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Literary merit as a resource for human growth: the use of social networks for psychotherapeutic purposes

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ABSTRACT

Narration is a tool to organize experience into a coherent vision that explains our identity. According to Paul Ricoeur, fictional characters and real people's identities are made out of the use of discourse. The tradition of narrative therapy states the importance of the use of letters, notes, and certificates to strengthen the alternative stories that are co-built with the person in the sessions. The digital format makes it easy not only to send but also to share such documents with a wider community. The so-called counterdocuments are those writings that do not focus on problems but on the actions performed by people despite the problem and that contribute to the construction of so-called alternative stories. This article reflects on the use of these writings with literary merit for psychotherapy and also claims the need for psychotherapy to be updated and adapted to the current digital cultural context.

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1. Introduction

The expression or concept of literary merit has been used to refer to the quality of written works from an esthetic point of view. In literature, there have been many debates about the subjectivity implied by the term and the criteria that would be included in it. For example, we can mention the controversial concept of the literary canon, by which a society or an academic establishes the essential texts in which cultural aspects weigh to define a culture (Cerrillo Torremocha, 2013). Texts are chosen for a combination of quality and cultural reasons. In other words, texts offer both universal discursive aspects and community-specific referents. In this article, we are interested in studying literary merit from the perspective of narrative therapy because this form of psychotherapy encourages the subject to elaborate narratives that explain general human psychology and the particular psychology of the person and, therefore, serve to find more complex and adaptive ways of feeling, thinking and acting (Bruner, 1986). The different forms of narrative, fictional or not, and other forms of literature, construct “the temporal dimension of human existence” (Ricoeur, 1996, p. 107) that allow us to enrich the experience of people. It is the language that leads us to acquire an identity perception: the person's

understanding of himself is an interpretation; this interpretation, in turn, is realized through narration, which is a privileged form of mediation that is constructed both from the person's real history and from the fictions he imagines (Ricoeur, 1996, p. 107). From this point of view, literary merit in psychotherapy would be the quality of the stories that occur in a helping relationship that contributes to the subject creating an alternative identity to the one that the problem or problems offered to the person. This article aims to use literature as a tool of psychological treatment, but as part of a wider study of poetry therapy, it may help also for educational and community building capacities (Mazza, 2017). That is, we understand literary merit, as the novelist Walter Van Tilburg Clark pointed out, that which allows the power to endure (Gilmore, 2010) or, in other words, the possibility of guiding human growth in the face of the difficulties it faces.

On the other hand, literary merit today is often expressed through social networks and other digital media. The growth of fandom communities, that of transmedia narratives (Sánchez-Mesa, 2016) and of influencers who deal with literature (Seymour, 2018), such as booktubers (Sevilla-Vallejo, 2020) are some examples of the importance that new technologies are gaining in literary expression. In this sense, social networks establish spaces for discursive and literary exchange (Dantas et al., 2017; Jones & Cuthrell, 2011). Due to their characteristics, according to Trier (2007) or Mullen and Wedwick (2008), social networks offer a digital environment that groups people according to their preferences and allow them to create a feeling of belonging that is fed back as new interactions are fostered. Thus, new technologies facilitate virtual relationships with other people, both individually and more intimately, as well as more collectively and socially exposed. The influence of these networks leads us to support the assumption that social networks and forms of digital writing can generate dominant discourses in the same way as other forms of individual and collective communication.

In his book, *Guidelines for Systemic Family Therapy*, White (1997) devotes a chapter ("The process of questioning: a therapy of literary merit?") to analyzing the different types of relative influence questions, which are those that serve to empower the person in the face of the problem and that focus on the person's influence on the problem. Stories of literary merit are characterized by the following:

This "form" of literary merit stories corresponds to the "form" of a therapy that makes manifest isolated achievements, redescription, and unique possibilities. Therefore, we might investigate the benefits of defining a "literary merit" therapy in which the therapist's greatest gift to those willing to undergo therapy is to help them become their authors. (White, 1997, p. 74)

From this point of view, literary merit is to make the person the author of her own life. She will generate her resources, digital or not, to make the alternative story to the problem endure in time. Isolated or extraordinary achievements are defined from narrative therapy as those moments in which the problem had reduced or no influence on the person. Thus, an extraordinary achievement will become a good entry point for the creation of an alternative story to the one proposed by the problem or, in other words, an alternative to the dominant story. As Kreuter and Reiter (2014) has stated, creativity is essential for resilience, in other words, the capacity to perceive different options contributes to psychological health (14), and alternative stories are part of this capacity.

This article aims to answer three questions: How to make a story that distances the person from the problem last in time, what would be a story of "literary merit" for the

person we are consulting? Is it possible to use literary resources in digital support to build a different story from the one the problem poses? Likewise, the purpose of this article is to use the text in digital support, both in narrative and poetic forms, to highlight the alternative stories of people, to make them “the authors themselves” of their lives and their relationships, and for these stories to become “literary merit”. To this end, we present the adaptation of the use of letter campaigns, which has traditionally been used in narrative therapy, to its use in social networks, especially in the case of WhatsApp. On the other hand, we describe the work of alternative narratives through poetic writing and songwriting. These literary compositions would allow both the highlighting of extraordinary achievements and the co-construction, together with the persons or families who come to the consultation, of alternative stories to the problem that endure over time.

2. Counter-documents

In the field of mental health, the most widely used document or written account is undoubtedly the clinical report. In other fields, such as social and school, reports are also used, in this case, called social and psycho-pedagogical reports, respectively. By exploring the aforementioned reports in-depth, we can realize the tendency to base the document on the disability or deficit to describe the person, which detracts from their resources, capabilities and potential (Goffman, 2006), and strengthens the dominant story. When professionals and the people involved read and reread such reports, they achieve the effect of maintaining and giving strength to the story of the problem (White & Epston, 1993), which hurts the identity of the people they describe (Estrada & Diazgranados, 2007, pp. 281–310; Gergen, 2006).

Narrative therapy emphasizes not so much the problem of the person who consults, but rather the strengths, skills and knowledge that he/she possesses and puts into practice to cope with it (Bustamante et al., 2010). This emphasis is also reflected in the written documents that accompany the therapy, which, because they are based on an alternative history to the deficit or problem, have been called counter-documents. This type of text can be written with the person attending therapy or reviewed by him or her, thus allowing both therapeutic works during sessions and autonomously.

The three objectives to be achieved with the use of counter-documents in the field of narrative therapy are: (a) to counteract the effect of labeling and reports because the very diagnosis of disorders often conditions the person’s identity; (b) to influence the care network determined by the problem, to encourage the active role of both the person and his/her family members and (c) to intertwine the therapeutic process with the broader life context of the person consulting. These three objectives are aimed at empowering the person in the face of the dominant ideas of the culture in which he or she lives, and at describing his or her capabilities, competencies and place in the community to which he or she belongs. In this article, we propose to expand the possibilities of counter documents in narrative therapy. Resistance documents are another way of naming this form of documenting the alternative history of individuals, families or communities, since they collect the discursive acts that confront and redefine the problem (Epston, 2001; Madigan & Epston, 1995). These documents, which are focused on counteracting the influence of a given problem on people’s lives, are systematized in resistance archives (Epston, 2008; Lock et al., 2004; Lock et al., 2005; Malson & Burns, 2009), which are

repositories where patient narratives of a given problem are collected. Of these, the best known is the archive of the anti-anorexia and anti-bulimia league, created by Epston (2020). This model could be transferred to other formats, such as resistance songs, resistance poems, resistance sculptures, resistance dances, etc., as expressions aimed at reducing the impact on the definition of the person's identity produced by deficit-based reports. Besides, counter-documents can take other artistic forms such as music, painting, dance, etc. In this article, we will focus on letter/email campaigns, poems, songs and the possible use of writings in mobile applications, supports with which to elaborate different documents that could be part of digital resistance archives.

2.1. Campaigns of letter/emails and social networks

From the point of view of narrative therapy, it is understood that people determine the meaning they give to their lives through the stories they tell about themselves. These stories are selected aspects of experience, which when put together, give expression to the chosen and lived storyline that is to be told (Bruner, 1990; White, 1991, 1993). This implies that the stories that are told shape our lives and drive or impede action. Thus, in the therapeutic relationship, it is necessary to ask questions that help people to become authors of their lives again, through what has been called reauthoring conversations (White, 1995, 1997, 2007). It is questions focused on reauthorization, with extraordinary achievements as entry points, that help construct texts of literary merit.

Of course, people's stories are not free from the influence of the social discourses in which they move; discourses that more often than not dictate what is good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, and even what should or should not be done (Van Dijk, 2011, 2017). With this in mind, work from the community to reinforce emerging alternative histories is inescapable. Hence, the so-called collective narrative practices and the different methodologies have emerged in this regard. The argument of this article goes beyond the presentation of these methodologies; we recommend to the interested reader the work of Denborough (2008).

Therapeutic letter campaigns help people to remember lost aspects of themselves (Madigan, 2004, 2008, 2019, 1995) with their community in mind. Again, the counter-document concept gains strength with the circulation of such texts. It is about recruiting a community of significant people for the person (couple or family) we are serving, and they are asked to write letters where they make it clear that change is possible, without forgetting the recognition of the suffering that the consulting person is going through. As Madigan (2019) states, letter campaigns have been used to assist in a wide variety of difficulties: anxiety, depression, loss, AIDS, bulimia, perfection, fear, couple conflicts, etc. In this regard, he says:

People who receive the letters begin to rediscover themselves and it helps them to re-associate with situations from which the problem had disconnected them, including reclaiming relationships, reconnecting with school, with their careers, with family members, in short, reconnecting with what the identity that the problem had brought had distanced them from (...). During the time letters of support have arrived from some curious authors. For example, letters of support and hope written by family dogs, teddy bears, cars, deceased grandparents, unborn siblings, and unknown movie stars. (Madigan, 2019, p. 90)

New technologies have offered people the possibility for their stories of resilience to become a story of literary merit that lives on, even after they are already deceased (e.g.

comolosmustangyelargan, 2013). Those who like to write or find some connection to the written word can be suggested to tell their alternative stories in the form of a personal blog. They do not always have to be optimistic writings but should collect and acknowledge the difficult times they are going through, but without forgetting that there are other parallel stories: stories of hope, values and principles sustained over time, which are also worth remembering. In today's society, letter campaigns are being transferred to the computer via e-mail.

Additionally, it should be considered that letter campaigns can also be exported to forms of open messaging. Social networks can be a forum for building healthier identities. A case of archiving resistance can be seen in Campillo's blog (2019). Likewise, other resources such as Facebook (Costa et al., 2012) and Instagram (Yi-Frazier et al., 2015) are already being used. The stories also take the form of selected images representing certain chosen moments. The formats are diverse: collage, concatenation of photos, family trees with images of family members, etc. Also, they can have different objectives, such as the project called "Momentos que abrazan" (Hugging Moments), carried out by Chimpén-López and González-Cañamero (2020), which serves to support people in the grieving process.

The written word can accompany and complement the images, to narrate, retell and expand the stories of resistance. Stories that will capture people's abilities and capacities to face difficulties. Also, enduring, and transformative testimonies of group identities, which will offer co-constructed alternatives to community problems. In this way, photographic documentation accompanied by storytelling can become a way to document the stories of resilience, not only of individuals but also of communities. Likewise, Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) offers creative methodologies to promote community engagement with different concerns that affect them: empowering youth (Strack et al., 2004); chronic pain (Baker & Wang, 2006); suicide (Mayton & Wester, 2018); or obesity (Findholt et al., 2011), to cite just a few examples.

Finally, work with adolescents has opened up interest in the use of new tools such as WhatsApp in psychotherapy. The aim is to enhance the usefulness of short messages written after each session, instead of letters or emails. It is the function of these texts to recall and summarize the content of the intervention, as well as to continue to strengthen the preferred story, emerging from the questions asked in consultation. Of course, WhatsApp messages are not only used with adolescents, but positive results are also found with people of a very wide age range. Faivovich (2017) shows how it is possible to maintain the therapeutic bond through WhatsApp. For their part, Kamel Boulos et al. (2016) conducted a review of the existing literature, which evidences the effectiveness of the use of Instagram and WhatsApp for the treatment of health-related issues and the speed in expanding some topics of interest to the individual in particular and the community in general. Regarding intervention proposals through WhatsApp, the study conducted by Calvo et al. (2017), who proposed a group intervention to reduce harms associated with drug use, can be highlighted. It remains to be discovered whether the short writings generated through this cell phone application are strong enough to become a text of "literary merit", this being understood as a way to make the story of resistance endure. An example of a short message written by WhatsApp is recorded below as a way of rescuing the extraordinary achievements that emerged in a

psychotherapy session with a father who faced an obsessive fear of something happening to his children, which led to relationship problems with them as he became hypervigilant.

Hello

To remember what we talked about, I send you this summary here:

Do not forget all the things that already give you peace of mind:

1. Your son is more mature (he goes out alone and comes back alone, he did only the paperwork and still takes care of his things).
2. There have been no problems of any kind at home
3. With your other child you have used your ability to dialogue and things are going well.

Regarding the fears, you consider that you are managing them, although they still appear from time to time to give you a hard time. But in spite of this, you are managing to take certain actions to get some peace of mind and relief.

Here is a phrase of yours: "in spite of the fears, solving the small things makes everything go well".

See you on the 7th at 17.00.

2.2. Circulating therapeutic poems¹

Lyrical texts are characterized as the literary genre most conducive to the transmission of feelings. As Maley and Moulding (1985) state, carefully selected poems can open up themes that act as a powerful stimulus for self and group reflection. Poetry is especially appropriate to capture brief experiences that maybe lost without it. This is what Crocket (2010) has named "rescued speech poems" (p. 76). In addition, we can use externalization of the problem as a way to open up spaces for preferred identity and apply the premise of narrative therapy the person is the person, the person is not the problem (White, 1984). By personifying the problem and writing about it or to it, we help separate the person from the problem and facilitate the co-construction of an alternative story.

This therapeutic potential of poems can be multiplied by using the words of the person who consults us or his or her own rhymes. In this section, we are going to approach the lyric in two facets, on the one hand, the poems as lyrical compositions in writing and the songs that would also be lyrical elements that incorporate music. The circulation of their poems through personal blogs and, fundamentally, through social networks such as Facebook and Instagram, make the knowledge acquired by the person during the therapeutic process can be shared. This produces empowerment of the person and a greater sense of personal agency that help them continue to strengthen the alternative story, while diminishing the power of the dominant story. At the same time, the multiple responses obtained in these social networks allow for a sense of community and break the isolation that, on many occasions, problems generate.

The following is an example of externalization and extraordinary achievements through two poems by M^a Paz Ávila, who has gladly contributed them to this article.

ODE TO DEPRESSION

Without right you come into our life
Like a cruel monster you take over
Of our brain, messing up everything.
You arrive suddenly, without warning.
At first, you disguise yourself as mild sadness
But then comes the endless weeping.
Tears fall on their own, without taste
Because ...
Oh, dancing storm, take her away.
Please take her away from my mind!
Repetition of foreign thoughts
Languishes the smile, already strange and ancient
We call out to the universe to break this curse
But God still does not answer.
Messy, dusty room.
Tired body sheltered in bed:
Cursed bed where I lose my will.
Bed, favorite princess of depression.
Everything loses meaning, nothing pleases.
Life broken into a thousand pieces.
Broken dreams, strange dreams.
Panic at night, don't come in the dark!
Lights on to protect your soul
Momentary madness ...
But you will not win, you won't sink me at all
For still my heart beats.
Impatient anxiety to arrive
That paralyzes me hour after hour
But my inner fire will win this battle,
And my faith will converse with the butterfly, in freedom.

After an interview with María Paz, where the subject of the article was explained to her and what her possible contribution would be, she thought it was a good idea to write a poem to her alternative history; a poem that is already part of her resistance archive. In this archive, the emails sent by her therapists and the answers that she has been elaborating and forwarding, in turn, are also compiled. Email has become an essential digital medium for communication and for recording the multiple stories that take place in and outside the consulting room. The dominant story cannot predominate over the alternative, so it is relevant that alongside her *Ode to Depression* appears her poem *My Alternative Story*. Her archive of resistance continues to grow to enrich her preferred identity.

MY ALTERNATIVE HISTORY

You, old enemies of the peace of my soul.

You, obsessions, depressions, anxieties ...

You will not win the war against me,

I, with my alternative history will become your friend;

Lying obsessions who have broken my heart again.

my heart again.

But my soul with great strength accepts you at last,

And so, you are lost for a long time thanks to the fact that

I have spoken of your tactics to my dear professionals.

Obsessions that you are like the waves of a raging sea,

that shakes with brute force my whole being.

Being that is like a rock on the high seas, adapting my body and mind to your

my body and my mind to your hard blows.

You, depression that is the consequence of the triumph

of this serious obsession, stay with me as long as you want,

I, with my alternative history, will mold myself to your din,

I will speak of you to whom it corresponds, you will not deceive me.

and I will go out on the street, accompanied at first,

I will keep making myself beautiful, I will dance forgiveness to myself little by little,

I will move in spite of the lies you tell me, and I will fulfill my goals

I will fulfill my goals, my dreams of harmony, balance, and tranquility.

Perfidious anxiety, which rides at full speed through my body

through my body from morning to night.

I already have resources to calm my mind,
 I already use the REASON to fight you and
 from my willpower I adapt myself to you
 and I breathe, I breathe consciously to lull you into a state of lethargy
 and I achieve it little by little.

I have many alternative stories in which I walk
 safe and slow through the streets of my city, and,
 my heart feels full, without the need of a partner.

And I caress you, serene, beloved cat Mico and,
 in return you give me stillness.

Dear rock, do not be frightened when the waves come

Adapt to them, become a strong queen,
 Keep on having faith, hold on to it, do not lose it,
 however strong the blows of the sea may be.

You can live with dignity, focus on your illusions,
 however small they may be, be obsessed with your desires.
 do not fall, believe in yourself, believe in the Love you receive,
 write, dream again, dance in spite of the sorrows,
 do not let yourself be deceived by them and go ahead, always go ahead ...

Some concepts of narrative therapy can be applied to our own lives as professionals, and the testimonies of our transformations can also be written in poetic form. As White (2002, 2007) states, the consultant-therapist relationship is not unidirectional but reciprocal, where power is diluted and where the therapist's life is also enriched by relating the consultants' accounts to the significant experiences of their work. These writings are likely to become therapists' counter-documents and their own archives of resistance. A sample is offered in the following poetic prose writing by a therapist who prefers to remain anonymous.

IN TRANSIT

It was a matter of survival, from every pore of my skin, every curl of my hair, each and every one of my rebellious thoughts wanted to change history ... My speech, of course, was shaped by my understanding of my lived experiences (slow, heavy, exaggerated stones ... that filled my backpack); and by a monothematic vision of myself incompatible with possible possibilities or future alternatives. It did not matter, I did not listen to anyone, nothing mattered but to vomit in a loop the same unanswered questions that corroborated the saintly patience of some friendly shoulders. Meanwhile, time tasted bittersweet, and I cooked my particular

catharsis of regrets without haste, but without pause, and my favorite story did not emerge, and the mourning continued to hurt too much.

That is how I learned, between resistance, activism, and narrative readings, what Michael White says: that no one is an empty vessel to trauma, and that to note the ways in which one has responded to it means to trace a parallel history. It was therefore necessary to write a new script, and to fill it with one's own resources, shared values, dreams achieved, and life lived. It was necessary to listen to all the beloved voices; to paint my mother's hugs with bright colors, to toast with cold beer, to tell aloud the saddest verses, and to smell the sea that does not exist in the clear skies.

Now I begin to understand, it was necessary to put the focus on all that was there, because grief is more than pain, Brigitte Vasallo defines it as a reminder that we are connected and present in the world, of what our ties with other people mean.

The objective of this other catharsis is not to bury the dominant story saturated by the problem, it is simply to reconnect with the traumatic experience without reliving it, without identifying with it or allowing it to define us. There is no hiding, locking up or changing the story, there is a need to know that all of us can tell ourselves as many of our own stories as we want. A revelation that has the potential to contribute to the development of a "sense of selfhood", although if we use narrative terminology we should rather refer to "personal agency".

While I was searching for my favorite blend of essential oils that best recomposed me, vital causalities decided that for a little while my transit would continue to make its way through island lands. So, the sea breeze and a few other means of transportation left me at home, and so many were the daily surprises and so evident the awareness of affection, that instead of a mini-vacation I have the sensation of having gone through Alice's mirror in a sort of postmodern ritual of passage.

Rites of passage, as Van Gennep says, serve to lessen the effects that transitions have on society. To support the person who transitions, and whose identity is transformed with the purpose of reaching a new status, or simply changing space, perspective, form in relationships, ... According to White, from certain structures and therapeutic conversations, it is also possible to form a scaffolding that allows people to separate from what is already known and familiar, to reach a new conclusion about their life and their identity.

It's funny, I haven't felt any clicks yet and I'm still ruminating on images that scare me, but I found a band-aid to put on the broken corner of my spring. I go around hearing stories about me that I do want to keep me company. There are not so many, but I know they are contagious, they make me excited, they make me dizzy, they flutter like the butterflies of the stomachs in love ...

Could it be that it is true that it was a rite of passage? Could it be that we have co-created invisible networks that are not letting me fall? Could it be that I am a judge and also part of the things that go well? Witnesses and external witnesses of this transit answer affirmatively to all the questions, and re-tell me with the voice of hope and the most beautiful words:

"It makes me so good to see you and feel you happy, today I come out smiling at the thought of you."

Poetry can also take the form of a farewell email from the therapist. A piece of writing that emphasizes extraordinary accomplishments and co-constructed alternative identity in the form of a story not subdued by problems. The following is an example of poetry made for this purpose as a counter-document to a borderline personality report and,

for the client, who prefers to remain anonymous, it served as a reminder and testimony of the road traveled, a way to make the story endure over time and give it literary merit.

POEM FOR JANUARY

*We've traveled rough roads together.
Building tunnels and passing through them.
We have looked back, not to grow weary,
But to rejoice in the progress,
In the memories,
And take breath to continue building new routes.
We have smiled, illuminating the future,
Planning life, creating solutions.
And we have cried to grease the machinery of feelings
And not lose sight of the others who accompany us on our journey.
We continue to gather broken glass,
remaking dreams,
And looking through them at the green field of hope.
We do not fear abandonment,
Because beyond us,
Is the meaning of our lives,
Who holds us by the hand,
In his arms,
In his kingdom.
We continue to gather joys of the past
To treasure moments in the future.
And we will continue to build life,
That will drive us each day.*

On the other hand, we are going to work on songs. As it was said, these refer to the lyric genre. In fact, lyric is one of the oldest literary genres, which arose orally and is usually accompanied by music. So, although today's songs do not coincide with the concept of lyric, both concepts have much in common. It is evident that the Western world lives under a model of aid centered on the written word and neglects (not to say undervalues) popular and oral knowledge. The same is true for other intervention alternatives such as music, art, dance, poetry, handicrafts, spiritual activities, etc. However, there are

questions that can reignite the debate: do people who go through moments of difficulty do something to overcome them or do they have to wait for this knowledge to come from professionals? Can people who have experienced moments of difficulty use music to overcome them? Can music and words be combined to offer help? Can a song be a record of the actions already taken by people to face difficulties?

Narrative therapy offers other ways of working that can be combined with the use of words. Songs of resilience document people's particular skills and knowledge, and they ponder them in order to support them as they go through life's challenges. There are songs and melodies that accompany us throughout our lives. Songs that are associated with specific events, relationships, moments and friendships (who are still around or who have passed away). For many people, it is possible to trace a life history with songs and melodies, and it is meaningful to see their alternative histories reflected in songs of resistance.

Moreover, in community contexts, Denborough (2008) argues that songs and music complement the use of the written word and can also be danced to. Needless to say, in some contexts, the written word is not accessible to all people, while songs and music can include the majority. It also adds the idea that with a good melody, the lyrics of resistance songs can remain in the mind, available for instant retrieval, as a form of re-authoring, as a way of telling and re-telling that story, so that it can endure over time and become a story of literary merit. Even as a form of protest.

Likewise, the song is not only a form of musical documentation of people's alternative histories, but, when working with communities, the performance of this song can serve as a demonstration of the continuity of even a cultural tradition. Following Denborough (2008) we outline, schematically, how to make songs of resistance:

- The lyrics should be composed of the words spoken by the people who attended the meeting.
- The chord structure and melody should be easy to teach so that people can sing it.
- The rhythm should be simple and clear and the chorus easy to memorize.
- The song should convey hope and be a deep reflection; acknowledge the real effects of the dominant story, but without focusing on the problem and in ways that describe in detail the skills and knowledge of the person/community.
- The composer/therapist must be off-center, that is, the songs are co-written, and the creation of the music is collaborative. For this reason, in addition, they are asked to title the song.
- Everyone records the song together, as a communal ritual in which any sound that evokes the recording ritual must be included.

Despite not being able to hear the music, we add an example of a simple, short song to at least capture the way the lyrics are written and the text becomes a song of resistance.

THESE ARE THINGS OF LIFE

Stanza

Music recovers smiles

From a dream came my closeness

It chased away fear

And brought love into my life

Gratitude sprouts

Melodies of fantasy

Open the door to calm

Refrain

It is the stuff of life

Stanza

Life brings worries

But they are accompanied by virtues

You do not always get what you want

But effort brings what you need

Songs of life

Melodies of impulse

Open time to dreams

Refrain

It is the stuff of life

3. Discussion

As discussed in this article, authors such as Gergen (2006; 2007 in Estrada & Diazgranados) propose the need to move away from deficit language in traditional clinical reports. This article presents not only the importance of constructing alternative narratives for the person's identity but also the possibility of doing so through digital media. Future studies need to address the extent to which today's society, youth in particular, live under a technological discourse of perfection that makes them feel out of place. In this article, we limit ourselves to reaffirming as Van Dijk (2011, 2017) that people are influenced by social discourses and add that these are nowadays frequently expressed through digital media and in social networks. In such scenarios of a post-industrial reality, new problems can be created around the sense of personal and group identity; and it is becoming more and more frequent to feel the judgment of the masses, by not fitting into the stereotypes imposed by ephemeral globalizing fashions. For this reason, the creation of counter-documents such as those proposed by Epston (2008), Madigan (2019) and White and Epston (1993), which help neutralize hegemonic discourses, is more necessary than ever. Also, once created, these writings must be circulated so that as many people as possible can have access to them. Only in this way will they become an open door to multi-historical hope, allowing the individual to break free from univocal and exclusionary narratives. As we have seen, counter-documents are

compiled and take the form of archives of resistance that can be expanded through social networks.

Similarly, new technologies facilitate virtual relationships with large groups of people, and deep emotional face-to-face relationships are left aside. On many occasions, the relationship is stronger with electronic devices, especially cell phones, than with the people themselves. Therefore, emails, the circulation on social networks of poems and songs or WhatsApp messages, could reconnect people with their values and principles, but also with significant figures for them. Their intention, as has been argued, would be to break isolation and favor an alternative discourse.

This article argues that narrative therapy has to adapt to the problems of the time through counter-documents and digital counter-practices. This proposal can allow not only to favor the identity of a person or relatively small units (couples, families or groups) as it usually happens in therapy (Kazdin & Blase, 2011) but also to generate materials that can offer alternative discourses to large communities. The present article has been intended as an approach to the use of writings of literary merit in therapy, and to their contextualization in the present day based on communication technologies and social networks. We propose that, from a critical analysis of the categories and resources with which we examine the problems underlying interpersonal relationships, these technologies can be used to elaborate counter-documents of literary merit. These must respond to the profile of the person who consults, respect the realities and times of identities dissident from heteronomy and add contingencies that do not increase the unstoppable digital divide. In this way, counter-documents would enrich the alternative histories of people who perceive themselves to be overwhelmed by the current technological discourse.

4. Conclusions

At the beginning of this article, three questions have been raised. With regard to the first, in order to make a story that distances the person from the problem last over time, we have at our disposal as many resources as the creativity of the therapist and the consultant allow. In this case, we have analyzed the use and diffusion of the poems and songs through blogs and different social networks. Of course, this does not rule out other possibilities such as painting or dance that serve as an expression of the stories of resistance, and then, to circulate them digitally and make the alternative stories endure over time. With respect to the second question, literary merit refers to those alternative stories that the person considers significant that employ discursive resources in a way that allows them to be read and reread, told and retold. In this article, we have shown examples of both narrative and poetry that serve a more complex and flexible construction of identity. As such, these stories tend to endure and define the person. Again, the consultants themselves will be the ones to determine the form of expression of their alternative history. The third question has given to consider that digital tools and social networks are essential to work the alternative discourses that allow the aforementioned personal growth. Letter campaigns should move from their analog to digital form because correspondence fundamentally occurs today in this format. Some options for future studies would be the following: emails back and forth and storing them on the hard drive of your computer; an archive with all the emails together to form a digital diary

of the different stories that emerge during therapy or it can take more artistic forms. Likewise, examples have been given of the use of social networks and different poetic forms to work on people's uniqueness. The aim is to use the digital media that our cultural context offers to enhance individual and collective identities.

Note

1. Examples drawn from experience in consultation under prior informed consent are presented.

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