



An Appraisal Analysis of Attitude in Dr. W.C. Minor and Prof. James Murray's Utterances in *The Professor and the Madman* (2019) Movie

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Abstract

This study investigated appraisal analysis through the Attitude subsystem within the Appraisal Framework, focusing on how linguistic choices reveal interpersonal meaning and psychological depth in movie dialogue. The analysis centered on the two main characters, James Murray and W.C. Minor, from *The Professor and the Madman* (2019) movie. It examined how their spoken discourse employs three Attitude types: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Grounded in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), particularly Halliday's (1994) theory of interpersonal meaning, this study used language as a lens to explore how characters construct social relationships and convey inner states. SFG conceptualizes language as a meaning-making resource, and its interpersonal meta function extended by the Appraisal Framework offers tools for evaluating attitudinal language. Using segmented clauses from the characters' utterances as data, the analysis revealed significant differences in attitudinal expression: Murray employed 346 attitude resources, primarily of Judgment, while Minor employed 632, dominated by Affect. These findings indicate that Murray's discourse reflects his rational, evaluative, and authoritative persona, while Minor's emotionally rich language signals psychological vulnerability and trauma. The attitudinal choices align closely with each character's psychological profile, demonstrating how language serves as a window into internal emotional states and mental health. These contrasting uses of attitudinal language underscore their individual characterizations and psychological complexity and contribute significantly to the movie's emotional tone and thematic progression. Beyond theoretical implications, this study offered practical insights for movie writers, discourse analysts, and educators, highlighting how linguistic strategies shape character identity, emotional tone, and audience perception. The attitudinal exchanges between characters were found to be crucial in

constructing the emotional atmosphere of key scenes, suggesting that language plays a pivotal role in storytelling and character development.

Keywords: *Appraisal Analysis; Movie Discourse; Attitude types; Characters; Utterances; The Professor and the Madman Movie (2019).*

Introduction

From the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective, language serves to represent experience and enact social relationships and interpersonal meaning. Halliday (2014) identifies the interpersonal metafunction as one of the three core functions of language, emphasizing how speakers use language to express attitudes, negotiate roles, and construct social identity. This study is grounded in that tradition, focusing on Appraisal Theory, a framework that systematically explores how language conveys evaluation, emotion, and stance in discourse.

Developed by Martin and White (2005), Appraisal Theory extends the interpersonal metafunction by categorizing evaluative language into three major subsystems: Attitude (how people feel, judge behavior, and value things), Engagement (how writers/speakers position themselves dialogically), and Graduation (the intensity and grad ability of evaluation). This study concentrates on the Attitude subsystem, which comprises three semantic domains: Affect (expressions of emotion), Judgment (ethical or moral evaluations), and Appreciation (aesthetic or value-laden evaluations). This framework is beneficial for investigating how speakers' evaluative choices help construct identity, reveal psychological states, and shape social interaction.

In recent years, researchers have expanded the application of Appraisal Theory across diverse genres. Troiano et al. (2022) demonstrated how appraisal can model emotional meaning in computational linguistics, while Yongsatianchot et al. (2023) used the framework to evaluate how large language models perceive emotional cues. Shabriani (2023) and Indriyani and Widyastuti (2023) have shown how appraisal resources express ideological stances and shape reader alignment in political and media discourse. Meanwhile, Zain and Nababan (2021) applied the framework to translation, highlighting how emotional meaning is reconstructed across languages. These contemporary studies affirm the versatility of Appraisal Theory across written and spoken modes.

Despite this progress, existing research has focused on written genres, news reports, speeches, and academic articles, leaving movie discourse relatively underexplored. While studies such as Taboada et al. (2014) and Martin and Dwyer (2020) examined evaluative meaning in media and documentary movies, they often emphasized narrative stance rather than character-level psychological analysis. Furthermore, although some scholars (e.g., Hidayati, 2017; Zhang, 2015) have explored Attitude resources in movies, few have explicitly connected

linguistic patterns to character psychology, especially in contexts involving mental health or moral complexity.

This gap is particularly notable when analyzing characters with contrasting psychological profiles. The movie *The Professor and the Madman* (2019) portrays two such figures: James Murray, a driven academic with high ethical standards, and Dr. William Chester Minor, a brilliant but mentally disturbed contributor who has schizophrenia. Their interactions are rich in emotional intensity and ethical complexity, making the movie an ideal site for Appraisal analysis.

The movie was chosen not only for its dramatic potential but also for its deep historical and intellectual significance. It is based on the true story of making the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), a linguistic milestone and one of the most ambitious lexicographical projects in history. Initiated in the mid-19th century, the OED aimed to document the English language comprehensively, tracing word origins and usages across centuries. James Murray, a self-taught philologist, led the project with scholarly precision.

At the same time, Dr. Minor, an American Civil War veteran confined to an asylum, contributed thousands of citations from his isolated cell. Despite vast social and psychological divides, their extraordinary collaboration shaped the modern English lexicon and exemplified the power of intellectual labor and language to transcend personal and institutional boundaries. Thus, the OED is not just a backdrop for the movie but a symbol of linguistic heritage, human resilience, and the transformative power of language.

Investigating the dialogue between Murray and Minor through Appraisal Theory offers insights into how the dictionary's creation was not only a lexical enterprise but also an emotional and interpersonal journey. The historical and intellectual weight of the OED project provides a profound context that deepens the analysis of evaluative language, making this movie a rich case study for exploring the complex relationships between language, psychology, and social interaction.

The linguistic interactions between these two characters are particularly significant: their exchanges are shaped by contrasting mental states, moral values, and societal roles. As such, the movie provides a rare opportunity to examine how evaluative language reflects internal psychology and intersubjective dynamics. The narrative's historical grounding, emotional complexity, and intellectual substance make it uniquely suited for a discourse analysis focused on Attitude.

To address this research gap, the present study conducts a comparative appraisal analysis of Murray and Minor's utterances, focusing on the distribution, polarity, and function of Attitude resources. By doing so, it investigates how linguistic choices serve as windows into psychological state, character development, and interpersonal dynamics in cinematic narrative.

Specifically, this study pursues the following research objectives:

1. To identify and classify the Attitude resources (Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation) employed by James Murray and Dr. William Chester Minor in their spoken utterances.
2. To analyze the distribution and polarity (positive or negative) of these Attitude resources in order to uncover patterns of evaluative meaning.
3. To examine how the use of Attitude resources reflects the two characters' contrasting psychological profiles and interpersonal roles.
4. To explore the broader implications of evaluative language for character development and emotional tone in the movie.

In pursuit of answers to these questions, the study aims to conduct a comparative appraisal analysis of Murray and Minor's spoken utterances, focusing on the distribution, polarity, and function of Attitude resources. Specifically, the research seeks (1) to identify and classify the Attitude resources, Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation employed by the two characters; (2) to analyze the distribution and polarity of these resources to uncover patterns of evaluative meaning; (3) to examine how these linguistic patterns reflect the characters' contrasting psychological profiles and interpersonal roles; and (4) to explore the broader implications of evaluative language in shaping character development and emotional tone within the cinematic narrative.

Finally, this study contributes to the growing field of discourse analysis by bridging Appraisal Theory with movie studies and narrative psychology. It extends the application of SFL to spoken cinematic texts, illustrating how evaluative language reveals underlying mental states and social positioning, and offers a nuanced account of how interpersonal meanings are constructed through emotionally charged and ethically complex dialogues.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a discourse analysis using a qualitative approach. According to McCarthy (1991, p. 5), discourse analysis examines the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. It considers the structure and organization of spoken and written discourse and the contextual meanings embedded within language use. This approach is appropriate for the present study, which investigates the attitudinal expressions found in the utterances of James Murray and Dr. William Chester Minor in *The Professor and the Madman* movie.

A qualitative discourse analysis framework was selected because it enables a detailed exploration of how language expresses interpersonal meanings, particularly those related to affective, moral, and aesthetic evaluations. This approach allows the researcher to interpret how linguistic choices reveal the characters' psychological states, social relationships, and evolving interpersonal dynamics. The study focuses on the Attitude subsystem of Appraisal Theory within

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), aiming to reveal the characters' personality traits and social positioning through their evaluative language.

Data and Context

The data for this research consists of verbal utterances by the two main characters, transcribed from the 2019 historical biographical movie *The Professor and the Madman*. These utterances were interpreted to identify patterns of attitudinal meaning. The analysis is supported quantitatively by calculating the frequency and percentages of each attitude type, affect, judgment, and appreciation, and it is complemented by qualitative interpretations of selected excerpts to deepen understanding of how attitudes are linguistically constructed.

Table 1. Datasets of the Study

Data Set (Character)	Total Words
Professor James Murray	592
Dr. W.C. Minor	1010
Total	1602

The general context of the two characters included in the present analysis is spoken discourse. Murray and Minor are central figures in the movie, which depicts their collaborative efforts in compiling the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in the late 19th century. The data source was the publicly available movie transcript, which was obtained from an online platform. It is retrieved from **Springfield! Springfield!** (<https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/>), a reputable platform that hosts verified scripts and subtitles for research and analytical use.

To maintain a focused and coherent dataset, the analysis was limited exclusively to utterances by James Murray and Dr. Minor. These two characters were selected because they are the movie's central figures, and their relationship forms the emotional and intellectual core of the narrative. Their contrasting psychological backgrounds, Murray as a methodical scholar and Minor as a mentally ill yet intellectually gifted contributor offer a compelling basis for exploring attitudinal meaning. Including other characters would introduce excessive variability and confound the central analytical focus. The exclusion of other speakers allows the study to closely track attitudinal variation tied directly to character identity and psychological portrayal.

The movie transcript was carefully reviewed and cleaned prior to analysis. First, all dialogue lines were extracted and formatted into a spreadsheet. Utterances made by characters other than Murray and Minor were systematically identified and removed. This was followed by a line-by-line inspection to eliminate fragmented, inaudible, or irrelevant utterances that lacked evaluative content. The remaining utterances were grouped under two separate datasets labeled by

character. Inconsistent formatting, punctuation, and transcription errors were corrected to ensure consistency in linguistic annotation. This cleaning phase was essential to prepare high-quality data for qualitative coding and statistical comparison.

The total duration of analyzed character dialogue amounts to approximately 78 minutes, yielding 346 utterances from James Murray and 632 utterances from Dr. Minor. Utterance selection was based on the presence of self-contained, syntactically complete, and evaluatively rich statements. Only utterances that conveyed explicit or directly interpretable affective, judgmental, or appreciative meaning were selected for coding. Dialogue that was heavily fragmented, rhetorical, or purely expository without evaluative content was excluded to maintain the integrity of attitudinal analysis.

Each dataset was then uploaded into the UAM Corpus Tool, an open-source linguistic annotation platform developed by O'Donnell (2011), which supports both manual and automated discourse analysis across various linguistic domains. The study employed the tool's built-in manual Appraisal annotation module, focusing specifically on the Attitude subsystem.

Data Analysis Procedures

Before analysis, the Appraisal framework was adapted to suit the complexities of cinematic discourse, particularly in handling implied meanings. In line with Martin's (2003) caution regarding analytical reliability, implicit attitudes requiring extensive contextual inference were excluded. Only explicit expressions of Attitude were coded, for example, direct statements of emotion (e.g., "I am grateful"), ethical judgment (e.g., "He is a good man"), or aesthetic evaluation (e.g., "That is beautiful"). This approach enhanced transparency and consistency in coding decisions within the qualitative framework.

The final dataset consisted solely of James Murray and Dr. William Chester Minor's utterances, with all other characters' dialogue removed to maintain analytical focus. These refined transcripts were uploaded into the UAM Corpus Tool (O'Donnell, 2011), an open-source platform that facilitates both manual and automated linguistic annotation at multiple levels. The tool proved especially well-suited for this study due to its flexible interface, which allows researchers to define customized annotation schemes and apply them consistently across texts. Its integrated statistical functions enabled the generation of both raw frequency counts and normalized proportions, accounting for dataset size disparities and supporting robust comparative analysis.

Manual annotation was conducted to identify and tag each attitudinal resource under one of the three Appraisal categories: Affect, Judgment, or Appreciation, and to specify the appraiser (Murray or Minor). The appraisal framework was customized to align with the study's objectives, incorporating character roles and excluding levels of Attitude explicitness from the original model to enhance reliability and interpretive clarity. The UAM Corpus Tool's

combination of structured annotation and embedded analysis tools significantly contributed to the overall methodological process's precision, efficiency, and reproducibility.

A second trained rater independently annotated 20% of the dataset to ensure coding consistency. Inter-rater reliability, assessed via percentage agreement, yielded a high concordance rate of 91%. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion, and annotation guidelines were refined for the remainder of the analysis.

Descriptive and comparative statistics, including raw frequency and normalized proportions, were generated using the UAM Corpus Tool. These statistics accounted for the word count disparity between the character datasets (Minor's being nearly double that of Murray's). It facilitated a comparative evaluation of how each character's evaluative language reflects their psychological and rhetorical positioning within the narrative.

This systematic methodological design, which incorporates precise utterance selection, explicit coding criteria, inter-rater validation, and rigorous statistical analysis, ensures the reliability and analytical depth of the study. The approach offers meaningful insights into the function of Attitude resources in cinematic discourse and character construction.

Ethical Consideration

As this research draws exclusively on publicly available material, namely, a widely distributed movie and its published script, no human participants were involved. Therefore, formal ethical approval was not required. However, care was taken to present findings respectfully, particularly given the movie's sensitive portrayal of mental health. The characters' dialogues were analyzed in a way that aimed to interpret representation, not to diagnose or speculate beyond the movie's narrative context. Attribution to original creators and adherence to scholarly integrity were maintained throughout.

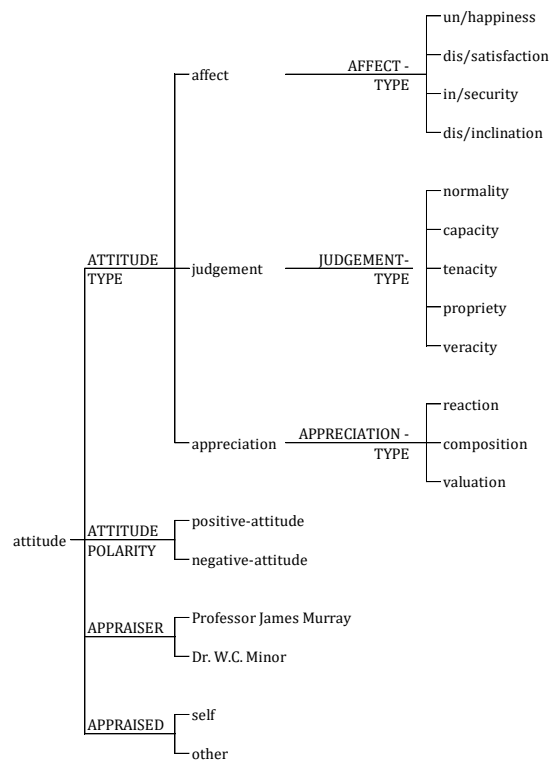


Figure 1. The final version of the employed attitude annotation scheme

This study employs Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework, specifically the Attitude system within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), to analyze how language expresses evaluation in character dialogue. The Attitude system is divided into Effect (emotions), Judgement (assessments of behavior), and Appreciation (evaluations of things and performances), each with specific subtypes. It also considers the polarity (positive/negative), appraiser (speaker), and appraised (target). This framework enables a nuanced examination of how characters construct identity, convey psychological states, and navigate interpersonal relationships through evaluative language, offering insight into how mental health and character development are represented in movie discourse.

Results

This section presents and compares the attitude resources employed by Professor Murray and Dr. W.C. Minor in *The Professor and the Madman* movie. For each dataset, the evaluative items of attitude used by both characters in the movie are presented, and the role of attitude in constructing character development and mental issue is discussed.

The finding showed that there were a total of 1010 words produced by Minor as the Madman in *The Professor and the Madman* movie. Most dominant Attitudes realized in the Madman's utterances in *The Professor and the Madman* movie sequentially are Affect, Judgement, and then followed by Appreciation. While for

Murray, he produced 592 words and most of them contain attitudinal types of Judgement, the followed by Affect and Appreciation.

Table 2. Attitude Resources Employed by Minor and Murray

Category	Sub-category	Dr. W.C. Minor		Prof. Murray	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Attitude Type	Affect	318	50.3%	68	27.6%
	Appreciation	21	3.33%	62	25.2%
	Judgement	293	46.4%	216	47.2%
	Total	632	100%	346	100%

Table 2 shows that Minor used significantly more evaluative attitude items (N = 632) compared to Murray (N = 346) in the movie. However, this result is expected, as Minor is the main character and therefore has more speaking opportunities throughout the movie.

The analysis reveals that affect was the most frequently used attitude type by both Minor and Murray, followed by appreciation and judgment. Martin and White (2005) explain that affect resources represent the appraisers' subjective emotional stance. Therefore, the predominance of affect suggests that both Minor and Murray primarily employed attitudinal resources with an emotional orientation, which heightened their subjective presence in the movie.

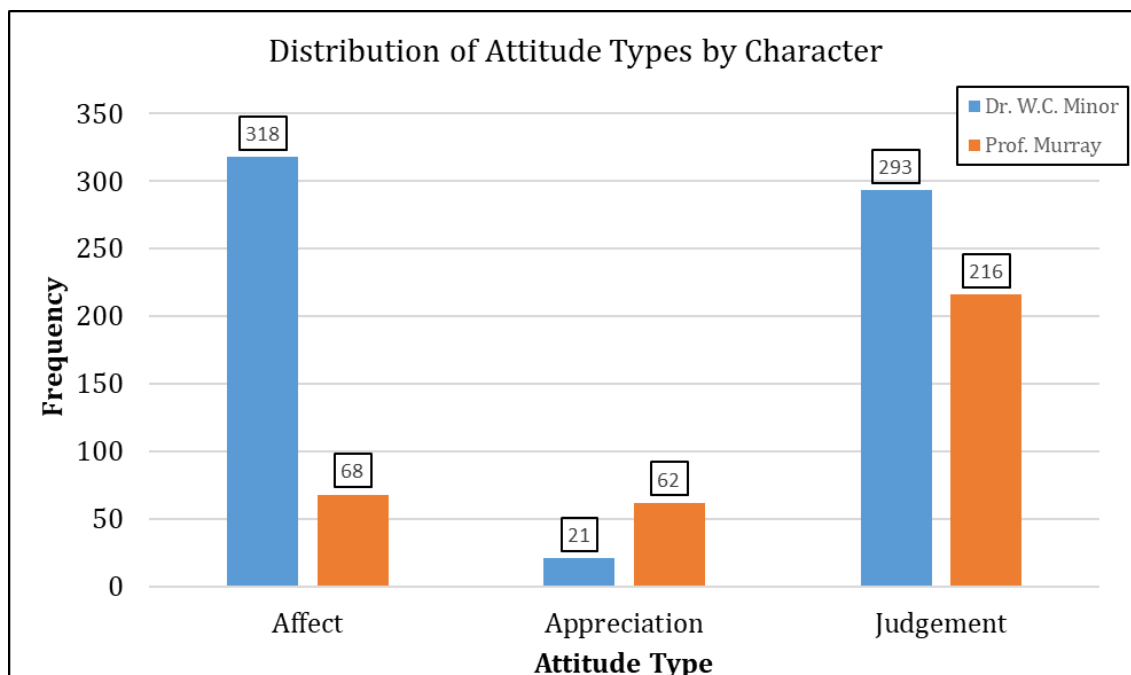


Chart 1. Distribution of Attitude Types by Character

Based on the chart above, the analysis revealed that Dr. W.C. Minor employed significantly more attitude resources (N = 632) than Professor Murray (N = 346), reflecting his central role in *The Professor and the Madman* and his greater speaking time. Among the three attitude types, affect, Judgment, and appreciation affect were the most frequently used by both characters, indicating a strong emotional orientation in their speech. Minor's dominance in Affect highlights his emotional instability and deep psychological struggles, aligning with his portrayal as the Madman. In contrast, Murray's use of Judgement as the most common attitude type reflects his rational, evaluative nature as a scholarly figure. These patterns demonstrate how attitudinal language choices contribute to character development and underscore the movie's mental health and intellectual engagement exploration.

Affect

The analysis identified 318 instances of Affect within Minor's dialogue and 122 within Murray's. According to Martin and White (2005, p. 42), affect resources relate to the “emotive dimension of meaning,” reflecting the appraiser’s desires, feelings, and satisfaction. Table 3 presents the frequencies and characteristics of affect used by both Minor and Murray.

- Minor’s Affect expressions (35.2% of his attitudes) were largely negative (68.6%) and self-directed (53.8%), highlighting his inner turmoil and psychological instability.
- Murray’s Affect expressions (35.3% of his attitudes) leaned toward positive polarity (75%) and were primarily directed at others (52.9%), reflecting his supportive and composed demeanor.

Table 3. Affect Resources Employed by Minor and Murray

Category	Sub-category	Dr. W.C. Minor		Prof. Murray	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Affect Type	Dis/inclination	112	35.2%	18	26.5%
	Dis/satisfaction	47	14.9%	20	29.4%
	Un/happiness	89	27.9%	6	8.8%
	In/security	70	22.0%	24	35.3%
	Total	318	100%	68	100%
Appraised	Self	171	53.8%	32	47.1%
	Other	147	46.2%	36	52.9%
Affect Polarity	Positive Affect	100	31.4%	51	75%
	Negative Affect	218	68.6%	17	25%

The findings indicate that both Minor and Murray employed affect resources in a comparable manner. **Affect** resources were the most frequently used attitude type by both characters (Minor: 318 instances; Murray: fewer but proportionally significant). Affect reflects emotional states, such as desire, fear, and happiness. Both characters used Affect to express **inclination and insecurity** (35.2% for Minor, 35.3% for Murray), but the polarity and target of these expressions differed.

The heavy use of **negative self-directed Affect by Minor** reflects his self-doubt, trauma, and mental instability. In contrast, **Murray's positive, other-directed Affect** highlights his supportive, outwardly stabilizing nature. This emotional orientation aligns with their respective narrative arcs: Minor as a tormented soul, and Murray as a steadying influence.

The following are examples of Affect resources used by Minor and Murray:

Minor's Expressions:

- **Inclination (Positive, Self):**

"I wanted to tell you something, but I don't remember."

Minor expresses a desire to communicate with Eliza Merrett, the widow of the man he killed. This line reflects his internal struggle and longing for connection, highlighting his emotional vulnerability. This reflects Minor's desire to communicate, indicating a positive inclination towards self-expression.

- **Inclination (Negative, Self):**

"I don't want to see you."

Here, Minor expresses a negative inclination, showcasing his internal conflict and reluctance. In a moment of self-imposed isolation, Minor pushes Eliza away, fearing that his presence may cause her further pain. This illustrates his internal conflict and self-loathing.

- **Insecurity (Negative, Self):**

"My heart is so sick."

This statement reveals Minor's emotional turmoil and self-perception of illness. Minor confides in Murray about his mental anguish, revealing the depth of his emotional turmoil and the burden of his guilt.

Murray's Expressions:

- **Inclination (Positive, Other):**

"You're not alone, Doctor. We are linked now."

Murray offers reassurance to Minor, emphasizing their shared purpose in compiling the dictionary and fostering a sense of camaraderie. This is indicating a positive emotional connection towards Minor.

- **Insecurity (Positive, Other):**

"Well... what I know of love is that the sickness often becomes the cure."

Murray reflects on the transformative power of love, suggesting that emotional suffering can lead to healing, thereby offering hope to Minor. This line suggests empathy and a positive outlook on emotional struggles.

Appreciation

Appreciation was the least used Attitude resource by Minor (86 instances) and used more frequently by Murray (106 instances). These resources evaluate objects, events, and processes, often reflecting a character's cognitive and aesthetic stance. Appreciation resources represent the appraiser's responses and evaluations of entities, and thus, they tend to exhibit a greater degree of objectivity compared to the other two attitude types (Martin & White, 2005). Table 4 displays the frequencies and specific features of appreciation used by both Minor and Murray.

- Both characters most frequently used Appreciation for valuation (42.9% for Minor, 40.3% for Murray).
- Minor's appreciations were overwhelmingly negative (95%), while Murray's were mostly positive (96.7%).
- Both primarily targeted things and others' performances rather than themselves.

Table 4. Appreciation Resources Employed by Minor and Murray

Category	Sub-category	Dr. W.C. Minor		Prof. Murray	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Appreciation Type	Valuation	9	42.9%	25	40.3%
	Composition	4	19%	12	19.4%
	Reaction	8	38.1%	25	40.3%
	Total	21	100%	62	100%
Appraised	Self	0	0%	21	33.9%
	Other	21	100%	41	66.1%
Appreciation Polarity	Positive Appreciation	1	5%	60	96.7%
	Negative Appreciation	20	95%	2	3.3%

The findings indicated that both Minor and Murray employed the three types of appreciation and the appreciation polarity system in a comparable manner, directing these resources toward similar entities. Both characters made substantial use of appreciation related to valuation (42.9% for Minor and 40.3% for Murray), expressed a greater proportion of negative appreciation for Minor (95%) and positive for Murray (96.7%), and primarily targeted their appraisals at things and others' performances rather than themselves as the appraised entities (100% for Minor and 66.1% for Murray).

Based on the table above, Appreciation, which evaluates objects, events, or performances, was used comparably by both characters (Minor: 83 instances). Yet polarity again revealed a stark contrast. Minor's overwhelmingly **negative appreciation** suggests a worldview shaped by despair and suffering. He rarely sees value or beauty, reflecting his troubled mental state. Murray's **positive appreciation** illustrates his hopeful, constructive perspective that is important for his leadership role in the dictionary project.

The following are examples of how appreciation was employed by Minor and Murray in the movie:

Minor's Evaluations:

- **Valuation (Positive, Other):**

"I have embarked on the most important work of my life."

Minor appreciates the significance of his contributions to the dictionary.

- **Valuation (Positive, Other):**

"I will ask for your vigilance."

He values the attentiveness and diligence of others in their collaborative efforts. Minor requests careful attention to detail, underscoring the value he places on precision and diligence in their collaborative work.

Murray's Evaluations:

- **Composition (Negative, Other):**

"Are you ready for some tough questions?"

Murray sets expectations, indicating the complexity of the task ahead. He prepares his team for the challenging nature of their task, acknowledging the complexity of their undertaking.

- **Valuation (Positive, Other):**

"For every word, in action, becomes beautiful in the light of its own meaning."

Murray reflects on the intrinsic beauty of words and their meanings, highlighting the profound appreciation he holds for language. He expresses admiration for the intrinsic value of words and their definitions.

Judgement

Judgement was the second-most prominent resource for both characters (228 for Minor, 118 for Murray), although it was used differently. These resources assess behavior and character, often aligned with social norms. Judgement resources are employed to assess individuals' character and behavior, making them the most subjective among the attitude types and potentially leading to controversy or unintended reactions (Martin & White, 2005; Daulay, 2010). In total, 509 instances of judgement were identified in the dataset from Minor and Murray's movie.

- Minor favored Judgements of capacity (31.8%), typically self-directed and negative.
- Murray's most frequent Judgement type was tenacity (32.9%), aimed at others and generally positive.

Table 5. Judgement Resources Employed by Minor and Murray

Category	Sub-category	Item	Dr. W.C. Minor		Prof. Murray	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Judgement Type	Social Esteem	Normality	42	14.3%	34	15.7%
		Capacity	93	31.8%	52	24.1%
		Tenacity	20	6.8%	71	32.9%
	Social Sanction	Propriety	51	17.4%	24	11.1%
		Veracity	87	29.7%	35	16.2%
	Total		293	100%	216	100%
Appraised	Self	-	194	66.2%	40	18.5%
	Other	-	99	33.8%	176	81.5%
Judgement Polarity	Positive Judgement	-	94	32.1%	164	76%
	Negative Judgement	-	199	67.9%	52	24%

Table 5 indicates that Minor and Murray utilized judgement resources in distinct ways. In the movie, Minor most frequently employed judgements of capacity (31.8%), while Murray predominantly used judgements of tenacity (32.9%). Murray applied positive and negative judgements in quite unequal measure (76% and 24%), whereas Minor showed a preference for negative judgements (67.9%). In terms of the targets of their judgements, Murray primarily directed his evaluations toward entities other than himself (81.5%), while Minor directed judgements mostly to himself (66.2%).

Judgement resources were used least frequently overall (509 instances combined), yet they reveal profound interpersonal differences. Minor's Judgements were primarily **negative and self-directed**, while Murray's were **positive and directed at others**. This contrast emphasizes Minor's internalized moral struggle and perceived unworthiness, while Murray's judgments elevate others, reinforcing his leadership and empathy.

The following are examples of judgement resources used by Minor and Murray:

Minor's Evaluations:

- **Capacity (Negative, Self):**

"I am no man's friend; I am a murderer."

Minor judges himself harshly, reflecting his guilt and self-condemnation. Minor condemns himself for his past actions, revealing his deep remorse and internalized guilt.

- **Propriety (Negative, Other):**

"It is a dark and vile place."

Minor describes the asylum, expressing his disdain for the institution and its oppressive environment. He critiques his environment, indicating a negative judgement of the asylum's morality.

Murray's Evaluations:

- **Capacity (Positive, Other):**

"The more impossible, the greater the love."

Murray acknowledges the strength in facing challenges, attributing positive capacity to others. Murray is suggesting that overcoming adversity can deepen emotional bonds.

- **Tenacity (Positive, Other):**

"Let paper and ink be our flesh and blood!"

This metaphor emphasizes dedication and perseverance in their scholarly work, likening their commitment to a lifeblood.

From these findings, the percentage differences in the types and polarities of Attitude resources employed by Minor and Murray are more than numerical variations. They are linguistic reflections of each character's mental, moral, and emotional positioning. Minor's dominance in negative Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation paints a portrait of a man haunted by trauma and consumed by internal conflict. Murray's positive stance in all three attitude types illustrates his role as an intellectual, moral, and emotional anchor. Together, their contrasting profiles embody the movie's core themes: the tension between madness and genius, the redemptive power of compassion, and the transformative potential of language and empathy. These distinctions make the characters believable and emotionally and morally resonant within the broader narrative framework.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a rich and nuanced illustration of how evaluative language, as conceptualized within the Appraisal Theory framework (Martin & White, 2005), is a powerful tool for constructing complex character psychology and interpersonal dynamics in *The Professor and the Madman*. The predominance of Affect, especially in Dr. William Chester Minor's utterances, and Judgment in Professor James Murray's speech reflect their psychological profiles and the broader social and historical forces shaping their identities.

Minor's extensive use of harmful, self-directed Affect and expressions of insecurity, fear, and guilt foregrounds his profound emotional turmoil, aligning with Martin and White's notion that Affect resources reveal the speaker's subjective emotional stance. This linguistic pattern intricately maps onto his character as a brilliant but psychologically troubled individual grappling with *schizophrenia* and the weight of institutionalization. The predominance of self-focused negative Affect in Minor's speech is both a window into his internal

struggles and a narrative device eliciting audience empathy. His language reveals a man painfully aware of his mental fragility and social alienation, reflecting not only personal suffering but also the Victorian-era stigma surrounding mental illness when psychological conditions were poorly understood and harshly judged. Thus, Minor's linguistic choices are deeply embedded in the historical context, illuminating the cultural pressures that shape his self-representation.

In contrast, Murray's frequent use of Judgment, particularly positive evaluations of capacity and tenacity directed toward others, epitomizes his role as a moral and intellectual anchor within the narrative. His language reflects the Victorian ideal of disciplined perseverance and scholarly rigor, reinforcing his social authority and ethical stance. This outwardly focused Judgment also supports and validates Minor, shaping their dynamic where intellectual mentorship and emotional encouragement coexist. Murray's linguistic pattern exemplifies the interpersonal metafunction of language, as Halliday (2014) described, where language enacts social roles and identities. His evaluations, often expressed with positive polarity, project stability, and affirmation, contrast with Minor's self-critical Affect, highlighting their psychological and social divergences.

This linguistic dichotomy is not incidental but crucial for the movie's exploration of character development. Language here functions not merely as a reflection of inner states but as an active force in constructing identity and negotiating relational dynamics. Minor's self-directed negative Affect and Judgment render his psychological complexity palpable, portraying him as a tragic figure whose brilliance is inseparable from his emotional suffering. Meanwhile, Murray's evaluative language models social authority and emotional support, illustrating how interpersonal interactions can facilitate resilience and transformation. The interplay between their linguistic resources reveals how the characters' identities are co-constructed through discourse, highlighting the relational dimension of mental health and the social nature of psychological experience.

Comparing these findings with recent studies on appraisal and mental health discourse underscores their broader significance. For instance, research by Yongsatianchot et al. (2023) demonstrates that linguistic markers of negative Affect in media representations humanize characters with mental health issues, fostering empathy rather than stigma. Similarly, Shabriani (2023) emphasizes the delicate balance between portraying emotional authenticity and avoiding pathologization. The current analysis supports these insights by showing how Minor's language, rich in emotional expression, invites a compassionate understanding of mental illness while also situating it within complex social and moral frameworks. This multidimensional portrayal challenges simplistic or stigmatizing narratives often found in media, contributing to more nuanced representations of mental health.

Furthermore, the movie's historical and cultural context profoundly influences the characters' language use and the narrative's emotional texture. The Victorian era's emphasis on moral propriety, intellectual accomplishment, and emotional restraint is palpable in Murray's measured judgments and social evaluations. Minor's language, marked by internalized guilt and insecurity, reflects the period's ambivalent attitudes toward mental illness and institutional confinement. This context enriches the linguistic analysis by situating the characters' evaluative choices within the social norms and power relations of their time, underscoring how language mediates personal identity and cultural meaning.

Nonetheless, certain limitations must temper the interpretation of these findings. The study's focus on spoken language within a single cinematic text may not capture the full multimodal complexity of character portrayal, such as visual or prosodic cues. Moreover, the movie's dramatization and Victorian setting might amplify specific linguistic features, raising questions about the generalizability of the results to contemporary or real-world mental health discourse. Despite these constraints, the analysis offers valuable insights into how appraisal resources function in movie discourse to articulate psychological depth and interpersonal relationships.

Finally, this study advances the field of discourse analysis by bridging Appraisal Theory with movie studies and mental health representation. It highlights how nuanced linguistic evaluations shape character development and illuminates the social dimensions of psychological experience. The distinct patterns of Affect and Judgment between Minor and Murray reveal their contrasting mental states and social roles and enrich our understanding of how evaluative language contributes to empathetic, historically informed portrayals of mental health in media. This integrated approach offers a robust framework for analyzing complex interpersonal meanings in cinematic narratives. It suggests fruitful avenues for future research into language, identity, and mental health across diverse media contexts.

Conclusion

This study investigates the application of Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework by examining attitudinal resources within spoken discourse, specifically the utterances of two prominent intellectual figures, Professor James Murray and Dr. William Chester Minor, in the historical biographical movie *The Professor and the Madman*. The analysis demonstrates the practical use of the Attitude subsystem, highlighting how distinct types of attitudinal resources, Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation are strategically employed to construct character identity, reveal psychological states, and shape interpersonal dynamics.

The findings reveal that Minor's language reflects a more subjective and emotionally oriented stance, characterized mainly by negative Affect and self-directed judgment, consistent with his mental health struggles and internal

conflicts. In contrast, Murray's language embodies a more optimistic, goal-oriented evaluative style, dominated by favorable Judgment directed towards others, reflecting his role as a mentor and visionary. This dynamic interplay of attitudinal resources provides a rich linguistic window into their contrasting psychological profiles and the complex emotional journey that underpins their collaboration on the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

The study further highlights the rhetorical power of attitudinal expressions, particularly in scenes where Judgment and Appreciation are used to motivate Minor's will to live and foster his acceptance of self, illustrating the transformative potential of evaluative language in cinematic narrative. Significantly, by focusing on spoken discourse in a movie context, this research contributes to expanding appraisal theory beyond traditional written genres, offering new insights into how evaluative language operates in media to reflect and shape mental health representation. The movie's historical and cultural setting, coupled with its focus on characters with severe psychological conditions, underscores the significance of language as both a reflection and construction of identity and emotional experience.

These findings resonate with broader discourse analytic concerns about the role of language in constructing social reality, identity, and power relations. By applying appraisal theory to cinematic dialogue, this study advances the field's understanding of how evaluative language indexes psychological complexity and interpersonal positioning, thereby contributing to a more nuanced conceptualization of character development within mediated narratives. The contrast in attitudinal resources between Minor and Murray exemplifies how discourse functions as a vehicle for conveying information and as a site for negotiating meaning, ideology, and affective stance core themes in discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013; Wetherell, 2012).

Moreover, this study complements recent discourse analytic research on mental health representation by demonstrating how language choices can reflect and reproduce cultural attitudes toward psychological differences and illness. It aligns with emerging interdisciplinary work that integrates linguistic analysis with psychological and media studies, revealing the potential of appraisal theory as a methodological tool for unpacking the subtleties of emotion, evaluation, and identity construction in diverse communicative contexts (Hyland, 2020; Bednarek & Caple, 2022). By situating individual psychological struggles within larger socio-historical and linguistic frameworks, this research exemplifies discourse analysis' critical capacity to interrogate how mental health narratives are constructed and contested in public media.

Despite these valuable contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. While ensuring clarity and analytical rigor, the exclusive focus on explicit (inscribed) Attitude resources restricts the exploration of implicit (invoked) evaluations, which are often crucial in understanding subtle, context-

dependent meanings in emotionally complex interactions. Additionally, by concentrating solely on the Attitude subsystem, the study does not address other important dimensions of appraisal, namely Engagement, and Graduation, which are vital for capturing how speakers manage dialogic positioning and intensity in evaluative discourse. Future research could thus extend this framework to include these components, offering a more comprehensive account of interpersonal meaning in cinematic dialogue.

Another limitation concerns the study's focus on a single movie and two characters embedded within a specific cultural and historical context. Language use in *The Professor and the Madman* is influenced by Victorian-era social norms and linguistic conventions, which may not fully generalize to contemporary or cross-cultural media portrayals of mental health. Comparative studies involving diverse movies and cultural contexts could illuminate how appraisal resources vary with socio-historical factors and influence audience reception differently. Moreover, integrating psychological assessments or audience response studies could enrich the analysis by linking linguistic features with viewers' emotional engagement and perceptions of mental illness, thereby advancing interdisciplinary understanding of media representation.

Furthermore, excluding non-verbal and multimodal elements such as intonation, facial expression, and cinematography limits the investigation to verbal language alone, overlooking how these semiotic resources collaboratively convey evaluative meaning in movie. Future research adopting multimodal discourse analysis could provide a fuller picture of how Attitude is enacted and perceived in cinematic storytelling. Lastly, expanding appraisal analysis to movies portraying a broader spectrum of psychological conditions, such as depression, anxiety, or trauma, would deepen insights into how language mediates mental health representation across diverse narratives.

In conclusion, study significantly contributes to discourse analysis by bridging appraisal theory with movie studies and narrative psychology. It enriches understanding of how evaluative language functions in spoken cinematic texts to reveal character psychology, emotional depth, and social positioning. The findings underscore the theoretical importance of appraisal for exploring interpersonal meaning and the practical implications for mental health media portrayals, highlighting how language shapes character development and audience interpretation. Future research can build upon this foundation by addressing its limitations and following the outlined recommendations to foster a richer, more nuanced exploration of language, psychology, and media representation in diverse contexts.

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