FILM THERAPEUTICS: A POSSIBILITY OF ASSISTANCE

Terapéutica fílmica: una posibilidad de asistencia

Jeel MOYA-SALAZAR1,2; Betsy CAÑARI1; Lucia GOMEZ-SAENZ1; Alonso ZORRILLA1; Hans CONTRERAS-PULACHE1

1Escuela de Medicina Humana, Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud, Universidad Privada Norbert Wiener, Lima (Perú).
2Hospital Nacional Docente Madre Niño San Bartolomé, Lima (Perú).

Email: hans.contreras@uwiener.edu.pe

Abstract:
There is a notable activity of the cinema within the medical training processes promoting the development of multiple inherent skills. In this study, we present a proposal for film therapy in the complementary context of current medical care. We review series of aforesaid, broadcast around the 70’s, consisting of short chapters (~25 minutes). Series like Candy Candy, Marco, or Heidi, have marked differences from modern series, and the potential to be therapeutic instruments in themselves due to: i) presenting specific characters (a boy or a girl in particular, in a specific context), ii) the existence of an argumentative story (which is followed chapter by chapter, which forces the child to recreate a story longitudinally), iii) the approach to existential problems (the lives of the characters force them to live limit situations, usually linked to the historical conditions of their time); and iv) the experience of experiences of a moral nature (involving a discussion of good and bad). These could link the child and the father, since each chapter represents an activity of daily life, exempting them from the mass transmission of series without educational (therapeutic) content.

Keywords: cinema; therapy; series; neurology; parental assistance.

Resumen:
Existe una remarcada actividad del cine dentro de los procesos de formación médica promoviendo el desarrollo de múltiples habilidades inherentes. En este estudio, presentamos una propuesta de terapéutica fílmica en el contexto complementario de la asistencia médica actual. Revisamos series de antaño, emitidas alrededor de los 70’s, que constan de capítulos cortos (~25 minutos). Series como Candy Candy, Marco, o Heidi, tienen marcadas diferencias de las series contemporáneas, y el potencial de ser instrumentos terapéuticos en sí mismos debido a: i) presentar
Introduction

It would be useless to highlight the value of the Journal of Medical Movies. Useless because it does not need, from here, to be highlighted: it shines alone. It does not require praise or congratulations. But thanks. For those of us who see in the cinema a great artifact as a constructor of imaginaries, then, having this space specifically linked to medicine represents a place to inhabit without counting time. It is true that film can help medical students, and medical professionals, to improve their critical, clinical and insight skills. However, there is one more fact that has not yet been explored: the cinema as a therapeutic tool in itself. Not just the cinema, to learn some aspect of medicine, but the cinema as medicine itself. Cinema as a medical tool in the fight against pain, suffering, and death. Cinema as a therapeutic instrument, in medicine: a filmic therapy.

Here, we present a proposal for film therapy in the complementary context of current medical care, discussing the characteristics of animated programs, how they can impact patients, and discussing their progressive changes up to the current technological age.

Our Field of Work

We are going to specify the field from which we are orienting ourselves. In modern times, one of the great social dilemmas is the one experienced within families. Especially when there are infants and children; especially when fathers and mothers, subjected to the inclemency of competitive modernity, must spend a lot of time in the workplace, leaving in the background (still regretfully) the formative exercise of fatherhood and motherhood.

For those of us who treat families with infants and children, practical evidence always pops up: many parents live with electronic communication devices (for example: a television, a cell phone, a tablet, etc.). Fathers/mothers sometimes find use of these devices, but mostly: they are subjected to its onslaught. In the particular case: almost everyone, if not: everyone, infants and children, watches television, in some cases they watch movies, but more frequently they watch (one or several hours a day) animated programs.

Children ages 2-5 and 6-8 have previously been reported to consume ~35 and ~28 hours of television per week respectively. And although the negative effects are striking, television has also been attributed arguably positive effects on the development of child users. This cumulative impact of television can be summarized, for example, in the role of advertising so that the intake of fast food has increased in children.

When we see a child eating in a restaurant in front of a cell phone, the first thing we feel is a mistake. But more precisely we should see in this situation the manifestation of a defeat: the electronic communication device has won a battle.
in the active execution of paternity / maternity. In other words, technologies, technological devices such as mobile phones, have become an organic extension, a perennial prosthesis, an almost intrinsic structure of our body.6

But here we do not want to refer only to restaurants, but above all to homes: where privacy is diversified to unsuspected limits (and that are only glimpsed with the exercise of a clinical practice: seeing, treating patients). Cartoons are described as one of the most interesting and entertaining modes of conveying animated messages.

**Repeat Candy**

On the other hand, for those of us who have been on earth for a few decades, a singular fact assails us: contemporary animated programs are far from the animated programs of yesteryear. We say «yesteryear» without this bringing us any aftertaste of manners or conservatism. Currently an animated program can be characterized as: a 30- or 60-minute session, peppered with a lot of commercial advertising. Or is it 30 or 60 minutes of propaganda peppered with animated shows? Whatever: contemporary animated series enjoy the intensity of the image, the none-historicality of the plot, the extreme fiction of the characters (full tendency towards caricatures), among other things.7,8 All this makes an infant or child who watches a contemporary animated program consume blurb, in other hand, and on the other, be seduced by the eroticism of «cartoons». Usually, each program is a program in itself, each session, rather: one session begins and ends, and the next day another session begins and ends. The only thing that survives is the program, but not the plot (the plot is defined in each chapter, in each broadcast, in each session that begins and ends in a sea of propaganda).

The most essential difference from cartoons of yesteryear is that modern characters are essentially abstract (in contrast to ancient characters who sought to be quite concrete: think «Courage, the Cowardly Dog» and in «Remi» –who has a cow for a companion–, in «Heidy» –who lives with the calves–, in «Angel» –who travels the world with one purpose: to find a seven-colored flower–) . On the other hand, contemporary animated series do not require that the child follow the sequence of the sessions. There is no sequence, there is no series, and the chapters are usually independent chapters: this makes it easier for any viewer to «get hooked» on the animated program at any time during its broadcast, and not need to: «know the story» or «understand the narrative plot.»

Many parents watch these shows with their children, get to know them, even have fun and laugh watching them. However, little or nothing can later talk with their sons or daughters about it. They can spend half an hour being shaken by the same stimulus, but after this «exposition» ends, nothing remains to allow the dialogical relationship of fatherhood / motherhood.

**Old Series**

As far as possible, current fragmental television has tried, joining efforts with various interests, to demolish what little that progressively diminished on media quality. If the quality imaginary of the series of yesteryear is rescued, we can refer, as we do below, the representations of each series and its substructures, which attributed affection to us (and they still impute us) and an established connection not only with the transmitted series, if not with the group concerned with the plot of each television story: We will describe below, the essential components of each series that constitute its argument and its essence, represented below in images.

**Remi**

**Nobody’s Boy: Remi/ Ie Naki Ko (1977), Ozamu Dezaki.**

In 1977 Remi, Nobody’s Child, was created by TMS Entertainment, I base its argument on the
French novel Sans Famille by H. Marlot, which had more than fifty episodes that were 25 minutes long each. This series was broadcast by Nippon Television for Japan (broadcast period: October 2, 1977 - October 1, 1978).

**Heidi**

*Heidi, Girl of the Alps / Arupusu no Shōjo Haiji (1974) / Isao Takahata*

The Japanese animation studio «Zuiyo Eizo» (currently Nippon Animation) and, in conjunction with the German channel Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, premiered on January 5, 1974 the children's series: «Heidi, the girl from the Alps». The story is set in the 19th century, long before the First World War (1914) and even before the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871); It is inspired by the homonymous book by Johanna Spyri (1827-1901), a work based on her childhood.

**Anne**

*Anne of Green Gables / Akage no An (1979) / Isao Takahata*

Anne of Green Gables, Anne of Green Gables or Anne of Green Gables is a book written by...
Canadian Lucy Maud Montgomery and published for the first time in 1908. The work tells the life of Anne Shirley, an orphan girl who thanks to her imaginative and awakened character manages to dazzle all the inhabitants of Avonlea, the small fictional fishing village on Prince Edward Island where the story takes place at the beginning of the 20th century.

For this reason, as soon as we immerse ourselves in history, we are involved in a context where it is not possible to perceive any industrial technology. And in this way, we approach a fantastic series that, in turn, is so alien to the fantastic, since the protagonists incarnate us as they teach us how one person can influence the life of another so much. Thus, Heidi exposes joy, innocence, freedom. Clara Sesemann represents the effort, the defenseless. The grandfather, Tobias Hessen, loneliness. Throughout this framework of war and union, the characters show different types of coexistence, gratitude, fun, irony and detail; and in contrast, selfishness, the unexpected, sadness, and shocking despair at being deprived of their source or concept of happiness.

The rest of the book recounts her education in school, where she soon excelled in her studies, her literary ambitions and her friendships with other girls such as Diana Barry (her best friend), Jane Andrews or Ruby Gillis, and her manifest rivalry with Gilbert Blythe, a boy three years older than Ana who dared to make a joke about her hair and acquired the hatred of the redhead in return, although he repeatedly asked her forgiveness. The book also follows Ana’s misadventures in peaceful Avonlea. These include her games with her group of friends (Diana, Jane and Ruby), her rivalries with the Pye sisters (Gertie and Josie), and her domestic mistakes, such as dyeing her hair green, among others.

**Marco**

*Marco, from the Apennines to the Andes / Haha o Tazunete Sanzenri (1976)/ Isao Takahata*

*Marco, from the Apennines to the Andes* is a short account included in the novel *Corazón* by Edmundo de Amicis published in 1886, which describes the inclement vision of Italian emigration to America, between the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

This 52-episode anime was first aired in 1976 in Japan. The series narrates the life of a family from Genoa, Italy, made up of a mother with two children, the youngest and youngest named...
Marco. The story begins when the mother is forced to travel to Argentina to get a job and provide financial solvency and a better quality of life for her two children who reside in Genoa. The brothers receive correspondence from the mother, from America, until gradually they have not heard from her in a period of two years.

Because of this, 13-year-old Marco decides to face a long and complicated journey from Italy to Argentina in order to find his mother. Marco, accompanied by Pepino his monkey, begins his journey that includes unique experiences, the discovery of characters with different characteristics demonstrating the differences between customs and realities of each season of the trip. Then in Argentina, he travels through various cities including Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Tucumán to find his mother.

Candy Candy

*Candy Candy/ Hiroshi Shidara (1975)*

More than four decades ago, the Japanese study *Toei Animation* premiere Candy Candy, broadcast for the first time in October 1976, being one of the main and Cosmopolitan animes that for decades has conquered children with its hundred episodes of 25 minutes each.

This anime tells in 115 chapters the story of an orphan girl named Candy, found on a snowy day at the beginning of the 20th century. It’s in the orphanage *Ponys home* near Lake Michigan, where she grows up with her great friend Annie, orphaned and found the same day as her. They become inseparable friends until the day they decide to adopt Candy, who without hesitation and remembering the promise of inseparableness with Annie refuses to be adopted. However, the adoptive parents in this situation decide to adopt Annie, who unlike Candy accepts without hesitation and leaves the orphanage.

Figure 5. Infogram about Candy Candy.

At 12 years old, Candy is adopted by the Leagan family to accompany her two children Elisa and Neil, who treated her very badly, even turning her into a servant, they even accused her of robbery and tried to send her to a family farm. She went to Mexico to work, but was saved by William Adley who was Candy’s adoptive father. Candy lives with a pet (Klin) who sustains her sadness before the *go and come* that life offers you. Although Candy’s life unfolds between misery and the advent of existential problems, at the same time she is surrounded by people who held her in high esteem like Archie, Anthony, or Terry.

The rebel novice

*Torappu ikka monogatari/ Közō Kusuba, Közō Kuzuha (1991)*

In 1991 it was issued for the first time in Japanese language *The rebellious novice*. A series created by Nipón Animation. Also known as *Smiles and tears*, this series tells the story of an 18-year-old girl named María who wishes to be a nun and dedicates all her years of life to God, however,
her energetic and fun personality is noticed by the Mother Superior. For this reason, she is taken for a time to the house of Baron Von Trapp as the governess of his children. This widowed man and in that house 25 governesses had been hired, all of whom were rejected by their children; however, María with her joy, poetry and song managed to win the respect and hearts of the family members.

Her attempt to compromise with Baron Von Trapp is threatened by World War II and the control taken by the Nazis causes the family to migrate to Switzerland. The 40 Episodes of this series begin with the chapter I want to be a nun and he ends up with the last Goodbye homeland.

Figure 6. Infogram about the rebel novice

Animated Cinema of Old

In this regard we are going to specify that cinema (in particular the animated series of the 70s and 80s, which we call «of yesteryear», almost unanimously elaborated as first works of those that later (until today) would become in the great representatives of Japanese animated cinema. For example: Isao Takahata, who later became one of the emblems of the studio Ghibli (Tokyo, Japan), along with Hayao Miyasaki. What we are saying is that these series (for example: «Heidi, the girl from the Alps», «Marco», «The Rebel Novice», «Candy Candy», «Remi», «Annie, the one from the Green Gables» , among others) represent an educational tool (which can more simply facilitate the roles of fatherhood and motherhood) essentially, because unlike contemporary animated series, they show the following 4 momentous events, without saying that these are the only ones:

- Specific characters (a particular boy or girl, in a specific context);
- There is an argumentative story (there is a plot that must be followed chapter by chapter, which forces the child to longitudinally recreate a story);
- Existential problems are addressed (the lives of the characters - specific - force them to live extreme situations, usually linked to the historical conditions of their time); and
- Usually the character (a boy or girl) lives a series of experiences of a moral nature (which involve a discussion about the good and the bad).

We consider that these elements (without the need to affirm that they are the only ones that exhaust the subject) allow us to clearly differentiate the experience of a boy or girl who watches, for example: «Marco» and that for the same reason he must recreate in his «mind» (we would rather say: in his conscience) a whole story full of momentous vicissitudes, and the experience of the same boy or girl who watches, for example: «The Paw Patrol», «Rick and Morty» or «Gravity Falls». It seems that the evolution of «children’s» animated series has followed a course: sacrificing the aspiration to reflect a real problem in order to provide (to the propaganda) a session of «adventure», fun, laughter, mockery, caricature, and superficiality.

Do you really think that a boy or girl watching «Gravity Falls» manages to learn about the «Mysteries in Latin America» (remember that the full title of the series is: «Gravity Falls: A Summer of Mysteries in Latin America»)?

The worst is not here, for those of us who have patients who are specific people: it jumps out that contemporary animated series are essentially a space to be seen by children and that they can also
be seen by parents, but that after seeing them:
the construction of paternity / maternity is not
promoted at all, although it has been highlighted
to be moving and intelligent\textsuperscript{9, 10}.

Attention, with this we do not want to be
conservative, we do not want to affirm «the old
series were better», we do not want to criticize
television, we are not even saying that cinema
should be utilitarian or that fatherhood / mother-
hood should be subjected to television nor other
electronic communication devices (an application
or YouTube on any cell phone, for example).

We are only highlighting that when creating
fatherhood / motherhood, at least two subjects
are required: one in the position of adulthood and
the other in the position of childhood, and that
the modern time of post-capitalist globalization, or
as they say: late capitalism, has subdued the time
of people who as adults go through parenthood /
motherhood. And when that time finally manages
to establish itself: it is parasitized by a television
set, or more modernly, by a simple cell phone or
Tablet. That it is said everywhere that a boy or
girl should not have a Tablet and that this propo-
sal is categorically affirmed does not stop being
an aspiration, what in the world there are boys
and girls who do not need to have a cell phone
or Tablet or a television: if they don’t have it,
parents do (they make an effort to do so, it is a
sign of reputation to have a good cell phone, of
competitive success, etc.). We are not going to
fall into the rhetoric of repeating: the cell phone
and the Tablet are «bad», we are not going to
waste time like that, more specifically we want to
highlight that in the 70s onwards, animated series
were produced, radically different from contem-
porary animated series. Faced with the excess of
visual and auditory stimulation of contemporary
animation, there are classic images (inspired by
the manga developed by Tezuka), with works of
a deep human character (too human), and that
can promote conversation and dialogue between
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parents / mothers e children (boys and girls), espe-
cially now that there is a culture of promotion of
Japanese culture and anime\textsuperscript{11}.

• However, the current information society is
avoiding interpersonal relationships, which
are mainly reflected in the family. The perma-
nent extraversion with technology is dra-
matically breaking into the social environment,
and this is promoting that children are more
willing towards technological devices, making
it difficult to interact with other subjects.
Parents must first tackle this contingency with
peripheral tools to technology or technology
with another focus of use \textit{a priori}. Recently, it
has been shown that parents are more likely
to interact with their children under 12 years
of age through anime\textsuperscript{12}. So, animes represent
a novel strategy of interaction, in a greater
sense than just the contemplation of cartoons
for the purposes of education of values and
society, as previously indicated\textsuperscript{13}.

• In this sense, cinema, in particular: animated
series are therapeutic instruments in them-
selves. They not only serve to learn medicine,
but they also serve to do with them what
medicine, we believe, intends from its deepest
bosom: to rework suffering.
Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the participation of Anie Soriano-Abal and Samanta Picón from the Norbert Wiener University, Matilda Contreras from the Pedro Ortiz Cabanillas Documentation Center, and Andrea Mija from the Faculty of Education of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, for their support in structuring graphs.

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Betsy Cañari Ccoica. Estudiante de cuarto año de la facultad de Medicina Humana de la Universidad Norbert Wiener, Lima Perú. Miembro del equipo de investigación de estudiantes de Medicina en Neurociencias aplicadas.

