

Unorthodox TV Series from the Perspective of Bowen Family Therapy

Yelda Yıldız Önal^{a*} & Semra Uçar^b

a Associate Professor, Istanbul Medipol University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2397-4778>

b Assistant Professor, Erciyes University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4395-9081>

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Abstract

Some scenes from the *Unorthodox* series have been analyzed through the concepts of Bowen Family Therapy, one of the prominent theories in the field of family counseling. This analysis is particularly directed towards the narrative arc of Esty, the protagonist, whose trajectory is intricately interwoven with cross-cultural dynamics. The qualitative research method of document analysis was employed to illustrate concepts such as differentiation of self, triangles, the nuclear family emotional process, the family projection process, the multigenerational transmission process, sibling position, emotional cutoff, and the emotional process in society. The themes in the series center on Esty's journey to find a balance between the influences of her community, her process of self-differentiation, and her assimilation into a new culture, as well as the enduring impact of her mother-in-law and the decisive choices she has made in her life. The scenes, which provide examples of multiple concepts, serve as embodiments of these therapeutic approaches for mental health professionals working in the field. It is contended that analysing movies and series will contribute to the enhancement of learning process.

Keywords: Bowen family therapy, sequence analysis, document analysis, family counselling

Bowen Aile Terapisi Perspektifinden Unorthodox Dizisi

Öz

Unorthodox dizisinde yer alan bazı sahneler, aile danışmanlığı alanında öne çıkan kuramlardan biri olan Bowen Aile Terapisine ait kavramlar üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Esty'nin, kültürel farklılıkları da konu alan hikayesine Bowen Aile Terapisinin sekiz temel kavramı perspektifinden yaklaşmıştır. Benlik farklılaşması, üçgen, çekirdek ailenin duygusal sistemi/süreci, aile yansıtma süreci, çok kuşaklı aktarım süreci/kuşak aktarımı, kardeş konumu ve duygusal kesilme/emosyonel kopma ve toplumsal duygusal süreç/sosyal regresyon kavramlarının örneklendirilmesinde nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan doküman analizinden yararlanılmıştır. Esty'nin benlik farklılaşma düzeyinin yaşadıkları ile kendini gösterme şekllinden bağlı olduğu topluluğun etkileri ile yeni bir kültürün etkileri arasında denge kurma çabası, kayıinvalidesi üzerinden süren bir evlilik ve hayatına dair aldığı keskin kararlar öne çıkmaktadır. Birden fazla kavramın birlikte kullanımını da örnekleyen sahneler ruh sağlığı alanında çalışan meslek profesyonelleri için bu terapi yaklaşımının kavramlarını somutlaştırıcı niteliktedir. Film/dizi analizlerinin öğrenme sürecinin zenginleştirilmesine katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bowen aile terapisi, dizi analizi, doküman analizi, aile danışmanlığı

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INTRODUCTION

Movies/series are instrumental in therapy training because they are inexpensive and manageable materials. They can be incorporated into the educational environment to facilitate learning within a secure setting and to implement interventions effectively. Films/series, which are important in the experiential learning process, also allow the examination of different cultural elements. Visual materials are helpful resources at the point of expanding ideas and looking from multiple perspectives (Dermer & Hutchings, 2000). The fact that the characters in the materials have different cultures, classes, genders, power and beliefs make different subject areas and possible client characters accessible. These learning experiences enable distance from different client issues and the effects they create (Dermer & Hutchings, 2000; Lappin, 1997).

Additionally, there are studies on psychology and counselor education on the use of movies in the teaching environment (Boyatzis, 1994; Higgins & Dermer, 2001; Koch & Dollarhide, 2000; Paddock, Terranova & Giles, 2001). Scenes facilitate visual representation in the learning process of abstract theories and concepts. In this way, it organizes what is learned within the scope of the subject matter of the learning material. The fact that the same concept can be handled in different scenes gives the opportunity to apply for repetition and use of concepts (Champoux, 1999).

Such content, which increases student participation, supports the transfer of knowledge to problem solving, and develops students' critical and analytical thinking skills (Koch & Dollarhide, 2000; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Movies/series(s) that enable cognitive, emotional and affective experiences and learning support learning for a long time as they are accessible and watchable again. Fostering a positive atmosphere for university students, promoting well-being and emphasizing their positive perceptions, can be achieved by thoughtfully selecting movies and series (Blasco et al., 2015; Dermer & Hutchings, 2000). Movies/series contribute to students' making sense of their own life stories by creating a new learning process. Unlike watching movies/series in daily life, the educator also plays a facilitating role in areas such as where to focus and what can be questioned while approaching the scenes from different points. In this sense, it can be easier to integrate knowledge and experience. Having insight into the culture, feelings and sharing of students can give an idea about how educational material can be transformed (Blasco et al., 2015). One of the compulsory courses carried out within the scope of undergraduate education in psychological counselling education is Family Counselling course (Council for Higher Education, 2018). Enriching and experiential learning methods play a crucial role in elevating these theories from the realm of knowledge to comprehension. What makes Bowen Family Therapy stand out among these theories is that understanding the individual's place in the system is important in terms of providing the opportunity to look at the individual and the family from a multi-faceted perspective, even when working with different theoretical orientations (Brown, 1999). Movies/series with real-life family representations or family representations in a particular culture can provide insight into how families experience conflicts and tensions. At the same time, it can be a guide in understanding and separating the concepts of the therapy approach while trying to understand the plot. With such learning experiences, personal awareness can be supported as well as professional learning (Brown, 1999; Hudock & Warden, 2001). Within the scope of film/series analysis, it is possible to separate and recall the concepts of theoretical approaches and apply the information at the levels of analysis and synthesis.

Bowen Family Therapy and Its Basic Concepts

The main concepts of Bowen family therapy are defined based on differentiation of self and experiencing anxiety. Differentiation of self consists of eight key concepts: triangles, nuclear family emotional process, family projection process, multigenerational transmission process, sibling position, emotional cutoff and emotional process in society (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Bowen (1978), who views the family as an emotional system, emphasizes that the individual is both affected by and influences the emotional processes within the family. Two key concepts emerge in understanding the family atmosphere. The first of these is the anxiety experienced in the family and the reactions to this anxiety. The second is self-differentiation, which shows how to deal with situations such as anxiety and stress that shape these reactions (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The way these two concepts are experienced can be observed by examining the differences in thoughts and feelings among family members. If the emotional system is dominant, it becomes difficult to make an objective decision by separating from the intellectual approach and emotions. In family members where the emotional system is dominant, individuality and autonomy remain in the background. The reaction and expectation

of another are more decisive in the decisions made. In this communication style, where relationality is more obvious, this concentration can manifest itself in dependence on one another, such as fusion, or it can cause reactions to be isolated by trying to create an emotional distance with the effect of the emotional system (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). In individuals with a high level of differentiation, anxiety is managed more effectively, decisions can be made independently of each other, and relationships based on unity can be established without getting lost in the emotional system. These experiences within the family may lead to the transfer of the parents' level of differentiation and emotion regulation skills to their children, within the context of the nuclear family's reflection process. With these aspects, differentiation refers to a process (Jenkins et al., 2005; Skowron, 2005; Skowron et al., 2009). In families where the emotional system is dominant, it is often difficult for individuals to continue their lives without being a part of a relationship. In such relationships, the dynamics of communication with one another direct the behaviour of the person. The individual accepts his feelings as determinant and acts under this influence. To manage anxiety, emotional enmeshment or emotional distance and avoidance of anxiety can be considered adaptive behaviours. In a well-differentiated person, on the other hand, the person can continue his life without being involved in a relationship and this situation does not pose a threat to his well-being (Bowen, 1976; 1978).

Depending on the level of differentiation of self, the definition of self also changes. In situations where anxiety is high and decisive in decisions, the person acts as someone he is not and acts under emotional pressure. The emergence of false ego becomes noticeable in individuals with low levels of differentiation. Stable and highly differentiated ego states in which emotional and intellectual decision-making processes are in balance are defined as coherent ego (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Taking responsibility for one's feelings and thoughts, expressing his thoughts independently of the pressure of others, and protecting the definition of self brings with it the ability to take the position of self (Bowen, 1978). If the individual's own functionality is sacrificed for the purpose of maintaining the balance in the system for the well-being of the individual, the functionality remains out of control. As the tendency to adapt increases, the functioning of the individual gets out of control and his well-being depends on how the other responds (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

How each member is affected by familial processes is also decisive in experiencing the level of anxiety. As anxiety increases, people need more emotional contact and closeness. As anxiety increases, tolerance, well-being and flexibility decreases. In this atmosphere, the individual is not allowed to be himself. Efforts to change others can reach compelling levels as individuals enter cycles of criticism, defense, and counterattack. If the balance is disturbed, new efforts for harmony begin to come into play. Triangles can be saviours in maintaining the dynamic balance of a three-person system. It helps individuals manage the stress of living together (Bowen, 1976; Comella, 2001). In some cases, the existence of triangles may not be enough to adapt and manage anxiety, or emotional interruptions may be needed to manage the emotional system. The individual who thinks he is not part of the system tries to change others or may withdraw from the system. In the shaping of these reactions, the patterns transferred from previous generations as well as the experiences of the individual in the nuclear family can also be determinative in the experience of anxiety and the management of stress. While the effects of anxiety and differentiation experiences vary over time, the level of influence of family members as parents and children, as siblings or spouses, may be different from other family members. These effects, which are reflected in the intergenerational and nuclear family, can be affected by the emotional processes of the culture and society. This, in turn, may increase the likelihood of repeating patterns across generations (Brown, 1999; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The eight prominent concepts of Bowen family therapy, along with their basic characteristics, are outlined below.

Differentiation of Self

Individuals with a low level of differentiation experience two extreme emotional states in relationships—enmeshment or emotional distance—driven by chronic anxiety. The need for intimacy is either met by increasing emotional closeness through enmeshment or by becoming overly focused on each other during emotional conflicts. Another way of balancing intimacy is by creating emotional distance, expressing anger, or stubbornly refusing to comply with the other person's wishes. As the level of differentiation decreases, individuals become more emotionally reactive to the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of others, with a heightened need for approval and validation. They become overly concerned with what others think of them. Lower levels of differentiation also lead to compensatory behaviors in areas not directly affected by functionality. Additionally, a lower level of differentiation intensifies the need for togetherness, love, acceptance, and guidance throughout life, creating unrealistic expectations. Chronic anxiety may make one spouse more dependent while making the other stronger and more dominant. For example, the spouse forced into obedience may seek escape for survival. Heightened

sensitivity to the emotional environment may lead to avoidance behaviors such as isolation, chronic psychosis, alcoholism, or drug addiction. Conversely, as the level of differentiation increases, an individual's capacity for autonomous functioning improves. They become more decisive in their own life, better able to adapt to changing circumstances, and their functioning in relationships is governed more by their interaction with the other person (Bowen, 1976; 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Triangles

Triangles are activated by fluctuations in anxiety levels, which can be alleviated by involving a third person in the communication process. These triangles may originate from previous generations. Their basic nature is characterized by several dynamics: (a) a stable duo can become destabilized by the addition of a third person, (b) a stable duo may be destabilized by the removal of a third person, (c) an unstable duo can be stabilized by the addition of a third person, and (d) an unstable duo can be balanced by the removal of a third person (Haefner, 2014; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Nuclear Family Emotional Process

Anxiety can spread to other family members through the transfer of attitudes, beliefs, and emotions within the family environment. The less emotionally separated an individual is from their family, the more they tend to worry about being independent and taking responsibility for themselves. A weak and inadequate emotional support system exacerbates anxiety for everyone, and anxiety that begins with one person can eventually affect the entire family. As the level of differentiation decreases, the tendency to personalize others' reactions increases. Patterns of emotional functioning across generations often include marital conflict, dysfunction in one spouse, impairment in one or more children, and emotional distance, with family responses to stress mirroring those of previous generations. Individuals tend to marry those with emotional systems like their own, and certain events, such as the birth of a child, may trigger anxiety within the family. Suppressed anxiety often manifests externally in response to these events. When acute or chronic tension arises within a marriage, families tend to manage anxiety by resorting to mechanisms such as alienation, interpersonal conflict, sacrificing one spouse to maintain harmony, or developing a shared focus or interest (Bowen, 1978; Haefner, 2014; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Family Projection Process

The reflection process describes how parents' emotional problems are transferred to their children. This process involves several steps: the parent focuses on the child out of fear that something is wrong, interprets the child's behavior as confirmation of their fear and anxiety, and subsequently treats the child as if there is indeed a problem. This explains how children may develop symptoms in response to anxiety about relationships passed down from the previous generation. According to Bowen, the child who is least emotionally separated from their parents is the most vulnerable to developing symptoms, as they are more likely to react anxiously to the strain in the parental relationship and misinterpret it as a problem within themselves (Brown, 1999; Haefner, 2014; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Multigenerational transmission process

Past relationship patterns continue in the current family system. There is a transfer of family traditions and ideals between generations (Haefner, 2014; Herz Brown, 1991).

Sibling Position

Although it is not universal, it is emphasized that being dependent in the family, high anxiety, and the level of differentiation vary according to sibling status. It is stated that intergenerational sibling positions can also be suggestive. The eldest or youngest child is seen as the most vulnerable in the family. Sibling positions of the parties are also effective in the selection of spouses. (Bowen, 1976; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Emotional cutoff and emotional process in society

This process refers to how individuals manage the intensity of emotional fusion between generations. A "cut" often resembles an escape, where individuals decide to separate themselves from their family of origin. As differentiation decreases, this separation can lead to isolation. Emotionally closed individuals may perceive interpersonal relationships as threatening, and such perceived threats can render them dysfunctional. Often, people attempt to cut emotional ties by creating physical distance, believing their parents are the sole source of their problems and avoiding individual responsibility. This effort to separate oneself from the original family may involve maintaining physical distance, limiting encounters to superficial interactions, or relying on internal defense mechanisms to avoid the fusion that generates anxiety. However, this approach is not a solution but rather a continuation of the same process. Examples include emotional divorce or estrangement between a child and a

parent. Additionally, this dynamic can manifest as generational gradation (Bridge, 2019; Bowen, 1978; Haefner, 2014; Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Peleg Popko, 2002).

Social Regression/Social Emotional Process

This concept focuses on how emotional reactions occur in social situations and examines how emotionality influences society's decision-making processes. It plays a critical role in determining the level of adaptation to stress from external sources. Society, as an emotional system, encompasses its own generational transitional processes, triangles, emotional interruptions, reflection processes, and differentiation-association dilemmas. Social regression emerges as a weakening of problem-solving mechanisms, driven by the increasing generational interpersonal anxiety inherent within the society itself (Bowen, 1978; Haefner, 2014).

METHOD

This study examines the fundamental principles of Bowen Family Therapy as portrayed in the American-German four-part series “Unorthodox,” produced by Kamm (2020). The series features notable actors such as Shira Haas (Esther Shapiro), Amit Rahav (Yakov Shapiro), and Jeff Bilbusch (Moishe Lefkovitch). The study adopts a descriptive approach and employs document analysis as a qualitative research method. Document analysis entails a systematic process wherein various written or visual sources are scrutinized to collect, comprehend, and synthesize data pertaining to the subject at hand (Bowen, 2009).

Process

The focus of the “Unorthodox” series, which was written based on Deborah Feldman's autobiographical work, is the lifestyle of Hasidic Jews living in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, belonging to the Sattar community, and the struggle of the character Esther Shapiro (Esty), who wants to get out of the oppressive environment they are in. In this study, the selection criteria for the “Unorthodox” series are that it represents different cultures, has more than one language translation, and is accessible from an internet platform. The series was watched at least four times by the researchers, and the discourse and/or behaviors that were thought to be analyzed with the basic concepts of Bowen Family Therapy were noted in detail, but the researchers extracted some data because the transcript was too long. The criteria for data inclusion are that the concepts can be exemplified at the specified level of characteristics, the researchers of this study agree that this criterion is met, more than one concept of the approach is present in each scene, or the concepts allow for the explanation of other concepts through either anxiety or differentiation of self. Scenes that were considered poor or non-representative of concepts for Bowen Family Therapy were excluded from the analysis. Failure to meet the inclusion criteria was also accepted as an exclusion criterion. Content analysis and descriptive analysis were used to analyze the data. Within the scope of content analysis, similar data were brought together within the framework of a common theme, organized and interpreted in an understandable way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Furthermore, discourse and/or behavior analysis was conducted by establishing connections between related scenes that can be analyzed under the same concept/concepts. To better understand the concepts used in the scenes discussed within the scope of descriptive analysis, an attempt was made to depict the context, and the exemplary character discourses were included. In the series, Esty's story is told without temporal continuity, with flashbacks. To establish a coherent sequence in the analysis, scenes were primarily selected from the first episode to be analyzed sequentially. However, to limit the number of analyses, additional scenes from both the same and different episodes related to the primary scene were also included. For the validity and reliability of the research, the analyses were repeated at different times, and the method of peer confirmation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008) was applied in the qualitative research. To ensure validity, direct discourse quotations from the relevant scenes were also included. While removing invalid data is another internal reliability step, depicting the characters and context in a way that is understandable in each analysis is an external reliability step. In line with the opinions of researchers with qualitative research experience, some changes were made in the concepts and approaches used in the analysis. For internal consistency in qualitative data, Miles and Huberman's (1994) reliability formula (the same number of decisions/total number of agreed and unreconciled decisions) was used. To avoid repetition, you may remove “consistency study” the second time: “While the rate was 86.2% in the first consistency study, it rose to 94.4% in the final assessment.

RESULTS

The following scenes from the “Unorthodox” series are deemed significant and have been selected based on their representativeness to the core concepts of the Bowen Family Therapy approach. These scenes depict the unfolding journey of Esty and Yanky's marriage, with a particular focus on the dynamics observed within their

respective families. Notably, Yanky's portrayal of a dependent personality structure and Esty's courageous pursuit of her individual identity through her escape to Berlin in the face of persistent interference from her husband's family are of particular interest. Moreover, the analysis will delve into Esty's resilience as she confronts the challenges inherent in establishing herself in Berlin, examining her intricate relationship with her mother Leah, as well as her interactions with fellow students at the conservatory. Additionally, the analysis will explore the identity crisis experienced by Esty's cousin Moishe, who accompanies Yanky to Berlin following Esty's departure, thereby contributing to a comprehensive examination of these complex dynamics.

Analysis 1: Episode 1 Introduction Scene

It is observed that Esty, who is married to Yanky, took a few important items with her when fleeing to Germany due to the unresolved conflict in their marriage. When this scene is analyzed in line with the Bowen Family Therapy approach, we encounter the concepts of 'multigenerational transmission process', 'differentiation of self' and 'nuclear family emotional process'. The fact that her mother, Leah, ran away from home after arguing with her husband shows a similar pattern. If it is handled with the concept of generational transfer, it can be said that the relationship pattern in the past continues in Esty's nuclear family system. At the same time, living together with family members (grandfather, grandmother, father, aunt) with a very low level of differentiation of self in an environment without her mother also supports this reaction. It is seen that she exhibits her attempt at individuality at an extreme level. Individuals with low differentiation of self act emotionally rather than being cognitively focused, like Esty, and their emotional dependence on family members continues. Esty, who is greatly influenced by her grandmother throughout the series, keeps a photograph of her on the nightstand in her bedroom. She takes the photograph with her and calls her grandmother for support when she escapes to Germany for the first time. This can be seen as an indication of her emotional dependence. The photograph may serve as a symbolic object connecting her to her roots. Esty's preference for the escape route is related to the concept of the 'nuclear family emotional process'. Esty's mechanism is emotional disconnection/separation from one another (physical or emotional avoidance), which is one of the mechanisms used by family members to cope with anxiety when acute or chronic tensions arise within the marriage.

Analysis 2: Episode 1 Min. 01.39

When Esty leaves the house to escape to Germany, she encounters the members of the congregation who are preparing to perform one of the traditional meetings due to the Sabbath, and when the women and children here are examined, the women and the boys are similar (married women with headscarves or wigs on their heads, usually wearing black, fanciful clothes). It is seen that their clothing and hairstyles are similar. The importance of the meaning attributed to children is evident in the discourses of the women who began to talk to Esty, and the role of the 'mother' of women comes to the forefront. However, the fact that Esty has not yet met the expectations of the congregation and her husband, Yanky, who is a member of this congregation, causes her not to feel as comfortable as the women in this environment, and Esty, who thinks that she is not like them in terms of structure, feels even more outside. When Esty goes out of the building, the similarity of clothing, manners and behaviors of the men she encounters draws attention. Therefore, the possibility of repetitive patterns in the definition of the concept of 'multigenerational transmission' appear in the members of this community. It is seen that the roles of men and women from previous generations are also accepted by the members of today's congregation, and gatherings continue important days, so the past traditions and ideals are passed on between generations. At the same time, the fact that these individuals must adopt a uniform style of clothing and that they are emotionally and intellectually intertwined with the members of the congregation suggests that these individuals are not allowed to "differentiate themselves" by the community, which is the upper system. An example dialogue is shown below.

Episode 1 Min. 2.10:

- 'Where are you going, Esty?' (Alone among the group of women with babies)
- 'Esty is not a prisoner like us. She doesn't have to carry a baby.'

Analysis 3: Episode 1 Min. 06.52

She shares with the Yanky family that Esty may have left home. Quote from his mother's words:

"That girl wasn't worthy of you anyway. It was problematic from the beginning. She has no mother, and her father is also strange. They have been married for a year and have yet to have a baby. We were not going to accept it from the start."

Throughout the series, it is evident that Yanky's mother holds a significant role in Esty's marriage. Yanky, who has 'low differentiation of self', could not separate himself from his family members, especially from his mother, cognitively and emotionally, which caused him to constantly fight with Esty. Yanky attempts to manage

his anxiety through his mother, as he is unable to confront it alone in most situations. Therefore, it is possible to talk about the concept of 'triangle' here. This has been effective in the emergence of an unhealthy marital relationship and ultimately in the end of this marriage. The triangle is seen in the dialogues in different scenes of the series (see Episode 1, Min. 43.00; Episode 3, Min. 14.12). Some examples of lines that can be explained with the concept of triangle are given below:

Episode 3 Min. 04.20: From the dialogue between Esty and her mother-in-law, who was unaware in the first days of her marriage, only her mother-in-law's sentences are listed below.

- 'You didn't do it again last night.'
- 'Of course. He tells me everything. I am his mother.'
- 'How many times have you tried?'
- 'I've brought something that will help (roughly). (...) Read the instructions. It makes it easy for the underside to be anything. You have to find a way before that kid loses your self-confidence. Do you understand?'
- 'Yanky should always feel like a king.'

Episode 3 Min. 38.05: Esty says the following sentences to Yanky:

- "Then tell your mother and sister not to check on us all the time (she gets up and says in a shaky voice). 'Are they going to get it done or is Esty at fault? 'Should they have direct IVF?' (Imitating them and shouting at the end). I hear your voice in my head, Yanky. How can we do it this way? Your whole family is in bed with us (loudly, crying)."

Episode 4 Min. 05.43: Convinced that Esty will not get pregnant, Yanky tells Esty the following sentences:

- 'My mom says it won't go on like this. I want to divorce. She tells me you will never be a good wife.'

Analysis 4: Episode 1 Min. 08:07

Thinking that Esty might have left home, Yanky shared the situation with his family, and after a while, Yanky's father said the following sentence:

- "Let's go talk to the Rabbi".

The fact that the father thinks that they should act in line with the views of the Rabbi while making comments is an indicator of 'low differentiation of self'. The lower the level of differentiation, the higher the need for one another. However, the concept of 'social emotional process/social regression' also influences the emergence of this situation. Their bride, Esty, runs away from home, affecting not only Yanky's family but also the congregation. This caused the anxiety to be experienced even more, and it was thought that the Rabbi, who was seen in the upper position, should be consulted. In the environment where there are people gathered around a table; the following words of the Rabbi will be evaluated:

Episode 1 Min. 15.12:

- 'Tell us all about your wife'.

As seen here, the Rabbi was given the authority to deal with private family matters by Yanky and his family. Yanky's giving information about his marriage in this sentence and his siblings' negative comments about his wife are indicative of a border violation in marriage. The fact that the member of the family, who is seen in the most vulnerable position, is Yanky, brings the concept of 'sister position' to us. In this scene, the enmeshment of family members and their involvement in each other's lives seems to be normalized. Parents with low self-differentiation tend to raise children with the same level of differentiation. It is observed that Yanky and his siblings were influenced by their parents. Therefore, the concept of 'family reflection process' emerges here.

Analysis 5: Episode 1 Min. 47.55

Esty's grandmother is someone who attributes holiness to marriage, sees it as a new beginning, and imposes these thoughts on Esty. A sentence that reflects this is as follows:

- 'Don't be afraid, Esty. You will be very happy.'

Grandmother and aunt's normalization of traditional mediation and ignoring individual demands can be explained by 'low differentiation of self'. Esty, on the other hand, does not approach the situation exactly like them, although they are her role models, and questions what her spouse is like, suggesting that the mixing of emotional and cognitive processes causes difficulties in distinguishing them.

Analysis 6: Episode 1 Min. 17.27

Before Esty and Yanky are introduced, Yanky's mother must approve of the bride-to-be. Esty and her aunt go to the market to let him see Esty. Below is the dialogue between them:

- 'Why did we come here?' (Esty)
- 'Miriam Shapiro wanted to see you.' (Aunt)
- 'How will I know it's him?' (Esty)

- 'You won't understand. Come on, walk like you're looking for something. Smiling.' (Aunt)

Marriages in this community occur around similar cycles to here. After the approval of the families, the spouse candidates, who are asked to talk alone for a short time, are expected to make a quick decision about marriage. Therefore, the fact that the previous relationship-communication patterns and the continuation of family traditions reveal the concept of 'generational transmission'. However, it is seen that Esty acts with the mission of eliminating the concerns of the other, not her own, and does not allow any room for 'differentiation'. Another statement in which this situation is seen:

Episode 1 Min 23.17:

- 'Don't forget, Esty, she (Yanky) will speak first.' (Aunt)

Analysis 7: Episode 1 Min. 23.58

Taken to a room, Esty and Yanky are left alone for a short time. Here are some excerpts from the dialogue:

- 'My father took me and my brothers to Europe last spring.' (Yanky)

- 'How excited.' (Esty)

- 'We visited the tombs of all the famous rabbis.' (Yanky)

- 'Did you go all the way to Europe and only see cemeteries? Didn't you go elsewhere?' (Esty)

- 'I wanted to but my father wouldn't let me.' (Yanky)

In this dialogue, Yanky's need for family members and his emotional captivity are seen. This can be explained by Yanky's 'low differentiation of self'. There is also a 'family projection process' as the father transfers his emotional problem to his children and treats Yanky as if there is something wrong. As a tradition, visiting the famous rabbis' tombs can be explained by the "generational transmission". There is another related scene in the series (see Episode 3 Min. 10.06).

In the continuation of this speech of Esty and Yanky, the following statement of Esty is considered important:

- 'But let me tell you from the beginning. I'm not like other girls. I mean, I'm normal, of course, but I'm different from other girls.'

Based on this discourse, it is thought that Esty, who has 'low differentiation of self', has a desire to differentiate, but tries to take precautions with the anxiety of not knowing how to realize it.

Analysis 8: Episode 1 Min. 22.40

Esty, who fled to Germany after the marital conflict, helps a group she met at the cafe carry coffee and goes with them to the conservatory. She meets a group of young people there, then watches their rehearsals, is very impressed and tears up. This attitude of Esty, who seems to want to be included in the group, can be explained with the concepts of 'generational transfer' and 'low differentiation of self'. There is a tendency here to join a new congregation that stirs up strong emotions. This is how the system has progressed for generations, so it is thought that this is also Esty's war, and she wants to see herself as part of a community if she wants to survive. Dialogue after rehearsal:

Episode 1 Min. 26.27:

- 'It was a great concert' (Esty)

- 'It was just a rehearsal.' (Yemeni student)

- 'It was the best thing I've ever heard in my life.' (Esty)

Here we come across the concept of 'social emotional process/social regression'. The community in which it belongs to the educational process, artistic-cultural activities, technological developments, etc. being detached is seen to be related to the anxiety felt that the individuals in this community may resemble others. When there is a social regression, individuals exhibit behaviors that will reduce their current anxiety instead of long-term predictions and cannot make logical decisions. Considering the impact of all these factors, it is clear that Esty cannot thrive in such artistic environments where she can fully reveal her potential. It is possible to see the reflections of 'social emotional process/social regression' in other scenes. For example, Episode 2 Introductory Scene: Before the wedding, without Esty's request on how to be a wife (Yanky's family is the deciding factor), a congregational woman who is thought to have no higher education can only train with Esty. She gives technical information about what Esty is going through, without focusing on her feelings. How to live sexuality is not left to the spouses. Example excerpt from the dialogue:

- 'The man is the giver and the woman is the taker. Do you understand? Therefore, the man should be at the top and the woman should be at the bottom. Every Friday night, you will have intercourse. If you're clean.'

Again, in a different part of the series, when Yanky and Esty could not have sexual intercourse for a while after marriage, this assigned woman again lists instructions on how to behave to Esty in order to solve the situation

against Esty's request. Here, too, it is observed that if a relationship problem arises, it is often attributed to the woman; when a problem between the couple and expert support is needed, it is not decided by the two individuals alone, but rather by important others. The woman seen in these two scenes presents the concept of 'triangles'. The tension between the two people is tried to be resolved by a third person. Esty, who is disturbed by this triangulation, cannot internalize the rules of the environment she is in and questions the situation, indicating that she is moving towards differentiation of self. Example discourse:

Episode 3 Min. 30.07: Esty tells the woman who orders her instructions, regardless of what she is experiencing or feeling:

- 'Is it my fault that sexuality is not realized?'

Despite asking this question, change is not easy. In fact, despite her questioning, Esty also carries out the instructions due to her continuing dependence on others, one of the factors associated with 'differentiation of self', which is influenced by the pressure on the emotional process of the society she lives in.

Analysis 9: Episode 1 Min. 33.29

Learning that the young people she met in Berlin are going to the lake together, Esty wants to go with them. When they reach the lake:

(...)

- 'Do you swim in this lake too?' (Esty)

- "A lake is a lake, it doesn't matter." (Robert)

Robert can be thought of as an example of 'differentiation' and separation. Even if he has different opinions from the average, he can easily express it. The same cannot be said for Esty. We can say that she is in a defensive position in the face of the reactions, and the sentences she has uttered are sentences that she has heard for years and that do not belong to her. As a matter of fact, if she had said it with real faith, she would not have been convinced after a while, and she would have taken off her wig and swum in the lake. When we examine Esty's family system and the congregation she is part of, we observe the dominance of the emotional system. In such an environment, since individuality remains in the background, the reaction of others can be effective on the individual. Therefore, generations of mourning in the system in which Esty grew up is carried on by Esty and those like her. Therefore, in the dialogues that take place both in the car and when they arrive at the lake, the concept of multigenerational transmission is seen.

Analysis 10: Episode 1 Min. 38.23

Moishe and Yanky go to the piano teacher's office to look for Esty. Dialogue between teacher and Yanky:

- 'You must be her husband.' (Teacher)

- 'Did she tell you about me?' (Yanky)

- 'She left the piano lessons for you.' (Teacher)

In her community, women aren't allowed to receive piano training. Yanky initially remained silent, but their relationship problems made Esty hope for more adaptability from not only Yanky and her family but also Esty's aunt as a woman. This increased pressure on her, leading her to sacrifice her own agency, falling within the 'emotional system of the nuclear family,' to sustain the marriage (see Episode 3, Min. 27.00)

Analysis 11: Episode 1 Min. 40.04

Dialogue between Moishe and Yanky after learning that Esty went to Germany:

- 'Yanky, let her see a start. She just took piano lessons from that infidel.' (Moishe)

- 'So what? There are bigger sins. Moskowitz takes his wife to bars (Yanky)

Here we come across the concept of 'emotional cutoff and emotional process in society'. In their society, increased generational interpersonal anxiety leads to self-imposed emotional isolation. Many opportunities provided by the modern world (such as women playing musical instruments, attending concerts, using smartphones, etc.) are viewed as improper.

Analysis 12: Episode 1 Min. 44.49

Leah comes to the wedding when she learns that Esty is getting married. Excerpts from the dialogue:

- 'You haven't been my mother since the day you left here.' (Esty)

- 'No. I will always be your mother. Wherever I go. I wanted to give you this.' (Leah)

- 'What is this?' (Esty)

- 'Document. She shows that she is a German citizen. Because my mom and dad were born there. In case you need a place to go.' (Leah whispers.)

- 'Somewhere to go? I am getting married. Do you not understand? I'm going to start a family with Yanky Shapiro. We're going to have a lot of kids. A real sink. I won't need a place to go. This is what I want.' (Esty)

In this dialogue, Esty's false self is contrasted with her mother's strong, independent ego. The concept of 'generational transmission' highlights the influence of family traditions on 18-year-old Esty's perception of marriage. She unquestioningly adopts societal expectations, displaying 'low differentiation of self' in her emotionally driven reactions to her mother. This reflects her resistance to conforming to the community's strict rules and her determination to live life on her terms. Additionally, Esty's attempt to sever emotional ties with her mother through physical distance and blaming her solely for their separation aligns with the concept of 'emotional cutoff.' Several scenes throughout the series illustrate Leah's high self-differentiation (see Episode 2, Min. 19.26; Episode 4, Min. 26.00, 35.19).

Analysis 13: Episode 2 Min. 13:30

Following Esty, Yanky, and Moishe's arrival in Germany, they settled in a hotel. Upon entering their room, they covered a woman's portrait on the wall and prayed in their traditional attire. Meanwhile, Esty explored a store, observing and imitating the women around her. This situation revealed Esty's 'low level of differentiation of self,' making her susceptible to external influences and prompting her to seek a new community after leaving her previous one (see Episode 3, Min. 06:25, 43:10). However, Esty also displayed efforts to progress toward 'differentiation of self.' She challenged societal norms by quoting from the holy book, sought a scholarship from a conservatory in Germany after leaving her husband, looked for employment, auditioned for singing roles, attempted to understand and reconcile with her mother (employing Bowen Family Therapy techniques like 'back to/from home'), resisted Moishe's threats, and more. These actions are evident in her speeches and actions throughout the series (see Episode 2, Min. 43.58; Episode 3, Min. 16.08, 18.42, 21.47, 34.14, 35.44, 37.25; Episode 4, Min. 22.49, 33.00, 40.50, 48.08). For example, in another scene.

Episode 2 Min. 37.00: Upon the invitation of a Yemeni student, Esty goes to the dormitory. His other friends are also there. Her reactions to being questioned about whether she ran away:

- 'Why did you leave?' (One of the students)
- 'We're not having job interviews here.' (Robert)
- '(...) Now I have to find my own way.' (Esty)

Here, too, it is seen that she moves towards 'differentiation of self' with the transition to the ego position. Because the questions, gestures and facial expressions of others could put pressure on Esty and cause emotional reactivity, but she encouraged others to be open and mature by expressing her own feelings and thoughts in an open and responsible way. While talking about Esty's escape from the house, the transition to the I position also appears when the grandmother says about Leah, who left her son at the time (see Episode 3, Min. 09:00).

Episode 4 Min. 42.07: Esty, who sees Yanky in front of her after the eliminations, goes for a walk with him. Excerpts from the dialogue:

- 'I didn't know you could sing like that' (Yanky)

Analysis 14: Episode 3 Min. 10.20

Excerpt from the dialogue between Yanky and Moishe:

- Even if we find Esty in this city, how do you know she'll come back?' (Yanky)
- They always come back. Look at me.' (Moishe)

Here too, with this sentence of Moishe, who escaped from the environment he was in but then returned, "emotional cut-off", one of the basic concepts of the approach, comes to mind. Although he tries to maintain emotional distance through physical distance, he cannot be successful in this regard. Moishe, who did not obey the rules of the congregation, resorted to the escape route to become an individual, but the lack of sufficient resources prevented him from doing so. His dilemma manifests itself when he breaks the rules (smoking, drinking alcohol, gambling, having sex outside of marriage) when he goes outside the congregation (see Episode 1 Min. 28.51; Episode 3 Min. 17.43, 19.48). Below are some examples of the anxiety created by the desire for fusion and extreme individualization in Moishe. These dialogs are shown below.

Episode 4 Min. 07.45: Moishe enters the canal naked and shouts 'God help!'

Episode 4 Min. 20.05: Although Moishe, who kidnapped Esty and tried to intimidate her in a park, does not admit it, she conveys her own experiences and reflects her anxiety.

- What are you going to do here? You have no skills, no money, no experience, no acquaintances. The world is a scary place. He still has some money in his pocket. Your body is still warm thanks to what Yanky has provided. Wait a few months. Let's talk again while you're a world away from those who love you, starving in the cold.' (Moishe)

Analysis 15: Episode 4 Min. 44.30

While talking to Yanky in his hotel room, he gives her a gift and tries to kiss her. Some excerpts from the dialogue:

- 'When you sang that song today, I thought of our wedding. We were very happy that day.' (Yanky)
- 'I was happy because I thought marrying you would be the beginning of a new life.' (Esty)
- 'Everything will be different when we have a child.' (Yanky)
- 'It's too late, Yanky. Do you not understand? It's too late now.' (Esty)

In this dialogue, the concept of the 'nuclear family emotional process' is seen. The most important reason for Yanky to go after his wife is that he learns that his wife is pregnant. The fact that he gave up on divorce is that he thinks that they can reach the concept of the holy family with this child. Yanky tries to eliminate the tension between them by focusing attention on another area (child), one of the mechanisms defined in the nuclear family emotional process. Esty, on the other hand, does not want this because Esty, who is on her way to 'differentiation of self', no longer acts emotionally focused like Yanky, but prefers to progress in the rational dimension. She is aware of what will happen. In order to solve the problems experienced in Esty's marriage, seen throughout the series, among the mechanisms we encounter in the concept of 'the emotional system/process of the nuclear family', we come into conflict, sacrifice one's own functions, distance ourselves from each other (emotional first), and focus attention on another area (she believed that all problems would be solved once she got pregnant. However, when she learned that she was pregnant and went to tell her husband happily, Yanky said that she wanted a divorce, and on top of that, she ran away from home without saying that she was pregnant). However, since she could not get a result and although Yanky said that he would come and change, she knew that he would not get any results, so she finally used the mechanism of distance from each other (this time physical).

As a result, if the false egos of Esty and Yanky were married, and the process was in line with the congregation's and the families' expectations, that is, if the holy family system were immediately adopted with a child, the marriage of these false egos might have been high. In fact, Esty has both an autonomy pattern from her mother and a fusion pattern from her father, although we cannot find detailed information on her mother's side. Since she was separated from her mother for years and remained under the influence of her father's side and the community until the age of 18, the pattern of autonomy she received from her mother was suppressed by Esty from time to time, although it appears from time to time, because it can be said that dominance was in a fusion pattern. However, the increase in conflicts in marriage and the pressure on Esty provoked the pattern of excluded autonomy in her inner world, and this pattern gradually gained strength. Thus, the false ego had to gradually begin to give way to the coherent one. While Yanky remained in low differentiation of self with the dominance of the fusion pattern inherited from both parents, Esty progressed towards higher differentiation of self.

DISCUSSION

Within the field of family therapy, it is imperative to comprehend the dynamics of relationships that extend beyond individual persons and encompass the interactions among these individuals. The positional dynamics of family members in relation to one another play a pivotal role in understanding both the harmony and tension that exist within these relational systems. In certain instances, this entails recognizing that the relationships involve more than just two individuals (Bowen, 1976; Rabstejnek, 2009). It is crucial to consider the potential formation of triangles when the tension between parties exceeds their capacity to manage it effectively. In the Unorthodox series, we observe the presence of a common triangle found in traditional cultures: the bride, mother-in-law, and son triangle. Additionally, in cases of close relationships, we witness Esty's connection with her husband and her subsequent attraction to another individual. The series serves as an illustrative portrayal of how triangulation manifests across various relationship dynamics.

Understanding the variations in family relationships, ranging from emotional distance to cohesion, and comprehending the levels of balance, involves gaining insight into the emotional systems and stressors within the family structure (Bowen, 1976; 1978; Rabstejnek, 2009). Cultural factors can significantly influence how families define themselves and shape their expectations. In some cases, individuality is encouraged, while in others, adherence to traditions and societal expectations may take precedence (Bowen, 1976). The Unorthodox series presents a compelling portrayal of Esty's transformative journey, as she navigates between her authentic self and a constructed one. This journey is influenced by the stark contrasts between the cultural norms of the community

she was raised in and those of the country she seeks refuge in. Esty's experiences exemplify situations where her sense of self undergoes a profound shift, transitioning from conformity to authenticity.

Family dynamics extend far beyond superficial appearances. The intricate interplay between emotional and intellectual dimensions, relational positioning, and self-definition is profoundly influenced by preceding generations (Bowen, 1976). The Unorthodox series portrays Esty's journey through the complexities of her marital relationship and her interactions with her mother, which exhibit both functional and conflict-ridden situations. Examples of emotional pressures arising from sexuality and the expectations surrounding childbearing in her marriage are evident, as are the inevitable conflicts that arise within the relationship. This narrative also provides glimpses into the emotional system of the nuclear family, wherein external stressors and anxieties, such as the mother-in-law and the community, contribute to the intricate dynamics. As Esty distances herself physically and emotionally from her mother by leaving her marriage, community, and her former self, her resentment towards her mother is conveyed through her coldness and emotional detachment, embodying the phenomenon of emotional cut-off. This highlights the notion that severed relationships can maintain their influence despite the absence of direct emotional connection. It serves as a reminder that severed relationships do not necessarily entail physical separation or proximity but can continue to exert their impact even across great distances (Rabstejnek, 2009).

The intergenerational approach can be defined as the invisible side of the family at the same time. In the series Unorthodox, it also offers the opportunity to evaluate the behavioral patterns brought about by the community culture and the level of differentiation among community members. Things carried over from previous generations to the present are effective in reducing the level of differentiation. Family secrets and traumas are one of them (Lieberman, 1981). With the sibling position, it is possible to understand which child is chosen in the family or has different characteristics (Bowen, 1976). It can be said that the emphasis on sibling status is limited to the fact that Esty is an only child. At the point where the family is more than meets the eye, the reflection of social processes should also be taken into account. Societies acting on an emotional level are also effective in how differentiation is experienced. By presenting life examples from two different countries, the series also presents material in this sense.

Bowen Family Therapy offers a framework with its defined concepts in understanding the existing patterns of interrelationship in the family. It is an approach that provides the opportunity to observe the emotional events of the family (Winek, 2009). Considering that clinical studies support the effectiveness of this approach and maintain its validity across different cultures (Mehrabi & Veshki, 2021; Miller et al., 2004; Tuason & Friedlander, 2000; Yektatalab et al., 2016), it becomes even more important in family counseling education. In this approach, where insight into family dynamics stands out, the approach guides with its conceptual framework at the point of how the therapist can be positioned by focusing on a target (Winek, 2009). In this approach, where historical context and past experiences play a vital role, it is crucial for the therapist to determine the appropriate focus and style of guidance. At this point, it can be said that change is a circular process consisting of three steps: family's response to change and dealing with family's response to change (McGoldrick & Carter, 2001; Winek, 2009).

Creative and supportive methods, such as movie/series analysis, in integrating more than one concept from the theoretical level into practice, offer the opportunity to progress with an integrated model in the education process. While the family model presented within the scope of the movie/series provides a follow-up process, it can be ensured that an understanding of the family and the practice of theoretical problem-solving can be increased within the framework of the approach to specially defined situations. To manage the anxiety that may be experienced in practice, it can be ensured that theoretical teaching is supported by the applications. If it is carried out with supervision, it can be supported to increase the sense of competence by reducing the confusion and uncertainties that the student may experience with supportive content (McCollum, 1990). The learning process also enables students to understand their own family dynamics within the context of professional issues. In addition, to effectively use this therapy in Bowen Family Therapy, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of one's own family processes. It will also help transform perspectives into learning processes supported by mutual inquiry processes, facilitated by instructors or supervisors. Moreover, it will enable students to take an active role in the process of building their own professional identities. The movie/series(s) in which the emotional process manifests itself also provides awareness about how personal experiences are transferred to professional lives (Carlson & Erickson, 2001; Nel, 2006; Stratton, 2005). Considering that the therapists' own unresolved family processes may

reflect on today, the movie/series(s) without a therapeutic relationship become even more important for the therapist to resolve their own personal issues (Carlson & Erickson, 2001).

CONCLUSION

Movies and series serve as powerful tools for understanding real-life experiences and imparting scientific and behavioral knowledge (Fennell, 2013; Kavan & Burne, 2009). They are particularly effective in developing analytical and reflective thinking skills (Dermer & Hutchings, 2000; Kavan & Burne, 2009). In recent years, the use of films in counselor training has emerged as an important teaching method (Higgins & Dermer, 2001; Koch & Dollarhide, 2000). Considering that Bowen's theory revolves around emotions and reflections, utilizing movies or series can provide support by evoking emotions (Fennell, 2013). Films and series offer a visual medium through which concepts can be easily learned. As an audience, students can engage in experiential learning by immersing themselves in the material (Naidu, 2012). In the context of family therapy, movies and series enable therapists to observe potential risks of becoming entangled in their own family processes from a safe distance. They provide an opportunity to evaluate coping processes and practice maintaining objectivity (Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). Thus, in Bowen Family Therapy, the concepts of fusion and emotional distance can also be experienced through the positioning of becoming too involved in the material or remaining too distant. By activating both the emotional and intellectual aspects, movies and series enable analysis within safe boundaries, utilizing unbiased material that aligns with the therapeutic setting. Furthermore, the diverse effects of the same material on different audiences can serve as metaphorical examples of how individuals can be impacted differently by relationships and situations within the same family. Films and series also offer the advantage of capturing the temporal dimension by emphasizing the changes experienced by characters throughout their journeys (Dermer & Hutchings, 2000). The Unorthodox series, which exemplifies intergenerational transitions within a family, aids therapists in defining goals and concepts that will be addressed within the therapeutic framework. By depicting family problems and presenting examples of characters' lives, the series incorporates scenes where different cultures converge, thereby incorporating both culture-specific elements and shared experiences.

SUGGESTIONS

Although the cultural diversity of the “Unorthodox” series provides a richness in the learning material, the understanding of the characters and the adaptation process to cultural diversity may require the educator to offer more support for those who are unfamiliar with the culture in question. Being subtitled may create a need for supporting resources in terms of language competence and understanding of different cultural elements. Based on experiential learning processes and materials, it is believed that there is a need for studies that investigate the methods used in the learning environment within the family counseling education process experimentally or through qualitative methods. In this process, how students shape their professional identity definitions and the effect of their family dynamics on their educational processes can also be investigated within the scope of the materials. Finally, this series can be reconsidered by researchers in the context of Bowen Family Therapy techniques and the concepts of Psychodynamic Family Therapy.

Limitations

The limitation of the study is that it does not include the techniques of Bowen Family Therapy in order to avoid extending the text.

Statements of Publication Ethics

Istanbul Medipol University Social Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee approved the research.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

Authors	Literature review	Method	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Results	Conclusion
Author 1	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐
Author 2	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐	☒

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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