

Image Healing: From Abbas and Miyazaki's Films to the Realization Path of Art Therapy in Film Creation

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Abstract

This study employs an interdisciplinary theoretical framework integrating art therapy, psychoanalysis, object relations, trauma psychology, and film semiotics to propose a core model of cinema as a “transitional space” and “non-verbal therapeutic medium.” It demonstrates that the act of viewing films constitutes a complete psychological process encompassing trauma accommodation, emotional catharsis, cognitive restructuring, and self-integration. Using Abbas Kiarostami’s minimalist realism and Hayao Miyazaki’s fantastical animation aesthetics as dual case studies, the research employs film psychology textual analysis, audiovisual language interpretation, psychodynamic explanations, and role relationship dynamics to reveal how visual imagery influences viewers’ unconscious structures, emotional regulation systems, self-object representations, and collective subconscious, thereby achieving therapeutic integration of individual trauma repair and contemporary spiritual symptoms. Building on this foundation, the study develops an operational and theoretically grounded therapeutic film creation grammar, providing an internationally visionary interdisciplinary approach for the clinical psychological application of cinematic art and the construction of therapeutic aesthetics.

Keywords: art therapy, film therapy, trauma integration, psychoanalysis, transitional space, autopsychology, film psychology, audiovisual language, role dynamics, therapeutic creation

1. Introduction: The Interdisciplinary Foundation of Film as a Healing Medium

1.1 Research Background

The existential anxiety, attachment damage, trauma diffusion, and emotional alienation triggered by accelerated modernity have become global mental health concerns. Art therapy, characterized by non-verbal, symbolic, and inclusive interventions, has emerged as a crucial pathway for trauma healing, emotional regulation, and personality integration (Case, 2019; Robbins, 2020). Film, as a comprehensive art form integrating spatiotemporal structures, audiovisual symbols, narrative empathy, and mirror-like identification, naturally aligns with psychoanalytic concepts of fantasy space, transitional phenomena, and unconscious expression mechanisms (Winnicott, 1953; Lacan, 1964).

While most film studies focus on narrative analysis, ideological frameworks, and aesthetic styles, systematic deconstruction of cinematic creation mechanisms through psychoanalytic and clinical art therapy perspectives remains underexplored. This study bridges film psychology interpretation, role dynamics analysis, psychological mechanisms of dramatic conflict, and the psychological effects of audiovisual language with creative practice, achieving a paradigm shift from “film interpretation” to “therapeutic creation through film.”

1.2 Core Proposition

(1) The Film as the Media Realization of the Transitional Space

The film constructs a latent space between the reality principle and the pleasure principle, allowing unconscious

conflicts, traumatic memories, and repressed emotions to emerge safely (Winnicott, 1971).

(2) Watching Movies Is a Mini Psychoanalysis

Through the imagery, the audience achieves empathy, projection, identification, accommodation, and working-through, symbolically resolving their inner conflicts.

(3) Therapeutic Film Follows the Clinical Treatment Logic of “Trauma Presentation–Negative Emotion Acceptance–Meaning Reconstruction–Self-Integration.”

The narrative structure, the setting of dramatic conflict, the construction of character relationship and the design of audio-visual language all serve the restoration of psychological homeostasis and the integration of mental structure.

1.3 Subjects and Methods

This study adopts a qualitative interdisciplinary approach that integrates film aesthetics, psychoanalytic theory, and art therapy perspectives. Abbas Kiarostami and Hayao Miyazaki are selected as representative directors because their works respectively embody two contrasting healing paradigms: introverted individual healing and extroverted era healing. To explore the psychological mechanisms of cinematic healing, the study applies the following analytical methods.

Psychoanalytic textual interpretation is used to examine symbolic structures, unconscious expressions, and narrative patterns in the films. This approach helps reveal how cinematic narratives reflect psychological conflicts, desires, and processes of emotional reconstruction.

The clinical logic of trauma psychology is employed to reduce complex narrative situations to basic psychological mechanisms of trauma, recovery, and emotional integration. Through this approach, character behaviors and narrative developments are interpreted in relation to trauma processing and psychological healing.

Detailed audio-visual analysis is conducted to explore how cinematic language—including camera movement, editing rhythm, sound design, and visual composition—participates in shaping viewers’ emotional and psychological responses.

The dynamics of relationships between characters are analyzed in order to understand how interpersonal interaction functions as a medium for psychological projection, empathy formation, and emotional transformation.

The study refers to the process logic of art therapy and applies a correspondence approach between creative grammar and therapeutic mechanisms. Through this perspective, film creation is interpreted as a symbolic process that mirrors therapeutic stages such as emotional expression, symbolic reconstruction, and psychological integration.

Through the mutual verification of film aesthetics, psychological theory, and creative practice, the study attempts to construct a theoretical framework for understanding cinema as a potential medium of psychological healing.

2. The Psychological Mechanism of Film as Art Therapy: Interpretation of Film Studies and Psychoanalysis

2.1 Transitional Space: The Ontology of Film’s Healing

Winnicott’s concept of potential space forms the ontological foundation of cinematic healing.

The film is neither a completely objective reality nor a purely subjective fantasy, but a third space that allows for the coexistence of illusion and reality (Winnicott, 1953).

From the perspective of film studies, this space is constructed by narrative immersion, picture stitching, sound envelopment and time-space continuity, which enables the audience to contact the unconscious, face the inner object and repair the traumatic memory within the safe psychological distance.

2.2 Mirror Identity, Mirror Need and Role Attachment

The mirror stage of Lacan and the self-psychology of Kohut jointly explain the primary therapeutic mechanism of film:

Through role identification, emotional projection, and idealized investment, viewers achieve mirror self-confirmation and strengthen their sense of self-identity, thereby compensating for the lack of mirror reflection, fragmented self, and absence of attachment in reality (Lacan, 1949; Kohut, 1977).

The film psychology summarizes it as the role attachment mechanism: the stable, empathetic and accommodating role can become the transitional object of the audience and provide the restorative emotional experience.

2.3 The Psychological Function of Dramatic Conflict: Trauma Activation, Acceptance and Repair

Dramatic conflict in film is traditionally understood as the driving force of narrative development. From a psychoanalytic perspective, however, conflict functions not only as a plot mechanism but also as the symbolic externalization of inner psychological tensions. Characters' goals often represent unconscious desires that seek expression within the narrative structure. The forces that hinder these goals may correspond to internal psychological defenses, trauma fixation, or superego prohibitions that restrict the realization of those desires.

Within this framework, dramatic conflict becomes a projection of internal psychic struggle into the narrative world. The tension between characters frequently mirrors processes of transference and countertransference, as well as the repetition of earlier relational patterns formed in past object relationships. Through confrontation, misunderstanding, or emotional negotiation, the narrative gradually brings these hidden psychological dynamics into visibility.

The resolution of dramatic conflict therefore represents more than the restoration of external order. It symbolically reflects the reconciliation of internal contradictions and the reconstruction of psychological balance. In healing-oriented films, conflict design usually follows a principle of moderate activation, safe containment, and non-violent resolution. Rather than intensifying trauma to the point of emotional overload, such narratives carefully regulate the exposure of psychological pain while guiding characters toward recognition, acceptance, and eventual repair.

2.4 The Psychological Effects of Audiovisual Language: A Neurocinematic Perspective

Audiovisual language in cinema functions not only as an aesthetic medium but also as a psychological regulatory system that shapes viewers' emotional and cognitive responses. Research in neurocinematics suggests that specific cinematic techniques can influence neural activity, emotional arousal, and attentional focus during film viewing.

Camera stability and movement patterns, for example, can affect the viewer's sense of psychological security. Stable framing and slow camera movement often generate feelings of calmness and continuity, while rapid movement or unstable imagery may heighten tension and anxiety. Similarly, visual elements such as lighting, color, and composition contribute to the regulation of emotional activation. Soft lighting and balanced compositions tend to create an atmosphere of safety and reflection, whereas sharp contrasts and fragmented compositions may intensify psychological disturbance or suspense.

Sound design also plays a crucial role in emotional modulation. Music, rhythm, and ambient sound can directly influence the autonomic nervous system, guiding viewers' emotional states and synchronizing affective responses with narrative development. Editing rhythm and spatio-temporal continuity further shape viewers' sense of psychological coherence. Smooth temporal transitions support identification with characters and narrative immersion, while abrupt discontinuities may disrupt emotional integration.

Together, these audiovisual elements form the technical foundation through which healing-oriented cinema constructs its psychological effects, enabling film to operate as a medium capable of regulating emotional experience and facilitating symbolic processes of reflection and recovery.

3. Abbas: Minimalist Image as an “Inclusive Object” and Contemplative Healing

The films of Abbas Kiarostami can be understood as a form of contemplative cinematic art therapy. His aesthetic strategy is characterized by the depoliticization of imagery, the reduction of dramatic confrontation, and the avoidance of visual aggression that often dominates mainstream cinematic language. By minimizing spectacle and emotional coercion, the image becomes a stable, neutral, and non-intrusive containing object. In psychological terms, such images provide viewers with a perceptual environment that is calm, open, and receptive rather than demanding or intrusive. This aesthetic orientation enables cinema to function not merely as representation but as a psychological space in which viewers can safely experience reflection, emotional release, and inner integration.

3.1 Playwriting: De-Conflict Narrative and “No Event Space”

Kiarostami's narrative structure deliberately avoids strong dramatic conflict, climactic confrontation, and explicit value judgment. Instead, his films frequently return to the micro-temporal structures of everyday life, such as walking, waiting, casual conversation, and quiet observation. These seemingly uneventful moments form what can be described as a “no-event space” in which narrative tension is deliberately softened.

From the perspective of film psychology and narrative dynamics, this narrative strategy creates a safe psychological environment that allows a form of mental regression. By reducing the intensity of external stimuli and the pressure of dramatic escalation, the narrative weakens the authority of the superego and relaxes rigid defensive mechanisms. As a result, the spectator's mental state gradually shifts from a mode of tension and performance to a mode of simple existence. Within such a contemplative narrative space, viewers are encouraged to slow down their cognitive processing and turn inward, opening the possibility for introspection

and emotional reflection.

3.2 Image: Long Shot, Gaze and Mirror-Inclusive

A characteristic feature of Kiarostami's visual language is the frequent use of long shots and sustained visual observation. For instance, the long-shot ending of *The Wind Will Carry Us* illustrates how duration and spatial openness can create a non-intrusive viewing experience. A fixed camera position, eye-level perspective, extended duration, and spatial emptiness together produce a form of gentle, non-invasive gaze.

In psychological terms, such an audiovisual structure resembles the therapeutic conditions of unconditional positive regard, stable object presence, and the supportive holding environment described in clinical psychology. The long shot is therefore not merely a stylistic preference but an extension of the psychological container created by the film. By allowing time and space for emotional experience to unfold, the image enables viewers' feelings to remain present, gradually transform, and integrate into a broader internal understanding. Through this process, the spectator is given the opportunity to complete a subtle form of inner emotional integration.

3.3 Sound and Editing: Ganglionic Rhythm Regulation and Deactivation

The auditory and editing strategies in Kiarostami's films further reinforce this contemplative psychological environment. Ambient sounds dominate the soundscape, while non-diegetic music is often minimized or absent. Editing patterns remain smooth and continuous, avoiding abrupt transitions or rapid montage.

These stylistic choices influence the viewer's physiological and emotional state. The absence of intense rhythmic stimulation reduces excessive activation of the sympathetic nervous system and promotes a calmer parasympathetic response associated with relaxation and emotional stability. In this sense, the audiovisual rhythm functions as a subtle mechanism of emotional regulation.

From the perspective of neurocinematics, Kiarostami's audiovisual design can be understood as a trauma-sensitive cinematic language. Rather than amplifying anxiety or tension, the film's sensory environment gradually deactivates stress responses and encourages psychological calmness and attentional openness.

3.4 Summary of Therapeutic Mechanisms

Kiarostami's cinematic language constructs a contemplative therapeutic process that can be summarized as a gradual psychological sequence: contemplation leads to relaxation, relaxation allows defensive mechanisms to soften, and this softening enables a process of internal self-regulation that may ultimately result in a sense of existential tranquility.

This mechanism parallels several therapeutic approaches in clinical psychology, including supportive therapy, holding-oriented therapy, and mindfulness-based interventions. Within this framework, Kiarostami's films provide a stable psychological environment particularly suitable for individuals who are introspective, emotionally sensitive, or prone to anxiety. By offering a calm perceptual space rather than dramatic stimulation, the films enable viewers to encounter their own emotional experiences in a safer and more reflective manner.

4. Hayao Miyazaki: Animation as a Media Practice of Trauma Integration and Self-Actualization

The animated works of Hayao Miyazaki present a more dynamic model of psychological transformation. Miyazaki's animation can be interpreted as a narrative structure that mirrors the process of trauma integration and self-actualization. Through symbolic imagery, emotional confrontation, and relational repair, his films construct a developmental pathway that gradually guides characters from psychological fragmentation toward inner coherence.

The narrative logic underlying Miyazaki's films closely resembles the psychological dynamics observed in therapeutic processes. Rather than avoiding conflict, his stories often begin with a moment of trauma activation in which the protagonist encounters loss, separation, fear, or existential uncertainty. This initial disturbance triggers the emergence of internal conflicts that must be confronted throughout the narrative journey.

Following this activation stage, the narrative typically moves toward what can be described as a confrontation with the "shadow," a concept associated with the encounter between the conscious self and its repressed or feared aspects. Through encounters with antagonistic figures, ambiguous allies, or symbolic creatures, the protagonist gradually externalizes internal psychological tensions.

As the narrative progresses, emotional release becomes possible through acts of empathy, sacrifice, reconciliation, or self-recognition. These moments allow previously fragmented emotional experiences to be expressed and reorganized. The process is frequently accompanied by the repair of damaged relationships or the rediscovery of meaningful connections with others, which functions as a form of object repair within the psychological structure of the character.

This narrative trajectory leads toward ego integration and self-actualization. The protagonist emerges not as a victorious conqueror but as a more integrated individual who has reconciled conflicting emotional forces and

developed a deeper sense of identity and responsibility. In this sense, Miyazaki's animated cinema can be understood as a symbolic media practice through which trauma is not merely represented but gradually integrated within a narrative framework of psychological growth.

4.1 The Interpretation of Role and Conflict in the Framework of Psychoanalysis

Within a psychoanalytic framework, the characters and conflicts in Miyazaki's films can be interpreted as symbolic representations of internal psychological structures. Rather than functioning merely as narrative roles, these elements often correspond to archetypal forces that structure the protagonist's inner world.

Nature frequently appears as a symbolic representation of the collective unconscious or the primordial maternal space. Forests, rivers, spirits, and natural landscapes function as images of an original psychological wholeness in which the human self remains connected to deeper instinctual and emotional layers. In contrast, war, industrial destruction, and technological aggression often represent forms of cultural trauma. These forces can be interpreted as symbolic manifestations of separation anxiety, castration anxiety, and the broader civilizational repression of instinctual life.

The young protagonists that frequently appear in Miyazaki's narratives function as auto representations of the emerging self. Through their journeys, the films dramatize the psychological development of a subject attempting to reconcile conflicting emotional and moral forces. The spirits, beasts, and supernatural companions encountered along the way frequently operate as archetypal figures that embody protective energies, ideal objects, or inner guardians that support the protagonist's psychological transformation.

At the deepest narrative level, the central conflict in Miyazaki's films can be understood as a symbolic expression of multiple psychological splits: the division between self and object, civilization and nature, as well as consciousness and the unconscious. The resolution of these conflicts does not typically occur through domination or victory but through recognition, reconciliation, and integration. In this sense, redemption within Miyazaki's cinematic universe corresponds to a process of individuation and the reconstruction of inner psychological integrity.

4.2 A Critical Reading of Princess Mononoke: The Clinical Process of Trauma, Acceptance and Integration

(1) The God of the Earth: The Primordial Object and the Representation of Collective Trauma

In *Princess Mononoke*, the Forest Spirit—often referred to as the Deer God—functions as more than a mythological figure or natural entity. Within a psychoanalytic framework, this figure can be interpreted as the embodiment of a primordial object that represents the origin of life, a symbolic life matrix, and an image of the collective unconscious. The presence of the Forest Spirit establishes the film's deeper symbolic structure, in which nature appears as a space of psychological wholeness and primordial balance.

The beheading of the Deer God constitutes the central traumatic event of the narrative. This moment represents not only a disruption of the ecological order but also a symbolic fragmentation of the primary psychic structure. At the narrative level, it reflects the breakdown of the relationship between human civilization and the natural world. At a psychological level, it can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of collective trauma in which the connection between self and nature, consciousness and the unconscious, is violently severed.

The black corrupt substance that spreads across the landscape following this event functions as a visual metaphor for unresolved trauma. Its uncontrolled expansion resembles the diffusion of unprocessed psychic material, representing negative projections, destructive impulses, and emotional residues that have not yet been integrated. In psychological terms, this imagery corresponds to the experience of depressive anxiety, emotional overflow, and the exhaustion of the self when traumatic experiences cannot be adequately metabolized.

(2) Shan: The Traumatized Self and the Angry Inner Child

The character of Shan embodies the psychological structure of a traumatized self. Her aggression, distrust, and extreme vigilance toward humans can be interpreted as typical defensive responses formed in the aftermath of attachment disruption and identity conflict. Having been abandoned by human society and raised among wolves, Shan exists in a liminal psychological position between the human world and the natural world, which intensifies her sense of alienation and emotional fragmentation.

From the perspective of trauma psychology, Shan's hostility toward humans can be understood as a defensive structure that protects a deeply wounded inner self. Anger in this context does not function merely as destructive emotion but as a protective mechanism that preserves the integrity of the traumatized subject. Her heightened vigilance toward perceived threats reflects a common post-traumatic pattern in which the self remains constantly alert to potential invasion or betrayal.

Miyazaki's narrative approach is significant in that it does not suppress or prematurely resolve Shan's anger. Instead, the film allows her emotional intensity to remain visible and legitimate within the narrative space. This

narrative choice reflects an ethical principle similar to that found in trauma therapy: emotional experiences must first be acknowledged and expressed before they can be integrated. By allowing Shan's trauma to unfold rather than forcing immediate reconciliation, the film creates a psychological space in which anger, grief, and vulnerability can gradually move toward acceptance and transformation.

(3) Return of the Head: Reintegration of Fragmented Objects and Trauma Repair

The moment when the severed head of the Forest Spirit returns to its body represents a critical turning point in the psychological structure of the narrative. Symbolically, this moment marks the reintegration of fragmented objects and the restoration of a disrupted internal order. In psychoanalytic terms, it signifies the transition from psychic fragmentation toward the reconstruction of a more coherent inner structure.

The intense light that emerges during this sequence functions as a symbolic representation of psychological illumination. Rather than merely serving as a visual spectacle, the light can be interpreted as a moment of detachment from destructive emotional cycles and an unlocking of previously repressed unconscious material. Within the therapeutic metaphor of the film, this illumination corresponds to the moment when traumatic experiences become consciously acknowledged and therefore open to transformation.

Simultaneously, the dramatic changes in color and visual atmosphere signal a shift in psychological energy. The transition from dark, corrupted imagery to a more balanced visual environment reflects the movement of psychic energy away from depressive exhaustion toward processes of integration and sublimation. Music also plays a crucial role in this transformation. The rising musical structure during this sequence creates a sense of emotional release, suggesting that previously accumulated tension is gradually metabolized and discharged.

These audiovisual elements correspond to what trauma therapy describes as the moment of "working through." At this stage, the traumatic experience is no longer avoided or repressed but actively processed and symbolically reorganized. The return of the head therefore functions as the psychological resolution of the narrative conflict and the beginning of emotional integration.

(4) Forest Rebirth: Self-Actualization and Reconciliation with Existence

The rebirth of the forest at the end of *Princess Mononoke* does not represent a return to a pre-traumatic state. Instead, it symbolizes the emergence of a new equilibrium in which trauma has been acknowledged and integrated into the broader structure of life. The restored landscape reflects a psychological condition in which loss is recognized, fragmentation is accepted, and new relational boundaries are gradually established.

This transformation suggests that healing does not involve the complete elimination of suffering. Rather, it requires the capacity to acknowledge loss without being entirely defined by it. In the film's narrative resolution, characters learn to accept the fractures that have occurred while simultaneously rebuilding meaningful relationships with the world around them. The newly emerging relationship between human society and nature therefore takes the form of coexistence rather than fusion or domination.

From a psychological perspective, this process corresponds to a mature form of healing in which trauma is not erased but integrated into the evolving structure of the self. Pain is not removed from experience but gradually transformed into a source of reflection and growth. The self that emerges from this process is not perfect or fully restored but repaired and reorganized.

The film ultimately moves beyond the illusion of complete "cure" and instead presents a vision of psychological maturity grounded in acceptance, resilience, and coexistence with the complexities of existence.

5. A Comparative Study of Two Directories: The Psychodynamic Differences of Two Healing Paradigms

The films of Abbas Kiarostami and Hayao Miyazaki represent two distinct paradigms of cinematic healing. Although both directors construct narrative spaces that allow viewers to confront psychological suffering, their approaches differ significantly in terms of psychodynamic mechanisms, narrative strategies, and aesthetic orientation.

Kiarostami's cinematic language can be understood as a supportive and inclusive therapeutic model. His films tend to address psychological conditions characterized by anxiety, tension, excessive defensiveness, and emotional vulnerability. Instead of intensifying dramatic conflict, Kiarostami deliberately reduces external stimulation and narrative pressure. Through minimalist storytelling, weak dramatic conflict, and contemplative pacing, his films create a stable perceptual container in which viewers can gradually relax their defensive structures. This cinematic environment resembles therapeutic approaches such as supportive therapy, mindfulness-oriented reflection, and forms of gentle hypnotic absorption. The creative orientation of this paradigm is therefore characterized by anti-dramatic structure, low narrative pressure, and a high degree of emotional tolerance.

Miyazaki's animation presents a more dynamic therapeutic model based on exposure, emotional acceptance, and

psychological integration. His films frequently engage with deeper layers of trauma, including cultural anxiety, existential conflict, and the fragmentation of the self. Rather than avoiding conflict, Miyazaki's narratives actively activate archetypal forces and symbolic confrontations that allow characters to encounter their inner "shadow." Through dramatic conflict, emotional catharsis, and relational repair, the narrative gradually guides characters toward a process of object reintegration and self-actualization. The creative orientation of this paradigm therefore emphasizes strong symbolism, intense narrative confrontation, and eventual psychological integration.

The two paradigms share an important spiritual foundation. Both directors avoid narratives based on violence, moral condemnation, or psychological domination. Instead, their cinematic worlds emphasize respect for the inner experience of the self, tolerance toward emotional suffering, and the possibility of symbolic repair through narrative completion. In this sense, both filmmakers demonstrate how cinema can function as a medium for psychological healing, offering viewers spaces in which pain can be acknowledged, endured, and gradually transformed.

6. The Clinical Grammar of Therapeutic Film Creation (Original Core)

Drawing upon psychoanalysis, art therapy, trauma psychology, neurocinematology, and theories of film creation, this study proposes a conceptual framework that may be described as a "clinical grammar" of therapeutic cinema. Rather than treating film merely as narrative entertainment, this framework interprets cinematic creation as a symbolic process capable of facilitating emotional regulation, trauma integration, and psychological reflection. The proposed grammar does not prescribe a rigid formula for filmmaking. Instead, it outlines several structural principles through which cinematic narratives can create psychologically supportive environments for viewers.

6.1 Narrative and Conflict Healing Grammar

Within a therapeutic cinematic framework, narrative structure is designed not primarily to intensify dramatic excitement but to support psychological accommodation and integration. Instead of relying solely on classical "overcoming" narratives in which conflict is defeated through domination or victory, healing-oriented narratives tend to adopt trauma-accommodating structures that acknowledge vulnerability and emotional complexity.

In such narratives, dramatic conflict functions as a catalyst for psychological growth rather than as a tool for spectacle or emotional manipulation. Conflict is therefore framed in ways that allow characters to encounter internal contradictions and gradually reorganize their emotional experience.

Another important principle is the maintenance of psychological safety for the viewer. Healing-oriented narratives typically provide a certain distance from traumatic events and incorporate mechanisms of narrative containment that prevent emotional overload. This allows viewers to confront difficult experiences without becoming overwhelmed by them.

These narratives permit negative emotions such as anger, grief, or fear to surface openly without prematurely forcing them into positive resolution. Emotional authenticity is preserved, and the narrative gradually moves toward reconciliation and integration rather than toward simple closure or dramatic triumph.

6.2 The Grammar of Role and Relationship Healing

Healing-oriented cinema also relies on specific configurations of characters and relationships. One important element is the presence of a stable accommodating figure who functions as a supportive psychological reference point within the narrative. This role may take the form of a mentor, guardian, companion, or symbolic protector who provides emotional stability and encourages the protagonist's psychological development.

The developmental trajectory of the protagonist often follows a path similar to therapeutic processes, moving from trauma exposure through emotional expression and reflective understanding toward eventual integration. Characters are therefore not defined solely by external achievements but by their evolving capacity for emotional recognition and relational connection.

Relationships between characters frequently mirror deeper psychological structures such as attachment patterns, empathic resonance, and internal object relations. Through these relational dynamics, the narrative dramatizes processes of trust formation, emotional repair, and mutual recognition.

At the same time, healing-oriented narratives tend to avoid exploitative patterns in which suffering is sensationalized or in which abusive relationships are romanticized. Instead of reinforcing destructive dynamics, the narrative emphasizes respect for vulnerability and seeks to prevent the emotional consumption of violence.

6.3 Image Healing Grammar

Visual composition plays a central role in constructing the psychological environment of therapeutic cinema. Healing-oriented film images tend to emphasize stability, openness, and perceptual safety rather than sensory

stimulation or visual aggression. Through careful control of camera position, lighting, spatial composition, and movement rhythm, cinematic images can regulate the viewer's bodily and emotional state.

A stable camera position often corresponds to a sense of bodily stabilization for the viewer. When the visual frame remains calm and balanced, the spectator experiences a reduced level of perceptual tension. Similarly, the use of an eye-level perspective creates a relationship of equality between the viewer and the cinematic subject. This perspective avoids visual domination or oppression and instead encourages reflective observation.

Lighting also contributes to the construction of a psychologically supportive environment. Natural light or soft lighting conditions tend to create a nurturing visual atmosphere, while excessive contrast or aggressive illumination may generate emotional pressure. Spatial "white space" within the frame further functions as a psychological breathing space that allows the viewer's perception to slow down and expand.

Slow and continuous camera movement helps reduce excessive sympathetic nervous system activation. Through these visual strategies, the image becomes not merely an aesthetic device but a medium for emotional regulation and contemplative experience.

6.4 Sound and Editing: Healing Grammar

Sound design and editing rhythm constitute another important dimension of therapeutic cinematic language. In healing-oriented film structures, auditory elements are often organized in ways that support emotional regulation and perceptual continuity.

Ambient sound frequently takes priority over heavily stylized sound effects or dramatic musical intensification. Natural environmental sounds help maintain a sense of sensory grounding and contribute to a balanced neurophysiological state. Music, when used, often functions as a supportive emotional presence rather than as a manipulative device designed to force specific emotional reactions.

Another important feature is the reduction of excessive sensory stimulation. Healing-oriented sound design typically avoids rapid shifts in volume, abrupt sonic contrasts, or overwhelming auditory density. Such low-stimulus environments are more compatible with trauma-sensitive cinematic design.

Editing patterns also contribute to psychological stability. Continuous editing and smooth transitions help maintain a coherent sense of narrative and emotional continuity. When viewers are given sufficient temporal space within a scene, emotional experiences are allowed to remain present long enough to be processed. This temporal openness creates conditions for what trauma psychology describes as the process of working through.

6.5 Image Healing Grammar

Beyond narrative structure and audiovisual rhythm, healing-oriented cinema also relies on symbolic imagery that resonates with deep psychological archetypes. These symbols function as mediating structures between unconscious emotional experience and conscious reflection.

Natural landscapes often appear as representations of primordial life forces. Within a psychoanalytic or archetypal framework, nature can be interpreted as a symbolic matrix that reflects the original connection between the self and the broader environment of existence. Such imagery evokes a sense of psychological grounding and wholeness.

Water frequently symbolizes emotional flow and purification. Rivers, rain, or oceans may represent the movement and transformation of emotional experience, suggesting the possibility of renewal through the release and circulation of affective energy.

Light functions as another important symbolic element. The emergence of light often signals moments of psychological insight, awakening, or integration. Rather than merely illuminating the visual field, light becomes a metaphor for the gradual expansion of consciousness.

Images of rebirth or regeneration often appear at the resolution of healing narratives. These images do not imply a return to an untouched or innocent state but instead represent the integration of trauma into a renewed structure of the self. Through such symbolic processes, cinema creates a visual language that expresses psychological transformation and existential renewal.

7. Time Healing: Film as a Repair Device of Collective Unconsciousness

Contemporary society is increasingly characterized by widespread psychological pressures that extend beyond individual experience. Rapid social change, technological acceleration, and the fragmentation of traditional social structures have contributed to a range of collective psychological conditions. Among these are attachment deficits in interpersonal relationships, heightened emotional vulnerability, the diffusion of traumatic experiences through media environments, and a growing sense of existential uncertainty. In addition, collective anxieties and unresolved historical tensions often appear in the form of symbolic "shadow projections" within cultural narratives.

Within this context, healing-oriented cinema can be understood as a cultural mechanism that contributes to the repair and regulation of collective psychological structures. Film provides a symbolic space in which unconscious fears, desires, and conflicts can be expressed, observed, and gradually reorganized. Through narrative, image, sound, and symbolic representation, cinema functions as a collective container that holds shared emotional experiences while allowing audiences to confront them from a safe distance.

Cinema operates as a cultural mirror that reflects the psychological condition of its historical moment. Archetypal symbols, narrative conflicts, and emotional transformations within films often resonate with deeper layers of the collective unconscious. By giving symbolic form to otherwise diffuse psychological tensions, healing-oriented films make it possible for audiences to recognize and integrate elements of the collective shadow.

Therapeutic cinema is not merely a form of entertainment. It can be understood as a restorative cultural practice that contributes to the gradual reorganization of collective mental structures. Through the shared experience of cinematic narratives, viewers participate in a symbolic process of emotional recognition, reflection, and integration. Film thus becomes a kind of mobile cultural “psychotherapy room” in which the psychological challenges of an era can be explored and partially repaired.

8. Conclusion

This study explores the therapeutic potential of cinema through an interdisciplinary framework that integrates psychoanalysis, art therapy, trauma psychology, and film semiotics. The analysis demonstrates that film can function not only as a narrative or aesthetic medium but also as a structured symbolic environment capable of influencing emotional regulation, self-representation, and unconscious psychological processes.

Through the comparative examination of the works of Abbas Kiarostami and Hayao Miyazaki, the study identifies two distinct paradigms of cinematic healing. Kiarostami’s films construct a contemplative and inclusive perceptual environment in which viewers experience emotional stabilization and reflective awareness. In contrast, Miyazaki’s animated narratives activate deeper layers of trauma, guiding characters and audiences through processes of confrontation, emotional expression, and psychological integration. Together, these two paradigms illustrate how cinematic images can engage with both individual psychological structures and broader cultural anxieties.

By linking the interpretation of film psychology with the analysis of dramatic conflict, character dynamics, and audiovisual language, this study proposes a conceptual framework that describes the clinical grammar of therapeutic film creation. This framework suggests that narrative design, character relationships, visual composition, and sound structures can collectively contribute to the construction of psychologically supportive cinematic environments.

The findings indicate that healing-oriented cinema may play an important cultural role in periods characterized by widespread psychological tension and existential uncertainty. Rather than functioning solely as entertainment, film can also serve as a reflective cultural space in which audiences encounter, process, and symbolically reorganize emotional experience. In this sense, therapeutic cinema represents not only an aesthetic orientation but also a form of cultural practice that encourages empathy, psychological awareness, and the possibility of inner reconciliation.

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