

"The Visitor" is one of those movies, I think, that needs to be seen again and again for better understanding it as the story covers philosophical, educational [public, media, student and behavioral health professionals in training], political, social, and yes, therapeutic [behavioral health] dimensions...I think it is a perfect film for our Forum where we understand our mind better with the help of the movies and vice versa, understand the movies better with the help of our mind...

While the audience start expecting to observe unfairness in Tarek's case, Mouna, his mother, surprisingly confesses to Walter that it was her who disregarded the immigration official's letter years ago and did not inform her son relevant to denial of their citizenship application following the family's arrival from Syria hence Mom's decision for them to stay as illegal immigrants and meet the consequences.

The possible therapeutic use of the movie intrigued me most...and one of the interesting aspects of the story was the audience's not been given much information about Walter, e.g., previous relationship with his beloved pianist wife, the way she died, contacts with his son in London, and whether he has already been moving through denial-anger-bargaining-depression-acceptance stages...the loss of his spouse...He appeared to be indifferent towards everything and everybody in the beginning of the movie...differentiation of indifference, burnout, from depression at times is quite difficult but application of so called wrong treatment makes the condition even worse, i.e., treating burnout as depression or treating depression as burnout...depression despite its destructive and negative qualities is still an emotion...while burnout is "absence of any emotions"...He, to me, seemed more likely experiencing burnout syndrome...perhaps this is what you formulate "the first trauma?"

...finding our lost inner-child...being motivated again...being happy for what we do...the movie reflects an excellent experience...

My school of thought is Transactional Analysis and within the line of this approach, I thought Walter has lost his "positive, playful, happy, creative, innovative good child-adolescent with sense of humor" out

of all six compartments of our psyche, for years...

...and he finds it in unexpected place, uncalled time and with the help of unlikely illegal immigrant...a passion surfaces while he plays djumba, finally "socializes" with the others, Central Park drum cycle players!

I think he is handling your formulated "second trauma," losing again another love object, with sublimation, more healthier defense mechanism of our psyche...instead of going back to indifferent cycle again, playing djumba in a subway station, honoring his friend, Tarek, who once told him that one of the things he wanted to do most was playing in the subway one day and also expressing his newly created passion for life, sharing with everybody around him :-)

That piece itself, i.e., the movie is being ended with that scene, is perhaps the only comforting moment, even carrying a quality nuance of comedy, of this otherwise quite powerful drama...

Sincerely,

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