

# Multimodal Strategies in Teaching Ethics with Films

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**Abstract.** Our contribution investigates the question of how it is possible to apply multimodal methods of education in teaching ethics with fiction films. From a more sceptical viewpoint, one could argue that this is not possible for several reasons. The article suggests some arguments for the justification of positive answer, describes the recent researches of the problem and presents some results of multimodal teaching experiment of teaching ethics with fiction films. The theoretical basis for these approaches are the pragmatic pedagogy of William James and John Dewey, and close to them – the model of teaching with films developed by William B. Russell, also the Deleuzian theory of cinema.

**Keywords:** Multimodal education, ethics, teaching films

## Multimodalios strategijos mokant etikos kinu

**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje yra analizuojama, kaip multimodalų ugdymą galima taikyti ugdymui kinu. Kai kurie skeptikai mano, kad tai netinkama dėl įvairių priežasčių. Autorės pateikia savo argumentų, patvirtinančių kitą – pozityvų požiūrį, aptaria šios problemos teorines prieigas ir pateikia kai kuriuos darbo su kinu pavyzdžius, fokusuojantis į etinių nuostatų ugdymą multimodalumo perspektyvoje. Teorine prieiga šiam darbui pasirinkta Williamo Jameso ir Johno Dewey patirties samprata ir jiems artima Williamo B. Russello ugdymo kinu metodologija, o iš kitos pusės – Gilleso Deleuze'o kino filosofija.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** multimodalus ugdymas, etika, ugdymas kinu

## Introduction

The concept of ‘multimodal’ indicates the combination of two or more of different modes to create meaning. Multimodal education as a teaching tool and material include picture books, textbooks, graphic novels, comics, posters, digital multimodal texts, such as film, animation, slide shows, e-posters, digital stories, and web pages. Multimodal education also embraces live multimodal texts, for example, dance, performance, oral storytelling.

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This particular article concentrates only on the one type of the digital multimodal text – feature cinema.

Matthew Kearney and David F. Treagust demonstrated how multimodality is useful in teaching Physics (Kearney, Treagust, 2001). Using interactive digital video clips they presented sixteen real world demonstrations to Physics students in order to elicit their pre-instructional conceptions of Force and Motion and encourage discussion about these views. We ask another question: can multimodal interaction be useful in teaching not only Physics, but also in moral issues? Is multimedia able to elicit students' pre-instructional conceptions of Human reality and encourage a discussion of even deep moral problems? Can it be considered as the Copernicus turn in the moral, and, in the broader sense, humanitarian education?

We try to respond to this question from the three possible points of view: 1. Responding to the severe critique in the chapter “Debates with abstract sceptic” concerning the use of feature films in the process of moral education; 2. Reflecting contemporary scientific literature in the West concerning the research problem in relation to some examples of practice in the chapter “Teaching with films: associated and differentiated access to thought’s construction”; 3. Discussing the results of teaching experiment provided at Vilnius university with the first year philosophy speciality students as an official ethics course. The authors suppose that teaching this course is not only a theoretical matter but also has a real connection to practical moral education.

The research is provided using and combining theoretical analysis and case studies. Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy of cinema is the theoretical basis for the research, and William B. Russel’s practical methodology is used to approach the case study as teaching experiment. The thought experiment is used in justifying the possibility of applying the multimodality in teaching ethics with films. The analytical review of critical literature is used to clarify the theoretical premises of research. The qualitative experiment is used in investigating the possible involvement of students. The phenomenological method is used in reflecting the analysis of the data. The comparative method is used to investigate the distinction between associational and differentiatinal type of thinking.

## 1. Debates with an abstract sceptic

One can oppose teaching ethics with fiction movies for several reasons. The authors of this paper discussed the arguments with Wilfried Baumann of the Austrian Computer Society, Department of Innovation, who formulated them in a private letter responding to our project during the conference in Vilnius *Constructionism, computational thinking and educational inovation* 2018.08.21-25. But, on the other side, it is not so important who said them, but it is very useful to hear what has been said. So we are discussing it with possibly anyone, an abstract sceptic, in order to justify our position more clearly.

First of all, the sceptic says: An educational process implies there is a consensus on what has to be taught and especially in this case what are the commonly agreed on moral values. While this seems straightforward for many questions, this will surely be controversial for others. Who decides those cases?

Secondly, the film industry is just another industry, trying to make money and under the control of people that follow their own personal interests and not the interests of the society as a whole. For any educational process we should ask if it is beneficial for the society as a whole. There is a thin line between education (which should benefit society as a whole) and manipulation (which usually only benefits the manipulator). Thirdly, is hardly anything more passive, according to the sceptic, than watching a fiction movie. It tries to involve us emotionally, to incite feelings like anger, guilt, pity, pride, love, fear, empathy, curiosity, etc. The fiction movies merely give the audience the feeling to be involved at best, which is not in the sense of the active involvement required by multimodal education.

Fourthly, the sceptic supposes the best what one can expect from the fiction movie is some sort of the information. Information that is presented visually is often easier to understand and more convincing than textual information. The effect of visually acquired information is in some cases longer lasting than other information, because visual information can sometimes be recalled easier than other information. Written text, like a novel, can just as well try to evoke powerful images, but with a movie, a much larger group of people can be addressed. Many people lack the reading competence, the imagination or the patience to read a novel. In a movie it is easily possible to add subtle, implicit, additional information that is registered and processed subconsciously, at least partly. This somewhat subliminal content passes the critical barrier every person is equipped with, much more easily because it is difficult to scrutinize information whose acquisition someone is not aware of. These additions could be specific visual clues, for example, like subtle properties of the clothes the hero or the villain is wearing, it could be the soundtrack or it could be generic visual effects like a fish eye view, a tint, a soft focus or a blurred view. As a consequence from above, some people cannot question what is presented to them visually they believe everything they see in a film is real. And this visual access to the information has nothing to do with the student-centred, discovery learning.

Fifthly, despite these doubts, the sceptic supposes that some movies, albeit usually not the ones dealing with social issues, have large followings (*Star Trek*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*) with fan screenings where members from the audience dress up in costumes and re-enact scenes from the movie. Although this is an act of imitation rather than a learning process, it hints that active involvement is possible and even desired by parts of the audience. How could such an active involvement look like? There could be physical symbols for representing characters, important objects or locations from the movie. Participants could discuss and re-enact alternative endings, additional scenes, sequels, turns of the stories that they didn't like, ethical implications etc. There could be a prepared list of tasks to perform or questions the group has to work on. Members of the group could change the story add new characters or change their role. The results could be added to a database, and the group could be able to compare their results to results from other groups. Also, participants could be encouraged to create a work of art inspired by the movie they watched. This could be a drawing, a painting, a poem... This work of

art can but not necessarily has to reference any elements from the movie. This work of art could express different feelings that the viewer experienced. But this work could also contradict, challenge or ridicule the movie.

The response to the challenge from the followers of using fiction movies in teaching ethics would be following.

First of all: to the challenge that the educational process implies there is a consensus on what has to be taught and, especially in this case, what are the commonly agreed on moral values. We reply: Distrust for the teachers' ability to discern by herself/himself what the moral values are is the feature of totalitarian education, where all the rich variety of ethical life is reduced to several simplified concepts. We consider that the educator's diploma suppose the required ability in the incommensurable alternatives of real life take the courage for the moral decisions; also in addition to it, we are following Immanuel Kant's insight that the rational agent is able to understand the essence of the categorical imperative for the reason of his rationality (even in the case she/he is Moon dweller).

Secondly, we do agree with the sceptic that the film industry is something different from the process of education. It has its own pitfalls, which were reflected by the film philosopher Gilles Deleuze, when he wrote: "Cinema is dying, then, from its quantitative mediocrity. But there is a still more important reason: the mass-art, the treatment of masses, which should not have been separable from the accession of the masses to the status of true subject, has degenerated into state propaganda and manipulation, into a kind of fascism which brought together Hitler and Hollywood, Hollywood and Hitler" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 159). But on the other side cinema is not the only one of the spheres of culture with the sin of collaboration with fascism. Yes, Leni Riefenstahl, the talented film director, can be blamed for her sympathy with National Socialism. But the fact that such famous writers as Ezra Pound or T.S. Elliot or Louis-Ferdinand Celine also expressed anti-Semitic views does not stop from using literature in the process of education. The same case is with the fictional films or the other branches of art. The kitsch in the painting or unsuccessful piece of the music do not exclude the power of talented works. The fact that some sort of film production is mediocratic, manipulative or express doubtful values does make the films as the real pieces of art less valuable for the purposes of education. How to find the distinction? The suggestion of Deleuze would be very simple: just concentrate an attention to the good films. In his philosophy of cinema he had found and discussed on about four hundred 'good movies'. Of course, in this case the educator should have some sort not only moral rationality, but also the developed aesthetic taste to discern between mediocratic and good movies. In difference from the sceptic we treat fictional movies first of all as the works of art. So, agreeing with philosophers of education Jan Jagodzinski (2010, 2014) and Jason Wallin (2010, 2014), we see a deep need for using arts in the teacher's education.

Thirdly, we oppose the sceptics' opinion, that the films influence only the emotions of their spectators. It would be a very limited aesthetic theory. As we treat them as the pieces of art, we consider their influence in regards to Kant understands of the nature of

aesthetic taste, it means as the disinterested game of imagination and intellectual abilities. That is in the new direction developed by Deleuze, an approach on constructing thought side by side with feelings. It is an active process, very far from McLuhanian's (McLuhan, 1994) statement that film is a hot media, which does not leave place for active involvement in the process while watching film. Contrarily, it is active involvement in the sense of thoughts even more than emotions.

Fourthly, so in contrast to the sceptic's view, we do not make emphasis on the process of the gaining information when using fictions films in moral education, but consider them as the challenge for creative mental learning and provoking critical abilities of the students. We are following Deleuze's insight that watching the good movies first of all is an encounter that inspires a thought. But not the thought stemming from the sources of everyday experience, but a special type of thought, in Deleuze's words, "the identity of thought with choice as determination of the indeterminable" (Deleuze, 1989, p.171). The spectator of serious movies faces the problem: how to withstand something which is unbearable and unthinkable in reality.

So fifthly, we do agree that it is possible and useful to use methods for creating different endings of films stories, the same as it would be possible to play with written texts. It can create much fun and amusement for students as well as for the educator. But the question remains about the value and purpose of such recreated endings. Do they have the value in itself as the source for the entertainment? We do not trust the young people to take life seriously and construct by the use of their imagination and mental skill their own reading of serious cinema as a valuable piece of art? Modern cinema is only indirect representation of reality. But in evoking the special kind of thinking, it has the power to restore our belief in the world, says Deleuze (see Deleuze 1989, p. 166).

## **2. Teaching with films: associated and differentiated access to thought's construction**

Looking on the experience of teaching with films in different countries, we can find more than few strong traditions. We would like to analyze at least two of them. One, which is oriented toward teaching social problems, is elaborated by William B. Russell in his book *Teaching social issues with films* (2009) and Stewart Waters and William B. Russell's publication *The Fundamentals of Teaching with Films* (2017). The other one, which is elaborated by Wallin in *A Deleuzean approach to curriculum. Essay on a pedagogical life* (2010) and Jagodzinski *Visual Art and Education in an Era of Designer Capitalism* (2010), also both their publications in the book *Deleuze and Guattari, Politics and Education. For a People-yet-to-Come* (2014), suggests a new way of teaching with films for critical and in the same time creative purposes. Both traditions are quite new, both are oriented toward teaching and learning to think in a special constructional way, and the second one, following Deleuze, operates not with association, but with differentiation.

The two schools mentioned above demonstrate that different approaches to apply films for teaching and learning can follow distinctively different methods. They also

show what understanding of the world any method constructs and what results we can expect. The first tradition of teaching with films, represented by Russell, teaches to understand, to recognize and to use associations, whereas the second one, represented by Wallin and Jagodzinski, teaches to criticize, to experiment, to invent and to create. The construction of concepts, thoughts and meanings – in other words – ways of thinking are very important for both of them.

In the books *Teaching social issues with films* Russell suggests methods, schemes, templates of survey, describing and exemplifying the tools very precisely. His main focus is on teaching social problems, such as poverty, drugs, socially vulnerable families, bullying, addiction, depression, aids the marginalization of cultures, care about animals and other sensitive topics (30 social issues). These problems are suggested to be analyzed by Russell because of how related they are to American social life, culture and pedagogy, but not only to it; these are common for many countries. The theoretician formulates concrete questions to work with film material: questions for gathering information, analysis, interpretation and creation. Students can recreate the end of film or even synopsis to present their story (how they understand the film with their personal narration). They are inspired to discuss hot problems, to evaluate the actions of heroes and position of film director. The teachers are instructed with the list of films, proper according to student's age, and must avoid the scenes of violence and sex, in other case – with the permissions of their parents.

What does Russell use for his theoretical standpoint and methodology? It is mostly Driscoll and Engle teachings of critical thinking, decision-making and reflective thinking (Russell, 2009). That is also close to the Deweyan tradition of problem solving, trying to find answer for the question one has. For Dewey, a stimulus for the learning process calls interest. Interest is the main vehicle. So films give great possibility to compare what is already in students experience and to think while following the moving image. Dewey, in *Democracy and Education*, says: "Any activity with an aim implies a distinction between an earlier incomplete phase and later completing phase; it implies also intermediate steps. To have an interest is to take things as entering into such a continuously developing situation, instead of taking them in isolation" (Dewey, 1997, p. 137) and adds quite a pragmatic note, that thinking "is the intentional endeavour to discover specific connections between something which we do and the consequences which result, so that the two become continuous" (ibid, p. 145). Despite Dewey, who, when talking about experiential learning, usually has in mind a student's authentic experience; he claims that experience of others, especially social experience, can be transmitted, and that is why films, which show real or simulated examples from others' lives, can teach also. The theory of teaching with films, based on this standpoint, suggests the construction of a worldview and especially the understanding of the social field through critical and reflective thinking and decision making. It deals with the connection of various elements and the involvement of new elements, which appears in the process of learning, also the reconstruction of presented ideas based on the students' own understanding, values and experience. Russell states that such tools for film analysis "increase students interest in



the material being studied, thus allowing it to become more meaningful and relevant to the student. Furthermore, authentic classroom activities help teachers achieve instructional goals such as retention, understanding, reasoning, and critical thinking” (Russell, 2009, p. 2).

Russell presents a list of films, mostly well-known and popular (*Schindler's list*, 1993, *Trainspotting*, 1996, *The Terminal*, 2004, *Scarface*, 1983, *American Girl*, 2002, *The Virgin Suicides*, 1999, etc.), which are awarded in international films' festivals. They undoubtedly fit for the analysis of social issues, giving a lot of material for the interpretations.

Wallin and Jagodzinski suggest a bit different kind of films, probably not always good for teaching teenagers, much more fitting for curriculum studies at the university level. Anyway, they expect to bring to the schools a new way of thinking, especially of youngsters. Wallin suggests the film of Jim Jarmush *Ghost Dog: the way of Samurai* (1999), also Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* (2003) and Todd Haynes' *I'm not there* (2007). He demonstrates how to work with the problem of time and the atemporal person, how to link different heterogeneous lines of actions, how to newly treat the absence of arguments for the agreement, and the problem of multiple identity. In that way, he expects to protect the students' thinking from clichés, stereotypes, and to escape the techniques of repression during pedagogical activities. Teaching with films, according to him, is a step forward from banking education, criticized by Paul Freire. Wallin explores Deleuzian and Guattarian concepts and cinema theory about the time-image, which interrupts into a movement-image and in that way breaks the dialectical understanding of film actions, instead opening a space for imagination and unexpected combinations of elements that fill the cracks, gaps, ruptures in films, appearing by means of specific montage. The montage of such films is differing from classical montage because it is oriented toward the presentation of intervals rather than connections of shots (Milerius, 2013). It can be called a *montrage*<sup>1</sup>. Here is a lot of space for linkage of different heterogeneous elements and planes, because the main vehicle in film teaching is not the interest, but desire and affect. How do they differ? If the interest is oriented toward concrete results, desire much more works for involvement into the process of creation through the affect (Deleuze, 1995). That means active participation in the creational process, which is not personal; it means being a part of assemblage – combination of interconnected elements of the process. So the construction is not personal and even not social, much more machinic, dependent on an unpredictable combination of organic and artificial, real and imaginary, social and natural. It is construction not of forms, but of forces. It is not about identity and the individual, but about *individuation* and *becoming*, in other words – processual. As Deleuze states: “Cinema always narrates what the image's movements and times make it narrate. If the motion's governed by a sensory-motor scheme, if it shows a character reacting to a situation, then you get a story. If, on the other hand, the sensory-motor scheme breaks down to leave disoriented and discordant movements, then you get

<sup>1</sup> According to Nerijus Milerius (2013) it stems from the word *montrer* (fr. to show)

other patterns, becomings rather than stories”. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 59). Breaking, crossing and displacing appear as the main tools as well as cracks and ruptures. Stemming from Jan-Luc Godard’s films, Deleuze states: “This is not an operation of association, but of differentiation, as mathematicians say, or of disappearance, as physicists say: given one potential, another one has to be chosen, not any whatever, but in such a way that a difference of potential is established between the two, which will be productive of a third or of something new” (Deleuze, 1989, p. 179-180). Deleuze calls such a method “Between”: between two visual or sound images, between two affectations, between sound and visual image etc. Wallin also uses Godard’s way of montage for the interpretation of *I’m not there*, and especially Godard words: “It is not where you take things from – it’s where you take them to” (Wallin, 2010, p. 194).

Working in the same tradition, Jagodzinski analyzes films such as Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin*, (1925), Joaquino Fernandez, Colino Gunno *Indoctrination* (2011) or Lana and Lilly Wachowskis *The Matrix* (1999), when the first one demonstrates a dialectical move and the spectator’s involvement in the action, and the third one erases the border between reality and hyper reality. Using these and other films, Jagodzinski pays attention to the message of ideology, which is perfectly demonstrated in the film of Eisenstein and, from the other side, the possibility of another construction of a worldview, which is much more complicated and much more rich, integrating what is imaginary, virtual and only possible, as it is in the film of the Wachowskis. In both cases, students are inspired to understand the construction of their worlds, though access is different in both film cases: to construct one’s vision according to ideology and concrete expectations (*Battleship Potemkin*) and to show how one can be constructed in a modern, much more complicated reality, through the erasing of borders between real and imaginary, natural and technological, human and not human (*The Matrix*). Jagodzinski criticizes construction of people’s consciousness, especially of students, and following Deleuze outlines a new way of presenting image, which does not fit for narrow formation of thinking as well as marketization and selling of image for the masses. Moreover new way of films montage, based on differentiation and intervals, helps to destroy passive and mainstream way of thinking, which is easy going for manipulations, usually supported by the dominant policy and dominant pedagogy.

The other kind of films, which he chooses for the analysis in the classes, is of performance artist Bill Viola, who is famous for his video installations such as *The Greetings* (1995), *Five Angels for the Millenium* (2001), *The Raft* (2004). His installations allow appearing in different realities. Viola works with different consistencies, especially water and an absolutely different speed of movement in it. That is also related to the different perception of time, quite close to filming in the style of slow mood. Jagodzinski’s examples of video projects and fiction films allow understanding world as infinite; more than one usually see and hear. This method helps to open thinking for imperceptible and what is only possible. It is not the matter of how film or performances directors express their view, rather how student are involved in film as *machine*, working through affects, precepts and concepts, named as a main tools for perceiving the world and especially



arts. So the student, participating actively and creatively during the humanities lessons, creates the thought and is created by thoughts. She or he becomes one of the elements, integrated in the assemblage as creational machine. Not because of ideological construction, but because of creational event, this happens during the classes. Jagodzinski, who follows Deleuze, thinks that such a film allows to be much more closer to the virtual world, full of surprises, new combinations, and in that way to expend teaching and learning possibilities. The aim of visual studies according to Jagodzinski is to investigate paradoxes of “lived” life. “The power and *force* of the image *in an expanded sense* (be it in performance, film, television installation, and so on) reside in its affect or intensity in parallel with its contents. This means that semantically or semiotically ordered levels of analysis—representation as such—are no longer adequate for the task. A turn to philosophies of the unconscious that address the paradox of these two levels—the semantic and the affective—as they work and twist with each other in different contexts becomes a necessity for VCAE’s<sup>2</sup> advancement” (Jagodzinski, 2014, p. 104).

The authors of this paper experimented with films using different methods, working not with school students, but with university students of pedagogical studies. The main result working with them according to the second methodology (Deleuze, Jagodzinsky, Wallin) is their huge interest in a new way of thinking, constructing their inner and extrinsic world not with elements of clear shape and content, which can be grouped by concrete features or criteria, but with elements of absolutely different level, type, plane, from different assemblages. They work on combining heterogeneous elements and consequently inventing the world in the process of *becoming*. They watch and interpret but also create practically during the course of *Visual studies and education*. We are not pretending to describe their results broadly and in details, on the contrary – very briefly, focusing on the involvement of students. Students had to create their own multimodal projects, trying to find proper images for their ideas, to combine them, to add any existed or to create a soundtrack. In the results they presented wonderful examples of mixing elements of different type, levels or fields and producing very unique audio-visual constructs, for example: mixing videos from funeral of President Kennedy and concerts of *The Beatles*. In this combination the visual images, expressing different crowd’s emotions are absolutely mischievous. Additionally, it was a complicated matter with the soundtrack, which was created separately and was not as a diegetic – not coinciding with the visual image. The feeling of reality was mixed with fantasy of the creator and spectator. The perception and understanding of separate events were blundered and, in that way, created the enigma of the film. The other students’ film used the image of the legs of school children, their movement under the tables, and a special soundtrack. This combination provoked to think on the idea of the film in many directions, following the students’ steps. The question is why do educational programme students, who are ready to go to work in schools, choose to experiment with sound and image in an unexpected way, looking for new combinations, contrary to creating projects in a traditional way? Seems

<sup>2</sup> VCAE- Visual, cultural and art education

that the new mode involves them strongly, demanding their active and creative thinking and their wish to experiment using tools for creation presented during the course. The same tendency is evident during the analysis of films in the classes, such as Peter Weir's *Dead poet society* (1989), Eric Toledano's *Intouchables* (2011), Hal Hartley's *Unbelievable truth* (1989) and Wim Wenders' *Wrong move* (1972); great attention was devoted to *Wrong move*, which mostly expresses a new way of thinking; a thinking of infinity, experimenting, inventing and thinking in different directions according to the unpredictable vectors of a nomad. The result of teaching with films is not students' thinking according to the given new constructs of a film, but thinking side by side with the invention of constructs, experimentation and creativity. Such a methodology of teaching thinking is not as much humanistic as it is post-humanistic, oriented toward a link of all fields – human and technology, natural and artificial, actual and virtual, and it is beyond constructionism. Through the differentiation, cracks, ruptures, inbetweenness, involving also new elements, it deals with a broad scale of elements and at the same time is part of a much bigger creational and constructional process, which is more than human. Going to the question about empathy, feelings, which are expressed in the films: will we skip them? New teaching thinking does not stress the emotional field. It combines perceptions, sensations and thoughts. All are important, though thoughts, according to the Deleuzian films theory (Deleuze, 1986, 1989), are the axis for the construction beyond already legitimated constructionism.

### 3. Which Films are Suitable for Moral Education?

What kind of film should be used in moral education during the lectures or lessons of humanitarian (ethics, religion, civic) and social (history, education) sciences?

For the answer to this question we suggest to use the insights of not only world known philosophers, but also the answers of the students from the Ethics course during teaching experiment one of the authors provided with the first year philosophy speciality students at Vilnius university. The teaching experiment we understand as such kind of an experiment during which students not only demonstrate their capacities and present their opinions, but as an important result of teaching experiment is that they learn some new capacities and demonstrate the abilities of learning something new as compared with the situation before the experiment. The aim of Baranova's methodology was partly the same as Russell's, presented in the previous chapter: to develop active critical thinking by comparing written, spoken and visual texts. From the many methodologies used in the classroom for teaching with films, Russell and Waters discerned the following as the most effective: using film as a visual textbook; using film as a depicter of atmosphere; using film as an analogy, using film as historiography and using film as a springboard. But the most productive methodologies, in their opinion, are film used as an analogy and film used as historiography. "Using films as analogy is a fantastic way to promote higher-order thinking skills among students and help them begin the process of reconceptualizing the viewing experience of films by directly looking for interpretative meanings. This

process includes using films that are similar to events, people, places, etc., but otherwise different” (Russell, Waters, 2017).

Baranova’s method used is very similar to using film as analogy as Russell and Waters indicated, encouraging the students to discern analogies, but not so much with places and events as in Russell’s case (as is important in history teaching), but searching for an analogy between the problems discerned in the movie and some ethical problems set out in philosophy textbooks, discussed in lectures and imbedded in the everyday practice of life. The twenty-seven students in the course on modern ethics were therefore asked to combine text, feature, thought, writing and oral discussing in order to understand the difference between optimism and pessimism. First of all, they received the information about the problem by suggested title of essay: “What, according to your opinion, are the sources of optimism in William James’ philosophy and Krzysztof Kieslowsky’s feature film *White?*” Secondly, they read the extract of the text about William James conception of the will to believe and the sources of optimism discerned by American philosopher from Baranova’s textbook *Ethics: philosophy as a Practice*. They also were suggested to read William James’ original text *The Will to Believe* (James 2014). Thirdly, they wrote 2-3 pages essays for the seminar, which was transformed into a scientific conference. They all brought their essays to it. Some of them (who were selected by chance) presented their papers in oral form, before the audience. The listeners asked the questions, expressing their opinions. The professor only moderated the discussion and was only an equal participant of the discussion and afterwards collected their written essays. Their efforts of writing essays were evaluated by the criteria they knew in advance. For the highest evaluation the students needed not only to retell the plot of the movie, but to unite the philosophical and moral idea of optimism expressed by William James with the one they could discern behind the image of the film by Kieslowsky.

Why was this particular film selected? And how should films be selected for moral education?

Deleuze would have answered thus: good films. Not depending on the genre or topic. Good films, according to Deleuze, are those which are able to restore the link between man and the world, which has been recently broken: “Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears”, concludes Deleuze (Deleuze, 1989, p. 166). Deleuze does not state that the films will open what reality is in itself. He does not join the position of intuitive realism. And in this respect, he is closer to constructionism than to realism. But emphasizing the need for belief in reality he becomes rather close to William James’ fideism. This statement can be declared as the one of the main educational aims encouraging to include films in the curriculums of the humanitarian education. “Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of fundamental encounter”, writes Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). Watching films one encounters the glimpses of possibilities from the different spectre of perspectives one is not able to experience in everyday life. We will add: the selection of films for humanitarian education needs to meet the requirement of hidden secret directly not expressed in the image. The education process should

presuppose the hidden encounter. As one of the first year philosophy student wrote in essay about impression of watching Krzysztof Kieslowski's film *Three Colors: White* *Trois couleurs: Blanc*: "Every minute of watching film and the feeling afterwards I experienced strange feeling: I can define it as puzzlement, at the same time as the silent admiration, but also the inability to comprehend what is going on" (K.K.). The learning experiment with the film was provided in order to discuss the concepts of optimism and pessimism, the will to belief, the will to die and the will to live, stemming from William James pragmatism in the course of the philosophical ethics. The encounter with the film as event leads twenty students who participated in this educational experiment to the different conclusions. Some of them concluded that the moving stimulus for the main character Karol radically change his life was just the fact of his temperamental optimism, some of them – the obsession with love for his lost wife, some of them – the need for revenge, one of the students refused to suggest his own explanation saying it would be too oversimplified. As it was already mentioned, all the views were expressed during the seminar in the form as a conference: students read their papers, the listeners ask questions and everybody is participating in the discussion concerning the presented paper. The educator had no purpose to present one final and generalized point of view pretending to the "truthful interpretation". She only expressed her own point of view open to criticism as well.

Kearney and Treagust, in their already mentioned experiments with using digital multimedia in promoting a student's conceptual development in the domain of Physics, discerned four methodical steps: "a. articulation and/or justification of the student's own ideas; b. reflection on the viability of other students' ideas; c. critical reflection on the student's own ideas; d. construction and/or negotiation of new ideas". They also concluded that this "program provides students with an opportunity to engage in 'science talk' ... and a means of developing science discourse skills (exploration, justification, negotiation, challenge etc.)" (Kearney, Treagust, 2001, p. 69).

The first two steps can be noticed in the experiment with the movie *White* provided in the course of philosophical ethics. Are students able to learn from these different points of view in this open discussion and to modify their primary insights, as is presupposed in the pedagogy of social constructionism? Is there a need for this modification mainly in moral education? Or the educational outcome from this teaching experience is the encounter with the inevitability of living in a pluralistic social universe? The educator also supposes that something in the process of pedagogical experiment should remain as the secret also for the educator. On the other hand analysis of the essays reveal that the students are able to change their opinions even during the process of the reflection in writing and keeping inner monologue with themselves. Student A. L. in their essay starts the reflection of movie from sceptical tones. He had read in advance and before that from the whole trilogy of Kieslowski's *Three colours* this particular film, *White*, is the weakest at all. After the reflection in written form, he ends with rather different conclusion: "It is very difficult to summarize such a subtle and in many aspects ambiguous (from a point of view of and moral posture) film *White* by Kieslowsky trying to reduce

it to one or the other stimulus. It would be an idiotic attempt. Kieslowsky is not sorcerer who pronounces how the things should be and how it is necessary to behave. But the geniality of the film and certainly of Kieslowsky reveals itself when the situations – hypothetical or realistic open the plan for the question: what is *this*, *which* forces us to act and not to give up. And the complaints expressed in the beginning of essay do not seem any more so justified (because of the unclear end and all other things). The meaningful is the opening up the field for discussion” (A.L.). “It was very interesting for me to learn that it is possible to consider Karol’s action as the revenge or obsession with love. It did not come to my mind when I watched the movie”, reflected one of the students K.B., who relied on the alternative of temperamental optimism.

So the films suitable for moral education are the films which resist one straightforward interpretation and create the field for possible multidimensional social learning.

## Results

Cinema can be taught as a professional subject in cinema-studies courses, and it may also be included in university curricula of different subjects having no connection to cinema, or even in high-school courses as a source of a different kind of knowledge, construction of thought and critical thinking. It is possible to use cinema in education for sensitivity to certain values, for example, moral values.

The authors discovered and suggested the two possible strategies in the process of teaching ethics with films: 1. Creation of the students their own multimodal projects, trying to find proper images for their ideas, 2. Watching films alongside with reflection of some philosophical concepts, afterwards writing essays and presenting them to the group in the discussion as the possibility to encounter the glimpses of reality from the different perspectives. These multimodal strategies lead to the constructing students world view not with very concrete separate elements of clear shape and content, but with elements of absolutely different level, plane, from the different assemblages and enlarge the capacity of their critical and creative thinking. Also these approaches develop their social capacities – the ability of the understanding and communication with the different other.

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