author's previous conclusions, which were based on narrative and content analyses [7].

In addition, when someone frequently uses first-person singular pronouns, it may indicate that they are focused on their own emotions and thoughts, rather than interacting with others. This inward attentional focus can be a sign of emotional distress, which may negatively impact both mental and social functioning. Studies have found a positive correlation between high usage of first-person singular pronouns and depression and social submissiveness [8, p. 321]. D'Andrea et al. [8, p. 321] suppose that increased use of cognition words may be indicative of one's attempts to process the influx of information presented in trauma, and causation words may indicate an "overload" of information that was difficult for the participant to rationalize. The researchers also propose that people who use more cognitive words may be ruminating on an intellectual understanding of the traumatic event, rather than focusing on the emotional impact. This idea is supported by the present research, which shows that the Troubled Teen characters have persistently high numbers in the 'cognition', 'cognitive process', and 'differ' categories.

It is important to note that the Troubled Teen characters consistently demonstrate low numbers in the 'emotion_anxiety' category. A possible explanation is that fewer words related to anxiety indicate the avoidance of discussing negative emotions, which can lead to an increased risk of future PTSD. Individuals do not discuss anxiety in their narrative due to numbing or disengagement from the event [8, p. 321]. The avoidance of the topic causes the depression to persist with the characters.

Additionally, the Troubled Teen does not seem to care about the future. They primarily use verbs in the present tense and use verbs in the future tense much less often than other character types [7, p. 11]. This research supports previous results, where the 'focus_present' category is higher than the standard deviation, and the 'focus_future' category is consistently low.

Adolescents, particularly those who dislike authority and want more independence, tend to argue and challenge authority figures [6, p. 62]. The Troubled Teen has a passive-aggressive approach to her family relationships and uses confrontational communication tactics such as insults, accusations, and evasion of conversation. She also tends to use vulgar language and sarcasm [7, p. 11]. LIWC analysis demonstrates high numbers in the 'negate' category as the Troubled Teen is prone to arguing and/or questioning her abilities and strengths. On the other hand, the 'moral' category has low numbers; a possible explanation might be that the Troubled Teen is aware of the wrongness of her actions. If the rating of the film allows it, the 'swear' category has high numbers in her language. As the Troubled Teen is predominantly represented by teenage characters, her language is high on 'conversation', 'netspeak', and 'nonfluency words'. As adolescence brings a sense of invincibility and unlimited power, young people are more likely to take chances [6, p. 55]. The high numbers in the 'risk' category support this idea.

The numbers in the 'family', 'home', and 'food' categories are below the standard deviation, which indicates a lack of parental care (often revealed through the topic of sustenance in cinematic narratives) and estrangement from the family. Family issues and problems in social relationships can take a toll on teenagers, causing them to feel angry and guilty for real or perceived wrongdoings. As a result, they may be willing to punish themselves or others. Failure can be an effective form of self-punishment for these real or imagined crimes [6, p. 62]. Therefore, the numbers in the 'work', 'money', and 'fulfill' categories are generally low.

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