Sadık Çalışkan

İnönü Üniversitesi
ORCID: 0000-0001-6899-0424

# *The Four Stages of Trauma in Netflix's Adolescence: A Psychological Analysis of Shock, Denial, Anger, and Acceptance*

This study examines the portrayal of the four stages of trauma—shock, denial, anger, and acceptance—in Netflix's limited series Adolescence, through the lens of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's trauma model and its later expansion by David Kessler. The series, structured in four real-time episodes, follows 13-year-old Jamie Miller's arrest for murder and its aftermath, offering a visceral exploration of trauma responses. Using textual and visual analysis, this presentation dissects how each episode aligns with a distinct stage of trauma, employing the series' innovative single-take cinematography to immerse viewers in the characters' psychological turmoil.

The first episode depicts shock through Jamie's father, Eddie, whose numbness and disbelief during the police raid mirror Kübler-Ross's initial stage of trauma. The second episode shifts to denial, as Jamie's school and community evade the crime's gravity, reflecting societal avoidance mechanisms. The third episode focuses on anger, highlighting Jamie's volatile therapy session, where aggression masks his vulnerability and guilt—a hallmark of trauma-driven rage. Finally, the fourth episode culminates in acceptance, as Eddie and Jamie confront irreversible loss, though without resolution, aligning with Kessler's emphasis on trauma as non-linear and often unresolved. Methodologically, this analysis draws on narrative theory and psychological frameworks to decode the series' symbolic visuals (e.g., the vandalized van as societal stigma) and dialogue (Jamie's confrontational outbursts). The single-take technique amplifies the raw emotionality of each stage, blurring the line between character and viewer experience.

The findings reveal Adolescence as a nuanced portrayal of trauma, challenging simplistic narratives of closure. By juxtaposing Jamie's personal breakdown with

systemic failures (toxic masculinity, online radicalization), the series underscores trauma as both individual and collective. This study concludes that the series reframes Kübler-Ross's model for the digital age, where trauma is compounded by societal complicity and mediated violence.

Keywords: *Trauma stages, Kübler-Ross, psychological analysis*