

# The Life Stories of Children and Adolescents

## *Using Commercial Films as Teaching Aids*

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*Commercial films have been used by educators as helpful components in the psychiatry training process. Professional literature describing cinema focusing on children, adolescents, and their families, however, has been conspicuous by its absence. A solicitation from child and adolescent psychiatry members of the Association for Academic Psychiatry resulted in a compilation of 97 substantial and relevant commercial films, with each accompanied by a single-sentence annotated description. The author proposes a teaching approach and suggests questions to assist educators in the utilization of these films during the training of residents about child and adolescent themes and issues. A description of this approach is illustrated using two representative films. (Academic Psychiatry; 2000:214–224)*

Stone (1) asserts: “life is a moral [read psychological, behavioral, and ethical] adventure.” That is, human beings live, and tell, their stories. These stories become texts. Often these texts are the print or film descriptions of an individual’s moral adventures, and it is via these media that readers, viewers, and professionals can more closely examine situations, contents, and themes.

Both print and video media have the power to harness the attention and emotions of students and trainees in a manner that unadorned, reductionistic professional case descriptions often do not. As with the use of fiction literature by psychiatric educators (2–5), commercial film is similarly used for teaching purposes. Engaging films, viewed with a suspension of disbelief, usually evoke an unfolding, enveloping, and uninterrupted atmosphere for the duration of the story. The experience of this medium contrasts with that of print literature, during the reading of which

the reader is more likely to experience interruptions and discontinuities. It is no accident, therefore, that films have been used in the education of sundry health professionals (6–8), and specifically that of medical students, general house staff, and, more to the point, psychiatry residents (9,10).

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### CINEMA AND PSYCHIATRY

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Cinema has long captured the attention and interest of psychiatric professionals, who have devoted considerable effort to movie analysis (11–13). Commercial films have been used to illustrate numerous psychiatric concerns, including diagnostic considerations (14), psychopathologic manifestations (15–18), and differing treatment approaches (19). For example, *As Good as it Gets*, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, *Play Misty for Me*, and *Klute* represent films that, respectively, do good jobs of depicting manifestations of obsessive–compulsive disorder, substance abuse, borderline personality disorder, and therapeutic technique. Somewhat less tangible, but nonetheless important, concepts, such as countertransference (20) and stigma (21) have similarly been portrayed. Representations of charged attractions between archetypal characters, as commonly occurs in the genre of *film noir*, have promoted insights into the interper-

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sonal dynamics of ordinary individuals (22). Commercial film portrayals of physicians (23), psychiatrists, and psychiatric practice have received extensive description as well (24–26). The bulk of the psychiatric professional literature concerning films, however, as it relates to mental health concepts, practice, and education, has dealt largely with adult behaviors and manifestations. By contrast, the cinematic worlds inhabited by children and adolescents await larger exposure and more professional attention.

### Film Selection Process

In March 1998, to address that need, the child and adolescent psychiatry members of the Association for Academic Psychiatry received a letter soliciting the titles, and one-sentence descriptors, of engaging and thought-provoking popular films depicting “important facets of child and adolescent development, pathology, and/or responses to the environment.” It was intended that the proposed compilation be used by psychiatric educators to portray, for teaching purposes in general and/or child and adolescent psychiatry residency training settings, the developmental stages of childhood and adolescence and associated psychological phenomena.

Over a 2-year period, 112 titles were submitted, and 97 were included. Fictional screenplays, several documentaries, and the occasional animated film comprise those selected. Excluded from the compilation were films focusing primarily on adults as subjects, as well as those produced specifically as teaching vehicles with explicit didactic foci, for example, treatment approaches for designated psychopathologies; school-based discussions of non-majority sexual lifestyles, or drug use, etc. Clearly, such educational tools have great value, and relevant lists can be obtained from a variety of educational video producers and distributors. The focus of this effort, however, is on the world of evocative, visually-based, cinematic imagination.

### Child and Adolescent Themes

The cinema compilation (see Appendix) has been parsed into a variety of categories, and the films are listed in alphabetical order by title. Individual films focus primarily on child and/or adolescent and/or

familial functioning. Consequently, the portrayal of cognitive functions, interpersonal dynamics, developmental tasks, interests, and responses to stressors will vary with the protagonists’ developmental stages. For example, *Ponette* deals with the life of a 4-year-old child, whereas *Clueless* focuses on adolescent shenanigans. The films also approach their subject matter in differing ways—with humor (comedy: e.g., *Caddyshack*, *Hairspray*), seriousness (drama: e.g., *Dead Poets Society*, *Los Olvidados*), a combination of the two (tragicomedy: e.g., *Matilda*, *Say Anything*), affection (e.g., *Peppermint Soda*, *The White Balloon*) and/or austerity (e.g., *Sleepers*, *The Sweet Hereafter*). Some films focus largely on single themes, for example, children’s responses to abuse (*Radio Flyer*, *This Boy’s Life*), loss (*Careful*, *He Might Hear You*, *House of Cards*), or war (*Europa Europa*, *Forbidden Games*); others focus on the varied manifestations of a developmental stage, for example, sexual interests, conflicts with parents, and inter-peer dynamics among adolescents (*The Breakfast Club*, *Dazed and Confused*, *Sixteen Candles*). Rarely, a film will depict children and/or adolescents with clear-cut psychiatric disorders (e.g., *David and Lisa*). More commonly, the delineation between normative and pathologic, when that issue arises at all, is hazy.

### FILM DESCRIPTIONS/EDITORIAL DECISIONS

The descriptions of the selected films include the country in which the film was produced (for example, France) and, by implication, the language spoken (French); the nature of the approach (i.e., comedy, tragedy, drama, fable, fantasy, thriller), and year of release. The brief descriptions are written in the words of the contributing psychiatrist, identified in parentheses, with editing of the submission in order to improve clarity. The number of contributors and the wide variety of film subjects and approaches is confirmation of the range of tastes and interests among child and adolescent psychiatrists.

The request to avoid popular productions in favor of substantive ones was the single limitation posed for the contributors. A rating of 0–4 stars, derived from an industry-respected work that rates the perceived qualities of thousands of individual films (27), may possibly help guide instructor choices. It is certain, however, that determinations of quality most accurately reflect the tastes that exist in the eyes of

the beholder. For example, whereas the majority of the selected films are rated 3 stars or better, representing "fine (\*\*\*), memorable (\*\* \* 1/2), or masterful (\*\* \*\*\*) cinematic expression," both Brooks (*Blue Lagoon*; no rating) and Sondheimer (*Milk Money*, \* 1/2) staunchly defend their recommendations. Not to include parental guidance (MPAA) ratings for this project was another editorial decision. Apart from sincere differences between professionals about their value and their potential for misuse via the exercise of censorship, it is assumed that all medical and psychiatry trainees are of sufficient maturity to be exposed to each of the films included in the attached list.

### TEACHING APPROACHES

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The films can largely be used in one of two ways: either by using excerpts, or "clips," to illustrate a particular psychiatric facet, or by showing a film in its entirety. Clearly, clips are convenient for instruction, given time and scheduling considerations. Also, they are a good means for rapidly portraying simple, unelaborated topics, for example, diagnostic entities, disordered communications, and/or pathological behaviors (15). By contrast, in a manner similar to discussions that follow the reading of a complete short story or novel, (28) it is proposed that the viewing of a film in its entirety by residents as a group provides them with the opportunity to respond affectively, cognitively, comprehensively, and collectively to the portrayals of the life stories viewed on the screen. In this setting, trainees commonly exchange comments and insights that reflect an expanded breadth and depth of understanding, while they frequently introduce ideas and notions not previously considered by the instructor. The attached compilation is intended to provide a listing of films that lend themselves to complete viewings by residents to produce this outcome.

All of the selected films lend themselves to instructional questions inclusive of: who is/are the protagonist(s); what are the central themes; how (in)accurately and/or (un)realistically are they conveyed; what is normative vs. pathological behavior; are the developmental features age-(in)congruent; what is the quality of the parenting; to what extent is child/adolescent initiative encouraged/discouraged; to what extent is adult limit-setting excessive/inade-

quate; what vulnerabilities and assets do the children possess; and to what extent do the sociocultural influences of gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and/or other environmental contexts shape or determine the protagonists' behaviors? Later in the discussion, speculation commonly develops concerning how the possession of psychiatric knowledge and/or the provision of psychiatric input might have affected the course of the portrayed behaviors and their outcomes.

### Two Illustrative Films

To briefly illustrate the use of films as potential teaching tools, described below are the contents of two representative movies, some of their salient psychological features, and a sampling of resident responses to their viewing.

The novel *Carrie*, a gothic horror story written by Stephen King in 1974, with a screenplay directed by Brian DePalma in 1976, focuses on the sexually innocent mid-adolescent Carrie, the only child of a single-parent, fanatically religious, delusional mother. Setting the events of the film in motion, the girl, without preparation for the event, experiences with terror the onset of menarche while showering in her school's locker room. Consequently, immediately thereafter, she suffers vicious teasing at the hands of her female peers. Carrie is comforted and befriended by a concerned teacher/coach and, during later developments in the story, responds positively to the friendly overtures of a well-meaning teen couple. Subsequently, Carrie chooses to attend the school's graduation prom despite her mother's strongly antagonistic stance. After election as the prom queen, however, she experiences profound humiliation at the coronation, when her jealous peers drop a bucket of blood on her. In a murderous rage, and through the exercise of supernatural powers, Carrie creates a fiery inferno that destroys her school and all of the faculty and students attending the dance.

The film is an "over-the-top," taken-to-extremes, exaggeration of common adolescent experiences and events, pervaded by the pressured driving force of omnipresent sexual urges. Somewhat more subtly, the film dramatizes the negative impact of grossly disturbed parenting on a child, portrays the attempts of the vulnerable child to adjust to the demands of a severely disordered parent, and hints at the possibil-

ity of wholesome psychological change in injured children if aided by benevolent influences. However, the film also indicates the inherent fragility of the newly developed internal psychological structures when the vulnerable child or adolescent faces unexpected stress. The depiction of Carrie's relationship with her mother also portrays the need of the abused child for approval from his or her parents, irrespective of their coldness and lack of emotional support. Demonstrating yet another perspective on the adolescent-parent divide, the film ends with a dream episode experienced by the one survivor of the school's holocaust. This benevolent teen, clearly suffering from (undoubtedly chronic) posttraumatic stress disorder after the decimation of her world, is overwhelmed by her mother's attempts to comfort her with the endless repetition of the refrain: "it's all right." Hardly!!

Some trainees respond to the film as the horror story it literally is; others see beyond the literal view to the film's metaphoric representation of norms and pathologies in adolescent (and adult) development. Discussions with the residents range through diverse features and varied perceptions of the film, but tend to include the following comments: *Carrie* is a coming-of-age film—distorted, to be sure—but descriptive of the tendencies of individuals to engage periodically in extreme behaviors, whether they be cruel, impulsive, risk-taking, or generous. The enormous power and danger of the unbridled exercise of extreme will and/or word, particularly in the service of doing harm or causing destruction to others as well as to self, is expressed in the mother's delusional rants, students' cruel teasing, and Carrie's devastating rage. Omnipresent, barely restrained sexual feelings and fantasies serve as constant refrains, underpinnings, and motivations for the behaviors in evidence throughout the story. When Carrie plaintively cries to her mother: "it's not Satan; it's me!", she personifies the movie's embodiment of the projected fears and fantasies commonly harbored by adults regarding adolescents, that is, that their rapidly developing physical and sexual powers represent significant threats of potential rebellion and overthrow to the adults' desires for order and constraint (29), thus obscuring the realistic view of the adolescent as the genuine person that he or she in fact is.

In addition to the themes described above, residents bring unique and personal perspectives to the

discussion of the film. Their contributions have included comments by one trainee who, living in the context of an insular religious community, declares the film's portrayal of religious extremism to be realistic and not exaggerated; another focuses on Carrie as the prototype of an emotionally abused child and likens her generally repressed rage to what he has seen in abused patients under his care. Yet another trainee startles those assembled by pointing out the imitation of art by life, as she adjoins the reality of the recent Columbine High School massacre with features it shares with the film—namely, the school setting, the adolescents' rage, the possession of powerful instruments of destruction, the desire to use them for retaliation, and the absence of both internal and external structures to prevent their pernicious implementation.

The opening scene of *Salaam Bombay*, released in 1988 as a first directorial effort by Mira Nair, features the move of a touring circus from a rural area that results in the unanticipated abandonment and sudden unemployment of an illiterate 10-year-old boy, Krishna. Penniless and alone, he arrives by train in Bombay, is immediately engulfed by the overflowing multitudes and sounds of that large city, and is pursued by a deranged street person in his first human encounter there. Krishna quickly becomes one of many homeless boys living together on the streets, as the story describes his exposure to life in Bombay's teeming slums. Krishna's experiences include child labor at meager pay, mothering by a prostitute, friendship with a low-level drug runner, attraction to a girl kidnapped in the country for purposes of prostitution, petty thievery, and an introduction to alcohol and soft drug use. Later, he is incarcerated in, and escapes from, a boy's detention home. Throughout these experiences, Krishna is portrayed as a quiet, resourceful, observant, and resilient child, capable of emotional attachment and caring. On the other hand, in the course of his short life, he has set two fires, and at the close of the film he stabs to death a male assailant of the prostitute who initially befriended him. The film ends with the pair fleeing the murder scene together, but subsequently becoming separated by the jostling of an enormous crowd participating in a cacophonous outdoor festival. Krishna is last seen sitting by himself on a side-street window sill, crying briefly, and then staring numbly into what must be a bleak future with no obvious options.

At a recent showing of this film, five of the six attending residents were international medical graduates, representing three different "underdeveloped" nations. All five immediately stated that the movie's depictions of conditions in Bombay were factual and illustrative of the harsh realities extant in the huge metropolises of many third-world countries. The sixth resident reminded her peers that these conditions were no different from those existing in North America's inner-cities. Other comments included speculations about the effects of disadvantaged settings on child development; the variable degrees of resilience, and the posited contributors to these internal strengths, shown by young individuals living in situations of deprivation; the degree to which hopes for a better future (on the part of child or caretaker) are well-founded or poorly constructed; and the perplexing quests for solutions to, and useful interventions directed at, the problems of both the individual child and the environmental contexts in which he or she lives. The residents viewed themselves as privileged individuals, who take food, shelter, and clothing for granted, in contrast to the film's disadvantaged children. The imperative need to survive in the present, with the past essentially erased and with little concrete thought devoted to the future, made the most salient impression on the viewers.

Several additional major considerations emerged. First, despite the antisocial behavior in which many of the inhabitants engaged, none of the individuals were thoroughly malevolent. Rather, all were multifaceted persons possessing a mix of qualities and impediments and, despite off-putting surface behaviors, they all sought dignity. The residents felt, therefore, that the protagonists deserved to be treated with respect, although the story clearly made the point that such individuals are rarely approached with courtesy or regard. Second, the residents remarked on the numbing process, necessary for survival, experienced by individuals living in disadvantaged settings. They spoke of a related numbing process affecting themselves that followed their frequent exposure to similar life stories during their treatments of patients. One resident remarked that it often requires a new experience, "such as a new patient or film," to "make me start thinking again—to remind myself to be sensitive, and not to condemn or ignore [the patient]."

Finally, after numerous comments focusing on socioenvironmental matters, the discussion centered on possible outcomes for individual children. Krishna, an appealing and sensitive boy, responsive to warmth, has, by age 10, committed two arsons and a murder, albeit in the pursuit of his approach to righting wrongs. What is his likely prognosis? Would the expenditure of "much love" and "many dollars" make a difference? If so, what kind, in what quantity, and how would it and they be administered? Would individual treatment, foster care, and/or a group home lead to an improved outcome for a boy like Krishna? This discussion led to an analysis of the friction existing between the significance of statistics supporting the predictive probability of "past as prologue" vs. the hope inherent to the treatment of each child as a unique person with no predetermined outcome, and to the acknowledgement of advocacy for such an impaired child as an essential component of the armamentarium of the child and adolescent psychiatrist.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The attached compilation should serve well as a current source of accessible films "certified," primarily by child and adolescent psychiatry educators in a collaborative effort, as cinema that can be and has been (30,31) readily and easily used to educate trainees concerning a host of psychological matters relevant to children and adolescents. Expertise in the world of cinema was not required of the contributors, although such knowledge can be readily obtained (32). Rather, the compilation is a reflection of the thought that educators can give to media not ordinarily used for teaching purposes. Undoubtedly, the selections do not include many films whose titles will occur to readers, and numerous films created in the future will similarly deserve consideration for inclusion. Furthermore, many questions in addition to those mentioned above would be expected to be raised in discussions after the viewing of these films, and highly specific teaching goals could be attempted as well (33). Whatever the inadequacies of this compilation, however, the list should serve as both a useful teaching tool for psychiatry educators and as a reminder of the value of using teaching aids and approaches that are "outside the box."

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<b>APPENDIX. Association for Academic Psychiatry (AAP) Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Films</b>	
<b>Name of Film/Documentary</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Amarcord ***½	(Italy; tragicomedic fantasy; 1974) Fellini's autobiographical account of his childhood and maturation in prewar Europe, with lyrical portrayals of individual development, family, peers, religion and politics (Sondheimer)
Au Revoir Les Enfants****	(France; drama; 1987) in Nazi-occupied France, friendships develop between hidden Jewish boys and their gentile classmates prior to discovery by the Gestapo; based on an actual incident. (Frosch)
Babe***½	(USA; special effects fable; 1995) traumatized by maternal loss and subsequent abuse by a farmer, a pig finds his identity after he is adopted by sheep (Brooks)
The Baby-Sitters Club**½	(USA; drama; 1995) a tender look at seven 13-year-old girls leaving their younger interests behind as they enter the worlds of baby-sitting, attraction to boys, and conflicts with parents (Guyer)
The Basketball Diaries**	(USA; drama; 1994) descent of a successful high school athlete, accompanied by his hophead friends, into heroin addiction, street hustling, and petty crime, with little positive help from the disturbed adults in his life (Rostain)
Beautiful Thing**	(England; drama; 1980) adolescent working-class boys' coming-out story; sexuality, parenting, peer relations (Lock)
The Blue Lagoon	(USA; drama; 1980) two children survive a shipwreck and are left alone on an island to grow into adolescence and an emerging sexual relationship. Menarche is dramatically depicted. (Brooks)
The Boy With Green Hair***	(USA; drama; 1948) A 12-year-old boy, having lost his parents in the London blitz, suddenly develops green hair; that is, he becomes "different;" society responds with intolerance; undoubtedly a parable about recent world events and the development of the cold war. (Sondheimer)
Boyz 'N the Hood***½	(USA; drama; 1991) the American urban nightmare come alive, with children, teens and adults trying to survive (Sondheimer)
The Breakfast Club***	(USA; comic drama; 1985) five teens spend a Saturday together on school detention and come to know each other by the end of the day. Adolescent humor and intellectualization are obvious. (Brooks)
Breaking Away***½	(USA; comic drama; 1979) delightful coming-of-age film about a set of teens preparing successfully and unsuccessfully for college. (Drell)
Burnt By the Sun***	(Russia; drama; 1994) A family enjoys a day in the sun; a father and his daughter share poignant moments; but the setting is Stalinist Russia, and the illusions are stripped away. (Hartmann)
The Butcher Boy***	(Ireland; macabre comic drama; 1997) a 12-year-old boy living with a violent alcoholic father and suicidally depressed mother becomes progressively more paranoid, hallucinates, and commits murder. (Guerrero)
Butterfly	(Spain, drama; 1999) A 7-year-old boy is humanistically guided to the worlds of books and the beauty of nature while, in the background, his country experiences the tensions that will result in civil war and the triumph of fascistic repression. (Sondheimer)
Caddyshack***½	(USA; comedy; 1980) coming-of-age story about a working-class adolescent at a suburban high school. Also shows effects of peer pressure and social-climbing on adolescent relationships. (Shaw)
Careful, He Might Hear You***	(Australia; drama; 1984) After his mother dies, a young boy is caught in a custody battle between two aunts, one, poor but loving and the second, wealthy but unstable. There are innuendoes of sexual abuse. Identity problems surface as the boy struggles between compliant resignation and oppositional triumph. (Brooks)
Carrie***	(USA; gothic thriller; 1976) all the adolescent themes (and accompanying adult fantasies) — prurient camera spying on semi-undressed girls, the onset of menses, interpeer cruelty, the development of beauty and the expression of uncontrolled, destructive rage (Sondheimer)
Central Station***	(Brazil; drama; 1998) A middle-aged, childless woman inadvertently becomes the reluctant companion and protector of a nine-year-old boy searching for his father. (Hartmann)
Clueless***	(USA; comedy; 1995) depicts interactions between different cliques of adolescents at a suburban high school; also shows effects of peer pressure and social-climbing on adolescent relationships (Shaw)
David and Lisa***	(USA; drama; 1962) relationship of an obsessive-compulsive adolescent boy with an autistic girl in a residential setting (Zrull)
Dazed and Confused***	(USA; drama; 1993) chronicles several teens' progress through peer pressure, sexual development and intimacy, and alcohol and drug use; sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll (Penn)

APPENDIX. Association for Academic Psychiatry (AAP) Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Films (*cont'd*)

Name of Film/Documentary	Brief Description
Dead Poets Society***	(USA; drama; 1989) boys in a boarding school and the events leading to the suicide of one of them (Zrull; Frosch)
Death in Venice***½	(Italy; drama; 1971) middle-aged man obsessed with idealized teenage boy (Cline)
ET: The Extra-Terrestrial****	(USA; fantasy modern fairy tale; 1982) the story of an extraterrestrial creature who visits earth conveys various facets of child development: oedipal issues, latency themes, and adolescent activities (the "rotten" boys) (Brooks)
Europa Europa***½	(Germany; drama; 1991) harrowing true story of a young Jewish boy who tries to pass for German at a Nazi-run school during the holocaust (Sood)
Fanny and Alexander****	(Sweden; drama; 1983) Bergman's autobiographical film describes a year in the life of a young sister and brother living in rural Sweden (Brooks)
Fast Times at Ridgemont High***	(USA; comic drama; 1982) Southern California high school archetypes and activities: surfers, hangers-on, drugs, "tough" teacher, the mall — all used to humorously portray angst-ridden, hormone-driven teen development (Sondheimer)
Forbidden Games****	(France; drama; 1952) Illustrates the impact of war (WWII), the loss of parents, and the coping responses of two school-aged children. (Sondheimer)
The 400 Blows****	(France; drama; 1959) Truffaut's autobiographical account of his school-age development in the midst of disturbed family relations (Sondheimer)
Gallipoli****	(Australia; drama; 1981) Two idealistic young men, best friends, enlist to fight the enemy, with little preparation for the impersonal devastation of war. (Guyer)
Girls Like Us	(USA; documentary; 1997) four teen-aged South Philly working-class girls, followed for 4 years. Intersections of hopes and realities lead to unexpected outcomes. (Sondheimer)
The Glass Menagerie***	(USA; drama; 1987) the sensitive portrayal of a special, slightly deformed woman who retreats to her family and domineering mom when facing the scariness of reality (Drell)
Good Burger**½	(USA; comedy; 1998) a movie replete with goofy and charming pre-adolescent humor about good and evil and doing the right thing, in a hamburger-shop setting (Leonard)
Good Will Hunting**½	(USA; drama; 1998) emancipation (college-age) setting; issues of separation and emotional growth in an intellectually gifted townie shepherded by a superb psychologist who has been there himself (Sondheimer)
Hairspray***	(USA; comedy; 1988) affectionate view of Baltimore teens, their families, stereotypes, and racism, at the start of the (musical) rock'n'roll era (Sondheimer)
Heathers***½	(USA; comedy; 1989) darkly humorous descriptions of approaches to social-climbing, the frictions between differing cliques, obsessions with self and fitting-in, and suicide and murder in a high school setting (Hyler)
A Home of Our Own**½	(USA; drama; 1993) A single mother packs up her six children and leaves Los Angeles in search of a place they can call their own. The oldest son misses life as he knew it in the city. (Brooks)
Hook**	(USA; fantasy; 1991) Robin Williams stars in the remake of the "Peter Pan" movie. The role of the "too-busy-for-his-children father," issues of development, and growing up are explained in a modern and appropriate way. (Leonard)
Hoop Dreams****	(USA; documentary; 1994) coping in an inner-city environment, broken families, and personal development (Guerrero); portrayal of teens trying to escape life in inner-city Chicago through sports (Drell)
Hope and Glory***½	(England; drama; 1987) In Britain, during the days of the blitzkrieg, a young boy views the complexities of his life and that of his family. (Sood)
The Horse Whisperer**½	(USA; drama; 1998) Both a young girl and her horse are physically and psychologically traumatized; the healing of both slowly ensues. (Sondheimer)
Housekeeping***	(USA; drama; 1987) Two orphaned sisters are cared for by their endearing but eccentric and possibly mentally disturbed aunt in a community that strongly prefers behavioral and social conformity. (Silberman)
House of Cards**½	(USA; drama; 1992) A 6-year-old girl, witness to the accidental death of her father, retreats into a world of fantasy. Mother responds ambivalently to a psychiatrist's input. (Wright)
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden***	(USA; drama; 1977) An institutionalized girl, suffering from internal demons, responds to a caring psychiatrist. (Hyler).
I Never Sang for My Father***½	(USA; drama; 1970) a wonderful portrayal of the father-son relationship, depicting a powerful father and his passive, inwardly disappointed son in the context of the father's senility and the death of the mother (Drell)
The Ice Storm***½	(USA; drama; 1997) Clueless and reckless parents engaged in sexual liaisons outside of their marriages are too self-absorbed to notice their ignored children who, left to their own devices, flounder around. (Rostain)



<b>APPENDIX. Association for Academic Psychiatry (AAP) Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Films (<i>cont'd</i>)</b>	
<b>Name of Film/Documentary</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
It****	(England; drama; 1969) students in a typical (i.e., harsh, staid) British boarding school rebel — violently. (Sondheimer)
Kids**	(USA; fiction, presented as documentary; 1995) depicting ruthless, aimless, jaded urban adolescents engaged in sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll (Sondheimer)
Kolya***	(Czech; drama; 1996) A grumpy confirmed bachelor has his hands full when a little boy enters his life and gives it a new perspective. (Sood)
Kramer vs. Kramer****½	(USA; drama; 1979) A mother walks out on a marriage; a father becomes a parent; the mother returns for a custody struggle; and the child suffers, copes, and loves. (Sondheimer)
The Lies My Father Told Me***	(Canada; drama; 1975) A boy awakens to the way things really were between himself and his father. (Zrull)
Life Is Beautiful****	(Italy; tragicomedy; 1998) For his child a father attempts to transform a tragedy, through his indomitable optimism, into a celebration of life. (Sood)
Little Man Tate***	(USA; drama; 1991) A 7-year-old child prodigy longs for the “ordinary” experiences of a normal childhood as his cocktail-waitress mother does battle with his school director. (Brooks)
Lord of the Flies****½	(England; drama; 1963) Twenty-five schoolboys confront survival after their plane crashes on a tropical island. Their adventure turns sadistic as they confront what separates man from beast. (Brooks); Shows the vagaries of peer life devoid of external structure; a brutal example of what happens when groups lose their leader. (Drell)
Lorenzo’s Oil***	(USA; drama; 1992) inspirational true story of extraordinary parental efforts to find a remedy for their incurably ill 5-year-old boy (Harris)
Los Olvidados****½	(Mexico; drama; 1950) excellent study of poverty, the origins of antisocial behavior, gang culture, and violence, among adolescents living in Mexico’s slums (Sood)
Ma Vie en Rose***	(France; drama; 1997) a sensitive portrayal of a 7-year-old boy who wishes to be a girl, and of the differing disconcerted, angry, and caring responses of both the nuclear family and its surrounding communities (Sondheimer)
Matilda***	(USA; tragicomedy; 1996) whimsical but at times very dark portrayal of a little girl who is neglected by her family, but who goes on to develop remarkable talents and relationships (Penn)
Men Don’t Leave**½	(USA; drama; 1989) a single mother whose teenage son is seduced by an older woman (Satterfield)
Milk Money*½	(USA; comedy; 1994) delightful description of three prepubescent boys, their fascination with sex, and the attempts of one boy to facilitate his single-parent father’s attachment to an unlikely woman (Sondheimer)
My Bodyguard***	(USA; drama; 1980) the experience of high school before guns — when bullies ruled, and the other students needed to develop survival strategies (Sondheimer)
My Life as a Dog****	(Sweden; drama; 1985) A boy grows up after he is sent off to a rural village while his ill mother recuperates; he finds acceptance and adventures with the town’s eccentrics. (Brooks; Rostain)
My Son, the Fanatic	(England; tragicomedy; 1998) a family of immigrant and first-generation South Asian Londoners, some of whom return to conservative beliefs and practices, and a morally complicated father-son relationship (Sood)
Mystic Pizza***	(USA; drama; 1988) Later-adolescent girls deal with the issues of becoming one’s own person, the nature of relationships, and decisions about remaining in or leaving one’s home town. (Sargent)
Now and Then**	(USA; drama; 1995) A reunion of four middle-aged women portrays their prepubescent friendships and shared experiences — resembling a “Stand By Me” about girls. (T. Sondheimer)
Ordinary People****½	(USA; drama; 1980) the impact of the death of the prized son on the merely normal brother as reflected through his relationships with his accommodating father and his narcissistically depressed mom; depicts psychological disturbance in an adolescent after the death of his brother (Shaw); Has a good portrayal of a shrink. (Drell); reactions to loss (death) in family members (Alpert); parent-child alienation (Guerrero)
The Outsiders**½	(USA; drama; 1983) Teens born on the wrong side of the tracks, striving to survive gang wars, engage in their versions of chivalry and honor; the youngest of three orphaned boys worships his role-model, gang-leader, older brother in the sequel, Rumble Fish. (***) (1983); (I. Sondheimer)
Over the Edge****½	(USA; drama; 1979) Contemporary rock music is the background for the realistic portrayal of alienated teens engaged in antisocial behaviors. (Rostain)

APPENDIX. Association for Academic Psychiatry (AAP) Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Films (*cont'd*)

Name of Film/Documentary	Brief Description
Pelle the Conqueror****	(Sweden; drama; 1988) compassionate view of a young boy watching his disenfranchised and vulnerable father's marginal existence as a migrant farm laborer (Sood)
Peppermint Soda***	(France; drama; 1977) coming-of-age of a neo-adolescent girl and her mid-adolescent sister, rendered with a sweet and light touch (Sondheimer)
A Perfect World**1/2	(USA; drama; 1993) a serious film that strikingly portrays a young boy's attachment to an escaped convict; the perplexing outcomes of mentorship relationships; and unflinching portraits of unalloyed and alloyed sociopathy; Costner and Eastwood combined to make an excellent film about real life; its gravity ensured its utter lack of commercial impact. (Sondheimer)
Pixote****	(Brazil; docudrama; 1981) An orphan on the streets of a Brazilian city experiences many of life's tribulations. (Sondheimer)
Ponette**	(France; drama; 1995) moving depiction of a 4-year-old child's loss of her parents; extremely poignant and realistic (Rostain)
Radio Flyer**	(USA; drama; 1992) A family is torn apart by violence, and its two sons escape the chaos via the fantasy life of latency. (Brooks); drama portraying the emotional effects of physical abuse on children (Abene)
Rebel Without a Cause****	(USA; drama; 1955) 1950s' version of a moody, conflicted juvenile delinquent, touching on his relationship with his parents (Sondheimer)
River's Edge***	(USA; drama; 1987) disturbing look at adolescent anomie and alienation in California; chilling in its portrayal of teenage indifference to a brutal murder (Rostain)
Running on Empty***	(USA; drama; 1988) The late-adolescent son of former '60s radicals still living underground considers leaving his family in order to live a life without fear of capture. (Sargent)
Salaam Bombay***	(India; drama; 1988) A child struggles to sustain his existence on the streets of an Indian metropolitan city in the company of other homeless street kids. (Sood)
Say Anything***	(USA; semi-comic drama; 1989) An adolescent romantic relationship develops; it depicts the boy's frantic initial awkwardness, the couple's mutual engagement, and the girl's need to come to terms with her father's complicated existence and his goals for her. (Sargent)
Searching for Bobby Fischer***1/2	(USA; drama; 1993) A 7-year-old chess champ and his determined and concerned father learn above all else that they love each other. (Brooks)
7up; 22up; 35up; 42up	(England; documentary; four films; 1977, 1984, 1993, 1999) Apter's four films that follow a group of kids as they grow up. Shows how much and how little they change. (Drell)
Sixteen Candles***	(USA; comedy; 1984) generation gap between teens and their parents; deals with issues of popularity and emerging sexuality (Cline)
Sleepers**1/2	(USA; drama; 1996) portrays current and later effects of institutionalization and sexual abuse in children (Abene)
Sling Blade***1/2	(USA; drama; 1996) superb rendition of significant family problems experienced by a young latency-aged male; these include single-parenting, poverty, social isolation complicated by domestic violence, substance abuse, and mother's Significant Other who is verbally abusive, uses intimidation, and directs hostility toward this child (Penn)
Smooth Talk***	(USA; drama; 1985) depiction of female adolescent development in a shy, sheltered girl and the emergence of her awareness of her sexuality (Sargent)
Splendor in the Grass***	(USA; drama; 1961) Two teens fall in love during the depression era; parental pressures to separate and sexual urges to consummate disrupt the relationship, resulting in the girl's suicidal behavior, institutionalization, and treatment. (Sondheimer)
Stand By Me***	(USA; drama; 1986) provides excellent depiction of peer-group development and peer pressure in latency-age kids (Penn); Four boys on a long walk. . . . (Frosch); discovering a body in the woods. . . . and other shared secrets (Rostain)
The Stone Boy***1/2	(USA; drama; 1984) The accidental killing of a brother by his younger sibling has a powerful impact on members of a rural family. (Guyer)
The Sweet Hereafter***	(USA; drama; 1996) very dark, spare portrayal of a rural community and its secrets, which unfold after the calamitous loss of several of its children in a school-bus accident (Sondheimer)
This Boy's Life***	(USA; drama; 1993) portrays an abused stepson and his efforts to cope with a violent stepfather (Abene); wonderful rendition of autobiographical work exploring an adolescent's coming of age while dealing with a flaky mother and brutal stepfather (Rostain)

<b>APPENDIX. Association for Academic Psychiatry (AAP) Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Films (cont'd)</b>	
<b>Name of Film/Documentary</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Walkabout***½	(Australia; drama; 1971) After their father's suicide, a 6-year-old boy and his sister wander in the Outback; they are found and cared for by an aborigine whose attempt to teach them survival skills ends badly. (McCartney)
Welcome to the Dollhouse**½	(USA; drama; 1995) Junior high school girl encounters problems with puberty, popularity, and peer acceptance. (Guerrero)
What's Eating Gilbert Grape?***	(USA; drama; 1993) illustrates shame and adjustment issues in a teen whose sibling has developmental delays and significant behavioral problems, whose parent has medical problems (severe obesity), while he experiences identity and relationship problems (Penn)
The White Balloon***½	(Iran; drama; 1995) one day in the life of a 7-year-old girl who yearns to own a goldfish; Despite mishaps, she perseveres in her desire, while shaping new perceptions of the world and of her sibling bond. (Sood)
The Wild Child***½	(France; drama; 1970) the experience of life with a feral child, based on a documented 19th-century case (Zrull)
The Wizard*½	(USA; mix of drama and kid-style thriller; 1989) essentially abandoned PDD child, sensitively portrayed, whose remarkable abilities with video games lead to a happy ending, Hollywood kid-style (Sondheim)
The Wizard of Oz****	(USA; musical fantasy; 1939) A little girl makes the slow and painful transition from dependence to independence. (Drell)