

## **Fiction Film as Group Dreaming: Criteria, Interpretations**

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### **Abstract**

The authors describe a technique of work with some patients, that they name as film-analysis, sometimes called film-therapy, cinematology et al.

They find the work with films most advantageous for the clients who are the inhabitants of the former Soviet Union, because in Soviet times psychological work with clients was prohibited. Their work is based on the idea that the image is the unity of cognitive, emotional, esthetic and behavioural components of reality: consequently it is possible to make a process with it.

**Key words:** film-analysis, dreaming, interpretation, image

It is a well-known fact, that a film is a success and gains popularity among spectators and critics if it agrees with the “collective unconscious” of the spectators, and the degree the director has guessed the vital social needs of which the public is not fully aware.

On the other hand, if films are assessed from the point of view of the spectator it can be noted that the common motivation for watching films (especially on TV screen) is the desire “to relax”, “to shed everyday worries”, “to switch over”, to throw away the burden of all the responsibilities and to escape to the world of illusion. So, in both cases the film can be considered as a collective dream. The main element of the film structure is image. Image is a favourable model for both the study of psychological phenomena and for working with clients. If the image undergoes the development in time, it is even more propitious.

Firstly, the image incorporates the sensual as well as supersensual (symbolic) sides of life, and, secondly, the image is the unity of cognitive, emotional, esthetic and behavioural components of reality.

Thirdly, the image as a rule, is understandable and familiar to a person or a client living in the environment created by visual mass culture.

Art therapy widely employs images of a drawing, painting, music, forms of some material, literary work, theatre performance.

Our paper focuses on film images. The main aim of paper is to provide the conditions for the clients self assessment of their psychological problems along with the analysis of their own emotional, cognitive and behavioural idiosyncracies and potentialities.

The material for the film-analysis is to be chosen beforehand depending on the type of psychological problem vital for the client (family, intimate relations, unpredictable situations, rigidity of behaviour, manipulative tasks etc.).

Work is conducted in groups of 5 – 15 persons. The length of the procedure or the work process of direct interaction varies from 1.5 to 2 hours. Exercises with groups are divided into several stages. In the beginning a short introductory talk is conducted about the film (time of issue, the producer, leading actors etc.). The spectator is

expected to watch the offered material without any special analysis, concentrating only on their personal sensations and feelings.

When the film is over, a short break follows, and then each participant of the group is invited to tell what he felt as a spectator. This is the second stage where the main task is to provide the possibility to express their feelings, listen to the experience of other members of the group. During the third stage the leader invites participants to recall separate episodes, separate scenes or images of the film and read them as if they were informational texts, that is to read between the lines, finding the symbolic load.

When analyzing the film the main focus goes to the points of coincidence and noncoincidence:

1. of the film material demonstrated (its genre, characters, actors, general mood), with a personal taste, feelings of the spectators, clients (“it’s for me – not for me”, “I like it – I don’t like it”, “it’s interesting to me – it’s dull to me”),
2. of individual feelings of each spectator with the feelings of other participants of the group work,
3. the contents of the work performed by the participants of the group with the content of a stage imposed by the leader who is the psychologist and therapist,
4. level and forms of activity of each group member with respect to all others,
5. degree of coincidence of subjective semantics used when analyzing the image among separate participants of group interaction.

Thus, the main criteria for the interpretation of the results of group interaction are the following:

1. symptomatics of spectator’s sensations evolved by the experiences of the main characters,
2. assessment of the integrity of the film as an occurrence having the beginning, the middle and the end,
3. the possibility for each participant of the group to express their sensations about the film during the process of the film analysis, even if the latter are different from the sensations of other participants,
4. ability to slow down the cognitive – assessive attitude to film material at the initial stage,
5. ability to single out semantics, hidden agenda of image, remarks, characters at an advanced stage of work..

We name this technique of work – with a patient as film\_analysis, sometimes it is called film\_therapy, cinematology et al.

The work with films is most advantageous for the clients who are the inhabitants of the former Soviet Union, because in Soviet times psychological work with clients was prohibited. A conscientious Soviet person was supposed to be able to solve his inner as well as external problems himself/herself. And if he/she did not succeed in it, his colleagues from the party organization interfered, being officially qualified as the most conscientious part of society. Colleagues from sports organizations determined the forms and terms of problem resolution by a collective analysis of the individual case.

It is a universally known fact that after 1936 psychologists were either physically exterminated or exiled to Siberia. As a consequence to this, even if it is for the sake of personal growth, up to now, consulting a psychologist, is on the same footing as consulting a psychiatrist.

Fiction film analysis makes the psychological working process with the client natural and efficient.