

Institution: University of Dundee		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Care Home as Cinematic Community: Enhancing Wellbeing through Film		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr. Ana Salzberg	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer in Film Studies and Visual Culture	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2014 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2016 to 2020 (ongoing)		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact

Qualitative research into spectatorship in social film screenings has benefited multiple groups in the care home sector. The research has improved the emotional, physical, and social well-being of care home residents in the Angus and Tayside region; it has influenced practice in participating care homes in order to optimise residents' viewing experience and has changed the perceptions of staff in regard to the value of film. As a result of the research, national regulatory body the Care Inspectorate has come to consider film screenings as a meaningful activity that can improve standards of care in homes for the elderly.

2. Underpinning research

This project combines cross-disciplinary research in humanities, health and social sciences to heighten awareness of film screenings as a meaningful activity in care homes. Salzberg's work on spectatorship established the specific nature of the embodied experience of classic film. This insight was at the heart of a co-created piece of action research conducted in collaboration with colleagues from health and social sciences (Breckenridge UoA3 and Kroll [Cat B] UoA3).

Insights from Salzberg's work in Film Studies provided the foundation for this project. In her monograph [R1], she argued for an embodied understanding of classic Hollywood cinema; privileging, that is, the sensory impact of studio-era productions over more rigid psychoanalytic models of identification. In this way, Salzberg's work was especially helpful for engaging with individuals suffering from cognitive / communication impairments: though such residents might not have followed the narrative of the film, the research team understood that classic film held a more physically charged appeal. Similarly, Salzberg has explored the way that the near-instant accessibility of these films in the digital age intensifies the sense of intimacy between star and spectator [R1, R2]. This, in turn, supported the team's ability to help frontline staff reconsider and maximise the value of their existing DVD libraries for residents dealing with loneliness or isolation.

Together, the work of Salzberg, Breckenridge and Kroll has underpinned the present project's exploration of aesthetic experience in care settings. Breckenridge's (2017) work 'Two to Tanka' provided insights into the use of poetry as a reflexive dialogical tool to help heighten nursing and healthcare practitioners' sensitivity to, and empathy with, those suffering from domestic abuse and other sensitive issues. In related terms, Kroll and colleagues (2016) analysed the psychosocial benefits of participation in arts programmes as

part of stroke rehabilitation, concluding that such programmes benefit both social interaction and social identity.

Collectively, their research generated a pilot study which received funding from the Carnegie Trust. The limited existing research on the topic of film in care homes had predominantly examined the use of short clips and printed images of stars to stimulate reminiscence for people with dementia; by contrast, our study was the first study in the UK to explore the effects of watching full-length feature films in their entirety in dedicated screenings. The team organised social film screenings in two regional care homes over a 6-week period. The pilot work involved residents selecting and viewing films and engaging in post-screening group discussion, and the findings were drawn from focus groups, individual interviews with staff and residents, and researchers' observations.

Three core insights were identified [R3]. Firstly, the team found that film supports residents as they remember the past. Classic films are a popular choice for residents because they facilitate personal and shared reminiscence. Watching familiar, as opposed to new, films also aids functional memory and places less burden on residents with cognitive impairment. At the same time, the team found that the value of social screenings lies not solely in their links to the past; indeed, film enhances residents' experience of the present through active, sensory engagement. Finally, film screenings allowed residents to look towards the future: the shared experience lasts beyond the screening itself and promotes a sense of community and social belonging. Scheduling regular screenings builds anticipation and excitement and gives residents an activity to look forward to. This is an opportunity rarely afforded to older people at the end of their lives.

A peer-reviewed article [R3] highlights the innovations of the study: exploring enjoyment, selfhood and social connectivity rather than narrowly focusing on residents' ability to comprehend and attend to film material; and utilising qualitative methods to seek residents' views rather than using survey and observational methods.

3. References to the research

[R1] Salzberg, A. (2014) *Beyond the Looking Glass: Narcissism and Female Stardom in Studio-Era Hollywood* Oxford: Berghahn Books

[R2] Salzberg, A. (2015) 'How long does it take?': The Resurrection of Marilyn Monroe and *Something's Got to Give* (1962). *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 32 (4) pp. 355-366 DOI: [10.1080/10509208.2015.999219](https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2015.999219)

[R3] Breckenridge, J.P., Kroll, T., Wylie, G., Salzberg, A. (2020) 'Remembering the past, enhancing the present and sharing the future: a qualitative study of the impact of film screenings in care home communities' *Ageing and Society*, pp.1-26 DOI: [10.1017/S0144686X20000501](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X20000501)

Funding

Research Incentive Grant of £6,165, Carnegie Trust: "Care Home as Cinematic Community: Enhancing Social Connectivity through Film." (Feb – Nov 2016) PI: Salzberg; Co-investigators: Kroll, Breckenridge, Wylie.

4. Details of the impact

During 2016-2020 the research has engaged with residents and staff in a total of six care homes across Angus and Tayside, leading directly to social, physical, and emotional benefits for residents; it has changed the ways in which care homes understand and use film, as well as their management of associated resources. The project has generated impacts from its earliest phase as a pilot study, with subsequent expansion through support

from national regulatory bodies The Scottish Social Services Council, and the Care Inspectorate.

In 2016 The Scottish Social Services Council published an interview with Drs. Salzberg and Breckenridge, as well as distributing their project summary leaflet to all care homes in Scotland via an online newsletter. This enabled researchers to establish a collaboration with the Care Inspectorate, which sponsored a series of improvement workshops based on the research.

Benefits to Residents

The project has changed the ways in which care homes use film. Prior to the research, homes typically adopted a variable definition of the ‘film’ (using it to refer to anything from YouTube clips of animals and musical concerts to episodes from television sitcoms) rather than a feature-length narrative production: *“What we usually do is half an hour then we’ll stop and do something else”* [E1]. Our research countered this norm by exploring the importance of running narrative films in their entirety, an approach which has led to **immediate physical, emotional, and social** benefits for participating residents.

In response to music and dance numbers, residents clapped their hands, swayed to the music, tapped their feet, sang along, and some even got up to dance. According to one resident *“It takes all your will power to stay in the armchair and not jump up”* [E2]. In another home, a staff member noted *“we have one lady who has a terrible time trying to sleep and managed to get a sleep [during] the film... [Another] lady with very advanced dementia was singing”* [E7] while watching the movie.

These physical benefits were complemented by emotional shifts, with staff commenting on the ability of film to change the mood of the individual: *“I’ve seen that just now, because... with [X], we’ve had a few issues with her behaviour this week and I’m seeing [she is] back to being [herself] just through the power of [film]”* [E3]. Staff in the Care Inspectorate-sponsored workshops also spoke of behavioural changes: one *“resident can be quite aggressive due to their dementia, and we noticed that they were calm and smiling during the course of the film... This was an unusual thing for them”* [E7]. Similarly, another manager found *“a pattern of reduced restlessness and agitation”* for residents [E6].

Staff were equally struck by the **increased intergenerational social engagement** that was facilitated by screening films in their entirety, with some visiting relatives choosing to join their loved ones in watching the films [E7], and others giving *“pointers for meaningful films”* [E6].

During 2020 there were also **COVID-related benefits** for residents. One home noted that our research *“prompted [them] to use film as a meaningful activity”* [E6] during the crisis. Another commented in an email, *“I am pleased to say residents have continued to enjoy a lot of movies [in] their own suites due to social distancing... Residents continue to have input and choices of movie and viewing times”* [E9].

Benefits to Staff and Changes in Practice

The positive impact on residents **helped change frontline staff perception** of film screenings. Initially several staff had voiced reservations, concerned that the screenings would not make a difference, however managers have noted that these perceptions have since changed: *“Staff... had initial reservations or worries, however now they can all see the benefits... [staff] are not so worried about what’s going on in the rest of the unit... as residents are more relaxed and settled watching the film”* [E6].

Participating homes have also **changed practice** in terms of **presenting films**, and in the **use of associated resources**. With one manager noting that the way the home presented

movies had “changed dramatically” [E4]. This manager represented one of two homes that established a dedicated cinema room following on from the success of the pilot-study screenings [E4, E5]. Similarly, a manager participating in the improvement workshops noted, “*Taking part in this project has taught me to look outside the box... Staff are more aware of the residents’ choices around movies and could add this into their support plans*” [E6].

This project led to broader benefits for staff via their roles as participant researchers in the co-creation of the Film in Care resource. They acknowledged feelings of increased agency; as the Care Inspectorate improvement advisor noted, “[Staff] *felt empowered by being directly involved in the project from the beginning and the design of the project was open enough that they were able to modify and test changes in a way that suited the individuality of each home... [Care home staff] visibly improv[ed] their confidence and potential for innovation as the project progressed*” [E8].

Improving Standards of Care

Such benefits to residents and staff have helped expand the scope of impact to include **changing how regulatory figures** view the use of film in care homes. The improvement advisor reflected, “*Before becoming involved... I shared a common view that watching film was a passive activity only*” [E8]. Following the completion of the workshops, however, she found that the project had significant implications for **the homes’ standards of care**: “*As is evident in the [Film in Care] resource and the quoted Health and Social Care Standards, the homes are all improving their standards of care due to this.*” She also noted, “*The Film in Care project ethos directly matched the Care Inspectorate’s vision for collaboration and improvements alongside those in the front line of services and those being cared for*” [E8].

The partnership with the Care Inspectorate has resulted in a resource on Film in Care co-created with participating homes. Though delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this resource will be published by the Care Inspectorate in 2021 for all 817 care homes across Scotland and will include the importance of screenings as a COVID-friendly activity [E8].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[E1] Staff interview, [text removed for publication].

[E2] Focus group transcript, [text removed for publication].

[E3] Staff interviews, [text removed for publication].

[E4] Testimonial from [text removed for publication].

[E5] Testimonial from [text removed for publication].

[E6] Testimonial from [text removed for publication].

[E7] Staff interview, [text removed for publication].

[E8] Testimonial from Care Inspectorate Improvement Advisor, 2020.

[E9] Email from [text removed for publication].