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How can Christian love be taught using the 'spiritual cinema'?

Abstract:

The article reflects upon one aspect of multimodal education – the possibility of teaching moral matters with films. This possibility was discerned by Stanley Cavell and has also been discussed in detail by W.B. Russell III. The author of this particular article sees some essential similarities and some differences between Russell's suggested methodologies and stages and the methodology she developed herself and started to use actively from 2002, teaching practical philosophy in some Lithuanian universities in practical philosophy courses. She is using films as an analogy. Educators using this method of teaching with films customarily stress its purpose as being to develop critical-thinking and acquire knowledge. The article discusses the results of a multimodal teaching experiment didactic Christian ethics with two feature films: Ingmar Bergman's *The Winter Light* (1963) and Robert Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951). These teaching experiments reflect the values of suffering, love and patience discerned by the students.

K e y w o r d s : teaching with films, Christian values, suffering, love, patience

STRESZCZENIE:

Artykuł koncentruje się na jednym z aspektów edukacji multimodalnej – możliwości nauczania kwestii moralnych za pomocą filmów. Możliwości te dostrzegł Stanley Cavell, szczegółowo omówił ją także W.B. Russell III. Autorka artykułu dostrzega istotne podobieństwa i różnice pomiędzy metodologią zaproponowaną przez Russela a opracowaną przez nią, i aktywnie stosowaną od 2002 roku, nauczaną filozofią praktyczną na kilku litewskich uniwersytetach w ramach kursów filozoficznych. Autorka używa filmów jako analogii. Nauczyciele stosujący tą metodę nauczania podkreślają, że jej celem jest rozwijanie krytycznego myślenia i zdobywanie wiedzy. Artykuł omawia wyniki eksperymentu dydaktycznego dotyczącego nauczania etyki chrześcijańskiej poprzez dwa filmy fabularne:

The Winter Light Ingmara Bergmana (1963) i *Dziennik wiejskiego proboszcza* Roberta Bressona *(*1951). Eksperymenty dydaktyczne wskazują na takie uczucia jak: cierpienie, miłość i cierpliwość dostrzegane przez studentów.

Słowa kluczе: nauczanie za pomocą filmów, wartości chrześcijańskie, cierpeienie, miłość, cierpliwość

Introduction: Teaching *about* and teaching *with*[*]

When starting to research[1] the possibility of using cinema in the teaching process, the question of possible methodological approaches arises. In this particular article the author relies on two different types of sources: teaching *about films* and teaching *with films*. Firstly, cinema can be taught as a professional subject in cinema studies courses, which would be teaching *about films*. This article is reliant on the insights of two cinema studies educators, specifically Stanley Cavell's conversation with Andrew Klevan. Their discussion "What

[*] The main ideas of this paper were presented at the INPE conference *Education, Dialogue and Hope* (13–17 August 2019, Haifa, Israel).

[1] This work was supported by the Research Council of Lithuania under Grant No. S-MIP-17-37 and was carried out in cooperation with Faculty of Philosophy of Vilnius University.

becomes of Thinking on Film?" is about the peculiarities of teaching in cinema studies programmes. Their dialogue is published in the book *Film as Philosophy. Essays in Cinema after Wittgenstein and Cavell,* edited by Rupert Read and Ferry Goodenough[2]. On the other hand, in teaching *with films,* different films can be included in the university curricula of different subjects with no connection to cinema or even in high school courses as a source of a different kind of knowledge, specifically humanitarian knowledge. As an example, this type of methodology is used in the textbook *Philosophy through Film* written by Mary M. Litch and Amy Karofsky[3]. The authors chose different philosophical problems, for example truth, scepticism, personal identity, artificial intelligence, free will, determinism and moral responsibility, ethics, political philosophy, the problem of evil, and existentialism. For each chapter they wrote a summary of the philosophical problem, identified the main aspects, selected one or two films for each topic, and in the final interpretation of the problem also included material from the movies on an equal footing with the philosophical exegesis. The textbook also advocates reading passages from philosophical texts relevant to the problems under consideration.

Using films as an analogy: William B. Russell III's methodology

The most visible impact on reflections regarding the inclusion of films as a teaching methodology was made by American educator William B. Russell III. In 2017, together with Stewart Waters, he published *Cinematic Social Studies. A Resource for Teaching and Learning Social Studies with Film* in which different teachers share their experience of teaching social studies with films. In the United States this practice has been in use since 1931, so considerable experience has been collected. The main aim of all the educators included in the volume is to develop the

[2] A. Klevan, S. Cavell, *What becomes of thinking of film?*. In: *Film as philosophy. Essays in cinema after Wittgenstein and Cavell,* New York 2005, pp. 147–209.

[3] M.M. Litch, A. Karofsky, *Philosophy through film,* New York and London 2015.

critical thinking and knowledge of their students by including films in the curriculum. From the many methodologies used in the classroom for such teaching, 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 analogy; using film as historiography; and using film as a springboard. Using film as a springboard stimulates student interest in a particular topic, person or event, promoting critical thinking and discussion. Typically, the material is a short video clip used at the beginning of the lesson or at the end as a conclusion. The authors criticise the methodology of using film as a visual textbook for the reason that most films are not created with the purpose of being an accurate depiction of historical people, places and events. Using films as a creators of atmosphere is seen as a peripheral activity, but the authors recognise its productivity when the teachers succeed in providing students with powerful images of different geographic features, cities and cultures from all over the world. However, in their opinion the most productive methodologies are the use of film as analogy or 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[4]. Much like using films as an analogy, the use of films as historiography encourages students to analyse and think critically about film. This methodology use films as artefacts of a specific time. Russell's model also sets out the concrete fundamentals of teaching with film, consisting of four stages: 1. The preparatory stage; 2. The pre-viewing stage; 3. Watching the film stage; 4. The culminating activity stage.

[4] W.B. Russell, S. Waters, *The fundamentals of teaching with films*. In: *Cinematic social studies. A resource for teaching and learning social studies with film,* Charlotte 2017, p. 12.

Teaching a course in practical philosophy using films

The author of this particular article discerns some essential similarities and some differences between Russell's suggested methodologies and stages and the methodology she developed herself and started to use actively from 2002, teaching practical philosophy in Lithuanian universities. The intention of this methodology was partly the same as Russell's: to develop active critical thinking by comparing written, spoken and visual texts. The method used is very similar to using film as analogy as indicated by Russell and Waters; students are encouraged to discern analogies but not so much with places and events as in Russell's case (as is important in history teaching), instead searching for analogies between the problems discerned in the film and ethical problems set out in philosophy textbooks as discussed in lectures and imbedded in the everyday practice of life. There is of course a difference between using films in philosophy and history classrooms, but there are also some similarities. The first similarity is the emphasis placed on the preparatory stage. In 2002, the author proposed a course in practical philosophy for first-year students at the prestigious, then private university International School of Management (ISM), recently renamed the University of Management and Economics. Included in the course methodology was teaching with cinema alongside philosophical textbooks. The preparatory stage included activities led not only by the professor but also by students. As the course was taught to university students, the legal problems Russell had raised regarding juridical parental approval were not applicable. Moreover, the university administration approved the programme by accepting it and by purchasing the necessary films for legal use. Films were also available at the movie library of the Open Society fund, sponsored by G. Soros. The preparatory stage meant that the films had been selected long before they were used, in the earliest stages of programme development. The main topics and issues raised in the course, the required textbook reading and the movies included with their particular issues were all set out in the curriculum. As usual, three films were used for this course: Japanese film director Takeshi Kityano's *Hana-be,* due to its reflection on Eastern ethics, Ing-

mar Bergman's *The Winter Light* due to the reflection of Christian ethics, and the Iranian film director Abbas Kierostami's feature film *Taste of Cherry* due to its reflection of Islamic ethics (the short scene where the main protagonist meets an Islamic student and they discuss the topic he is interested in). As all three films are united by the single topic of suicide, it was expected that the students would compare and reflect upon different solutions and approaches towards this difficult existential problem as well as engaging in multicultural comparisons.

Once the course was completed, the professor's viewpoint was suggested by the topic of the possibility for optimism, including William James' pragmatic concept of the *Will to Believe* and Krzystof Kieslowski's feature film *White,* and therefore students were asked to reflect on the following questions: What are the sources of optimism for the main protagonist in the film? Why does he never surrender to despair? This methodology resembles what Russell calls 'using film as analogy', indicating that the use of film as analogy is likely one of the most unique and challenging methods for both students and teachers.[5] This was confirmed in our practice, which showed that the students were able to grasp the problem discussed profoundly.

In what sense does essay writing differ from simple discussion? One of the former students, V.P., reflected on her experience after ten years of discussion on the internet among alumni, recounting the psychological difficulties she experienced while writing essays at school where there was a requirement to write according to strict patterns. Her work was quoted publicly, but only as an example of how not to write. No differences were tolerated. She wrote: '…many thanks to the person who got me into Baranova's course in which I wrote essays as long as bed sheets about these "strange" movies during the night. At least I felt good writing freely. According to myself, with all my heart and according to my understanding at the time.' This 'Baranova methodology' skipped the second pre-viewing stage suggested by Russell, avoiding any prior discussion of necessary prior background knowledge, context or vocabulary, as well as any synopsis of the film or short extracts.

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[5] Ibidem, p. 11.

The films were suggested as visual texts with independent meaning, following Jacques Derrida's remark 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte'. However, in this case 'There is no subtext' also means that the visual text as a source of meaning needed not to be deconstructed but rather deciphered. There were no additional requirements related to the intentions of the director, the biography, or the peculiarities of cinema art. In order to step into the film the students had to complete two preparatory actions: firstly, reading the indicated text from the philosophy textbook (the 2002 Philosophy textbook for grades 11–12 by Tomas Sodeika and Jūratė Baranova, and *Ethics: Philosophy as a Practice* by Jūratė Baranova), and secondly, reflecting on the essay topic suggested. They knew in advance the question they would be required to answer, and made notes for possible orientations for the answer while watching the film. This aspect bears close resemblance to the Stage 3 as indicated by Russell and Waters: 'Teachers should also remember to share with students what exactly they should be doing during the film viewing experience. What are the students looking for in the film/clip being shown?'[6]. Believing it to be very important, even absolutely necessary, Russell outlines the fourth stage, the culminating activity stage, by saying: 'Students need to know why they viewed the film or clip and how it connects to the overall curriculum or their daily lives'[7]. Russell and Waters suggest discussions, debates, worksheets, role playing or any number of other assessment methods. In our particular ISM case, the suggested methodology was essay writing as a presentation for a conference; the students presented their papers and the discussion followed in parallel.

The same methodology was subsequently implemented for students specialising in Philosophy at the Lithuanian University of Educational Studies (more recently known as The Educational Academy at Vytautas Magnus University) and transferred to Vilnius University philosophy students in the Ethics course. It is primarily essays written by these students that are integrated as a case study into the particular educational teaching experiment discussed in this article.

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[6] Ibidem, p. 10.
[7] Ibidem, p. 10.

How should we teach values?

Educators using this method of teaching with films customarily stress its purpose as developing critical-thinking ability and enabling students to acquire knowledge. However, is it possible to use cinema in education for acquiring sensitivity to certain values? For example, the ability to recognise the values of Christian ethics? One can define the core of Christian ethics as the conscious inclination to restrict personal egocentrism and to accept the value of the Other as transcending the space of personal ego. Ann Mary Mealey makes the following observation:

> 'What is significant for our discussion about the specificity of Christian ethics, however, is that, once again, the disciples are not forced to comply with an abstract set of rules and principles, but they want or desire themselves to do good (*attestation*) because God has disclosed goodness to them through Jesus (*témoignage*). To be more precise, the disciples will continue to practise Jewish ethics but their reasons for being ethical at all have now taken on a new meaning. Expressions of hospitality and love are now seen, not so much as a burden imposed from the threat of sanction or punishment for failure to comply, as acts that make more sense because they are carried out to honour God and to strengthen their identity which is sealed in the Covenant'.[8]

This paper poses the following question: are young people (approximately 18–21 years old) brought up in a modern secularised society able to recognise the core Christian values expressed not only in a written text, but also in visual art, namely cinema? Can they reconstruct the meaning of Christian values that are not directly shown in the visual image but rather concealed, as Gilles Deleuze would had said, in the sphere of the *hors-champ* (outside field)?

The experiment was carried out with first-year university philosophy students. Two lecturers in cinema studies, Andrew Klevan (University of Kent) and Stanley Cavell (Emeritus at Harvard University),

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[8] A.M. Mealey, *The identity of Christian ethics,* Fareham, Burlington 2009, pp. 64–65.

provided the theoretical approach to the experiment. In their conversation, they both agreed that it is very hard to teach film as a subject[9] and they drew a distinction between viewing film critically and viewing it philosophically[10]. Cavell proposed the idea that films think, and think philosophically, bearing in mind that students should approach a film without explanations from the outside or researching the intention of the creator; instead, they should take 'responsibility for finding out what a film is about, what we see and hear in film, and what might be important in it'[11]. Cavell also concluded that 'a serious film, like any work of art, resists interpretation, insists as it were upon being taken on its own terms'[12]. By suggesting a philosophy for interpreting a film, Cavell does not consider the film as an illustration of philosophy. From his students he expects not analysis but an entire descriptive essay, which would nevertheless have to be a description of a certain type or quality[13].

The twenty-seven students on the modern ethics course were therefore asked to choose between a reflection on Christian or on Eastern ethics. Eighteen chose the topic of Christian ethics and nine preferred the ethics of the East. Those who had chosen the topic of Christian ethics were asked to reflect upon two examples of spiritual cinema: Ingmar Bergman's *The Winter Light* (1963) and Robert Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest (*1951). No special outside information about the directors or the circumstances surrounding the creation of the films was provided. The task was to read the visual text without any intention of treating it as an example of cinema history; they simply had to reconstruct the hermeneutic meaning concealed behind the visual image, to determine 'what might be important in it' as put by Klevan and Cavell. No lecture was proposed and no previous discussion provided.

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[9] A. Klevan, S. Cavell, *What becomes of thinking of film?*. In: *Film as Philosophy. Essays in cinema after Wittgenstein and Cavell,* New York 2005, p. 170.

[10] Ibidem, p. 183.

[11] Ibidem, p. 200.

[12] Ibidem, p. 179.

[13] Ibidem, p. 170.

On the other hand, the experiment also included a parallel educational task to stimulate the students' ability to simultaneously compare written and visual texts. They were asked to read a text in advance from *Ethics: Philosophy as a Practice,* a textbook of about forty pages on the main values of Christian ethics. The second step was to watch the two movies, and the third to compare the *hors-champ* territories of these two movies.

For the fourth step, the following methodology was employed: students had to express their insights in a written essay by trying to answer the following questions: 'The situation of the clergyman from the Bresson film very much resembles the situation of the pastor in Bergman's movie. But what is the essential difference in their two different stances? Why was the pastor in Bergman's movie unable to prevent the fisherman from committing suicide? What would you have done differently in a situation like the pastor's?' The hidden premise for the task was the intuition that by comparing these two movies a message that was not openly articulated would be revealed.

Robert Bresson and Ingmar Bergman as the creators of spiritual cinema

Why were these particular movies selected? One can discern a deeper undercurrent in all of the films produced by Bergman and Bresson. They both belong to the tradition of 'spiritual cinema'. The theoretical premise for this selection was the concept of 'spiritual cinema' suggested in the philosophy of cinema by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. The term 'spiritual style' was used by Susan Sontag when she identified it in the films of Robert Bresson[14]. Although the term 'spiritual' seems to go against the materialism Deleuze expressed when he while saying 'Brain is the screen', in the *Brain is the Screen* interview Deleuze predominantly recollects his own turn towards cinema art when he says: 'Something bizarre about the cinema struck me: its unexpected ability

[14] G. Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The movement-image*, Minneapolis 1986.

to show not only behavior, but spiritual life (*la vie spirituelle*)'[15]. Rather than a dream or fantasy, Deleuze defines spiritual life as the domain of cold decision, of absolute obstinacy, of the choice of existence. He sees the possibility of an alternative for the cinema: spiritual art that studies the spheres of existence. Deleuze designates the acting characters in contemporary cinema with the name 'spiritual automaton', but in writing the conclusions to the two volumes in the topic of cinema observes that cinema becomes spiritual art because 'it confronts automata, not accidentally, but fundamentally'[16].

The concept of 'spiritual choice' (*un choix de l'esprit*) in Deleuze's film philosophy, unlike other critics' reflections, is based on Soren Kierkegaard's philosophical concept of spiritual stages: aesthetic, ethical and religious. However, Deleuze sees the dimension of the spirit revealed in the cinema of spiritual choice as even going beyond Kierkegaard's three stages of spirit. This new spiritual space is the fourth or even fifth dimension of the spirit.

In the textbook *Philosophy through Film,* Mary M. Litch and Amy Karofsky highlight the Bergman film *The Seventh Seal* (1957) for its discussion on the problem of evil. The authors notice that the very title of *The Seventh Seal* shows the influence of the Christian apocalyptic tradition, the branch of Christianity that takes the last book of the Christian Bible, the Book of Revelation, as a literal tradition of the end of the world. The reference to the 'seventh seal' comes from Revelation[17]. How is it possible to compare these two films? The plots have some similarities: the main protagonists in both films find themselves in very similar social and personal situations. They are both clergymen. The pastor Tom from the Bergman film is Lutheran, whereas in Bresson's film the young priest is Catholic. They both practice in small villages, both experience health problems and have difficulties communicat-

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[15] G. Deleuze, *The brain is the screen: An interview with Gilles Deleuze*. In: *The brain is the screen. Deleuze and the philosophy of cinema*, ed. G. Flaxman, Minneapolis and London 2000, p. 366.

[16] G. Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The movement-image*, Minneapolis 1986, p. 243.

[17] M.M. Litch, A. Karofsky, *Philosophy through film,* New York and London 2015, pp. 204–205.

ing. They even experience remarkably similar outcomes in communication: their conversations with people in their parish end in disaster, and their partners in dialogue immediately commit suicide (the fisherman in Bergman's film and the countess in Bresson's). The experimental task was to trace what other lines of intersection could be discerned behind the mere coincidence of the plots. Can the values of Christianity be discerned beneath the plot surface? If so, what are they?

Suffering, love and patience

The results of the written essays showed that students were able to discern three main Christian virtues: suffering, love and patience.

We can now construct the answer from the students' insights. The students reflected that in both productions 'the meaning of human life is approached not through the cold rational mind, but through the conscious experience of **suffering**' (M.B.). The main common point uniting the films discerned by the students is the loneliness faced by those who seek for God in the face of the secularised world. One student wrote: 'In both movies, the essence of Christian ethics is revealed through doubting the existence of God, and certainty is obtained through trial and hope' (M.B.). Another student observed: 'Tom, the main protagonist and pastor in Bergman's film *Winter Light,* and the young country priest who is the main protagonist in Bresson's film *Diary of a Country Priest,* are the symbols of Christianity in small country communities with weak faith and community ties. There is almost no one who believes in God left in these places, and during Mass the Churches in both movies are almost empty. The pastor and the priest are constantly fighting with personal and external problems, which gives even greater absurdity to their lives. This absurdity unites the experience of the priest and the pastor, but the reasons are different in the two movies' (Ž.K.).

The other important message lying hidden behind the films is a hint about Christian love. Students wrote: 'In both films the superior Christian idea of Love as the Cognition of Good and Evil is emphasised. In Bergman's film the organist pronounces "Love is God and God is love.

Love proves the existence of God, love is a real force for mankind", and in Bresson's film this is expressed by the utterance: "God is not a torturer, He wants us to love one another"' (S.V.). Furthermore, one of the students defined the core of Christian ethics as parallel to E. Levinas' approach: 'The relation to the Other offers the possibility of approaching God, as Levinas wrote: "The other man is the very place of metaphysical truth and is necessary for my relation to God"' (K.B.). It is not by accident that Levinas is mentioned in this context. As a matter of fact, one can discern traces of the search for radical Christian morals in the ethics of Levinas in the writings of Dostoyevsky. A main concept at the core of Levinasian ethics is disinterestedness (*désintéressement*). The presupposition of this article relies on the hypothesis that it is not possible to understand this disinterestedness (*désintéressement*) from the perspective of the Western philosophical tradition. In the main thesis of the article it is stated that in his reflection upon the philosophical interpretation of guilt Levinas relied not only on Jewish Scriptures but also on the sources he had found in Dostoyevsky's novels, where the Russian writer was searching for his own understanding of New Testament morality. In various writings, Levinas returns with some exaltation to Dostoyevsky's interpretation of guilt in the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Братья Карамазовы*) expressed by the teachings of the monk Zossima: *Chacun de nous est coupable devant tous pour tous et moi plus que les autres*[18]. As Marie-Anne Lescourret notes, Levinas maintained fidelity to this phrase to the end of his life[19]. Even in the later book *About God Who Came to Reason (De Dieu qui vient)*, he states again '*Chacun de nous est coupable...*' This phrase constitutes the core of Levinas' ethics. What is the vulnerability (*vulnérabilité*) of a person? Vulnerability occurs when one becomes obsessed by the Other and allows the Other to approach him, but in *Dostoyevsky's Conception of Guilt* this does not happen through consciousness of representation or proximity. To become vulnerable means to suffer for the Other (*souffrir pour autrui*), to be able to stand for the Other, to take the place of the Other, and to allow the Other to destroy oneself. This is the suffering of the heart,

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[18] E. Levinas, *Autrement qu'źtre ou au-delą de l'essence',* Paris 1978, p. 228.
[19] M.A. Lescourret, *Emmanuel Lévinas,* Paris 1994, p. 43.

miséricorde, which according to Levinas is the supposition of every love and every hatred for the Other. This is a preliminary vulnerability (*vulnérabilité préalable*). The responsibility for the Other is a service (*servitude*), passivity or prelogical submission of oneself to the Other. This value cannot be thematised. Her name is God, says Levinas in the text *The Humanism of the Other Person*[20].

The importance of Christian love as *miséricorde* was revealed by the students through the comparison of the differences between the messages in the two films. The written essay revealed that first-year students were perfectly capable of comparing the plot and the situations of the two clergymen in the two different productions, noticing not only their similarities but also their differences. One student, for example, wrote: 'But the main difference is that the country priest from Bresson's movie tries to fulfil his duty to the end, not closing the door for his parishioners, whereas the pastor Tomas from Bergman's movie passes his despair on to the others' (M.B.). Students were aware of the uneven and unjust social situation of the priest and the pastor. They noticed the inability to love, the coldness, even the indifference of the pastor in Bergman's film, characteristics for which he is not blamed by those who surround him. Tom in Bergman's movie despairs due to his own personal inability to experience love. Bresson's country priest, in contrast, despairs of finding signs of love from the surrounding world. Some students pointed out the entry he writes in his diary: 'Behind me was nothing and before me was a wall, a black wall... God has left me, I am sure' (S.V.). How could Bresson's country priest maintain love as *miséricorde* in such a difficult situation? It is due to the quality of his patience. Patience, as Tertullian observed, is one of the main values of the Christian spirit: 'Let us, on the other hand, love the patience of God, the patience of Christ; let us repay to Him the patience which He has paid down for us! Let us offer to Him the patience of the spirit, the patience of the flesh, believing as we do in the resurrection of flesh and spirit'[21].

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[20] E. Levinas, *Humanisme de l'autre homme*, Paris 1972, p. 87.

[21] Tertullian, *Of patience.* trans. S. Thelwall, available at: https://caplawson.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/of-patience-by-tertullian.pdf

Patience is the third particular virtue essential to Bresson's priest. The parishioners expect him to leave, but he, as one of the students noticed, 'remains spiritually great and obedient, restricting his own egocentricity: instead of anger he shows forgiveness, he does not disown the unfair parishioners and when advised to reject them, answers: "I won't close my door to anyone"' (S.V.).

Did the students notice any additional problems they were not asked to discern in advance? Some of them in fact did. The outcome of the experiment included rhetorical questions that cannot be answered at once. This is exemplified in one of the student essays: 'It is easier to speak about giving when material things are being given. In this situation it is easy to distinguish what can be given and what cannot. But is it possible to speak about things being given when they are not material, but spiritual? It is possible to imagine a love which one person once he/she feels it, 'gives' to another, or to the object of the love, or to humans as a whole, inspiring them to love. But is it possible to give something one does not have?' (K.B.). The student were also conscious of the main problem behind the words of Bresson's country priest: 'I parted the muslin veil and brushed her forehead with my fingers. I had said to her, "Peace be with you" and she'd received it on her knees. What wonder, that one can give what one doesn't possess! Oh, the miracle of our empty hands! How to give the things one doesn't have?' (K.B.).

Klevan and Cavell noticed that good films prompt mysterious thoughts and feelings, amorphous latent thoughts, and the aim of educators teaching through cinema is to teach students the patience to wait for the thought to be born. The experiment involving these two productions has revealed that students are able to rediscover themselves in the most important messages concealed in examples of spiritual cinema.

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