

**Movie:** *King Kong* (2005)

## **Synopsis**

Welcome aboard an unforgettable trip to Skull Island! *King Kong* is a giant monster movie that follows the journey of Ann Darrow, a struggling actress who agrees to star in a new film. Darrow and her fellow co-stars travel via steamship to the mysterious Skull Island. Upon arrival, Darrow is kidnapped by a native of the island prompting a frantic search by the rest of the crew. While held captive by the natives, Darrow is pulled loose and taken by King Kong, an ape of incredible size. The movie chronicles a series of epic fights between Kong and dinosaurs in an effort to protect Darrow. When the crew finally finds Darrow, they subdue Kong out of fear and decide to bring him on a journey back to New York City. Back in NYC, mayhem ensues as the giant ape searches for his love interest. From flipping over taxis to climbing the Empire State Building to fend off navy planes, King Kong certainly makes his mark in this adventure film!

## **How it relates to the field of psychiatry**

*King Kong* explores the dynamic relationship between a violent ape and a female victim held against her will. The movie begins with Kong taking Darrow captive, inducing a state of extreme fear and anxiety about her well-being. As the film progresses, Darrow begins to feel affection towards Kong, eventually doing everything in her power to try and save him.

Darrow's feelings reinforce the "Beauty & the Beast" motif; a hostage feeling sympathy towards his/her captor, a psychological phenomenon known as the Stockholm syndrome. This syndrome is rooted in Freudian theory where individuals will identify with a criminal in order to protect their superego. The superego, according to Freud, is based on the reality principle. The reality principle is the mind's ability to assess the reality of the external world, and act upon it accordingly. Protection of the ego is achieved when the victim can share the same values as his/her aggressor. In this film, the unlikely relationship that develops depicts the attempt of Darrow's traumatized brain to rationalize negative external feelings in an effort to protect her ego.

**Keywords:** action, adventure, anxiety, ape, dinosaur, superego, ego, id, Freud, King Kong, Beauty & the Beast, Stockholm syndrome, trauma

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