SCREEN GAZING AND THINKING. CINEMA IN HUMANITIES' EDUCATION

CONTEMPLAR LA PANTALLA Y PENSAR. UNA PROPUESTA PARA EL USO DEL CINE EN UNA EDUCACIÓN HUMANÍSTICA

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The article deals with a three year collaboration program between the Filmoteca de Andalucía (The Film Institute of Andalusia) and Philosophy faculties of the University of Córdoba (UCO). The aim of this educational project, entitled "To look, to think and to debate", was to integrate film analysis in the syllabi of some Philosophy courses, more than using films as incidental examples.
The general aims of that program are addressed by using two Spanish films as case studies, and highlighted, both, the new learning chances and the didactical problems.
Keywords: Educational methods, university experiences, cinema, Philosophy.

El artículo reflexiona en torno al programa de colaboración de tres años de duración desarrollado entre la Filmoteca de Andalucía y las áreas de filosofía de la Universidad de Córdoba (UCO). El propósito de este proyecto educacional, que fue denominado Mirar, pensar y debatir, fue integrar el análisis fílmico en el programa de varias asignaturas de filosofía, y por tanto no sólo su uso como ejemplos incidentales.
Analizando dos películas españolas como estudios de caso, se abordan los objetivos generales del programa y se discuten tanto las nuevas oportunidades de aprendizaje como los problemas didácticos implicados.
Palabras clave: Métodos educativos,experiencias universitarias,cine, filosofía.

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1.Introduction.

For the last three years, the areas of Philosophy and Moral Philosophy (Dpt. Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cordoba – Spain) have laid out a projectt integrate film analysis in the syllabus of some of our modules in bachelor's degree courses (specifically, in History and Humanities degrees). We entitled our project *Mirar, Pensar, Debatir* (*To look, think and debate*) It was developed with the support of the Andalusian Film Archive – AFA. Based on the results and feedback that we have received from its implementation, this paper investigates on the role of cinema in a liberal or humanistic education. In particular we highlight the implications of film analysis for critical thinking learning and for enhancing narrative imagination. Both of them are remarkable capabilities which provide guidance in life, an outstanding goal for a humanistic and liberal education. Last but not least, we shall focus in the hermeneutic appropriation of films to deal with onto-epistemic issues, particularly the use of cinema in the hermeneutical analysis of truth in the works of art. As an illustration we shall discuss two films included in the project: *The Hunt* (*La caza*, Carlos Saura, 1965) and *Dream of Light* (*El sol del membrillo*, Victor Erice, 1992).

2. Learning processes.

Regarding the learning processes, the project looks upon spectatorship as the main purpose of the learning experience. Using AFA facilities, we devised a film watching experience aimed at arise thoughtful and creative attitudes. To achieve that goal, we scheduled several screenings programs that

LEVEL	COURSE NAME AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS 2009-2012
Lifelong learning students	Course 'Filosofía' (120 students)
Undergraduate students	
First and second years	'Historia del pensamiento filosófico y científico', Degree in Humanities (45 students) 'Filosofía', Degree in History (300 students) 'Filosofía', Degree in Hispanic Philology (30 students)
Third and fourth years	'Hermenéutica contemporánea' (Degree in History and Degree in Humanities (40 students) 'Historia del PensamientoAnglosajón', Degree in English Philology (45 students)

Table 1. The groups involved.

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we share with AFA and, with the collaboration of different specialist that we have invited to the screening sessions, we discuss with them and our students about the films and the topics we have included in our programs. We claim that watching films in specifically designed venues, like film archives, is a helpful path to transform unreflective spectatorship into new and qualified learning experiences. Among the different ways where cinema can improve the teaching and understanding of several philosophical topics, we can underline these ones: filmmakeseasier some issues which are difficult to understand, it enhances essential skills like creativity and critical thinking, and collaboratesin illustrating different subjects which are difficult to be represented (Castro 2009, pp. 407-418).The project takes advantage from these benefits and uses them as an introductory path for our reflection on Philosophy and Ethics.

Our collaborative program with *The Film Institute of Andalusia* begun in 2008 and it is still ongoing. The period of study of this article is 2009-2012. We screened the same films, in the same screening sessions, with undergraduate students of the Faculty of Arts (UCO), and elderly students of the «Cátedra Intergeneracional Francisco Santiesteban» (the UCO program for elderly people) enrolled in the course 'Philosophy'. Table 1 shows the groups involved.

The intended teaching strategies were the following:

a) Highlighting analogies between philosophy and film audiovisual contents.

b) Switching from the traditional way of explaining and studying (through verbal and written communication) to audiovisual discourse.

c) Widening the space of teaching: from the traditional venues (university rooms) to the screening room.

d) Enriching the context of teaching using the extra-academic possibilities of one of the most important cultural centers of the city (*The Film Institute of Andalusia*)

e) Encouraging reflexive debate, which is essential in philosophy courses. After the screening there is a dialogue between teachers and the general public of *The Film Institute of Andalusia*, and not only between teachers and students. The debate on the movie continues for several days after the screening in the blog hosted at the official university web (www3.uco.es/moodle/) and the blog http://area-filosofia-moral-uco.blogspot.com.es/

f) Encouraging self-evaluation because students are supposed to link theoretical contents with what they watched, listened and discussed at the screening room

3. Methodology: Cinema in the liberal educational model.

We suggest the idea of *humanistic* or *liberal* education as a general framework to address the relation between cinema and philosophy. In 1930, the year of *L'âge d'or* (Buñuel, 1930) and *The Blue Angel* (*Der blaue Engel*, Sternberg, 1930), the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset published his *Mission of the University* (Ortega y Gasset 1987, pp. 313-353). Even today, this issue the goal of universities is difficult to define. Our time is quite different from Ortega's but we believe, like he did, that universities should be committed to a general notion of culture.

Ortega claimed that universities should have three main goals. The first two goals are generally acknowledged: first, students are

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trained for professional careers at university campus; second, university provides skills and knowledge for making research. Besides universities should attain a third goal that is quite important in a liberal educational model. According to Ortega, the real mission of universities is to create, preserve and communicate culture. But culture is not (or not only) tradition. Ortega did not mean the anthropological concept of culture, but a specific notion to bridge the gap between our present and an ever-challenging future. Social life is always complex and can becomes a mess. It could become a real chaos if we do not supplement instincts and immediate desires with some guidelines. All of us need a kind of a map or compass to find our way in the tangle of life. That compass is culture and, through it,individuals and societies strive to organize their experience and appraise what has a real value. Therefore culture is neither an aristocratic privilege nor the general way of life of a community. Ortega defined culture as the *living ideas system*of every period of time, meaning a framework of ideas to organize and understand the world, as well as establishing successful value rankings. Organizing, understanding and assessing are universal social needs, because every society must tackle some kind of irrational variety and lack of sense. These problems can be solved whether in an unproductive and passive way or in a fertile one. For this reason an important mission of university education is providing people with an adequate culture, namely a culture *at the high of their time* in the words of Ortega.

There are at least two lessons concerning cinema and liberal education that we can get from Ortega. The first one is about what culture representsin our time. As far as in the 1930s, Ortega pointed out that science furnishes contemporary culture. However that has not always been the case, because mythology and religion provided the bigger part of culture at other times. On the other hand, science is not culture. Let us note that science is a highly specialized knowledge with an obscure jargon, so that university educators should transform scientific information into knowledge for the daily life. The culture of the age is made of scientific 'living ideas' for the most part. While this is true, we claim other kind of ideas should be taken into account as well, including film ideas. As Adorno and Horkhimer noticed (1973, p. 171) «the entire world is filtered by the cultural industry», including film industry. It is quite possible that the fear of Lumières'first audiencesis just a legend. However, movies have come to be part of daily life since then. Cinema has become such a heavy influence on our interpretation of the world, that *La Ciotat* train is not only on the screen any longer. We mean that our ideas of the world are mediated and filtered by the movies, so they are part of the *live ideas* system of our time.

McGinn (2007, p. 18) claims that «the screen functions like a window onto a world beyond, through which the eye naturally and spontaneously passes, and that has been happening for a hundred years». For this reason we claim that movies are part of the culture of our age.Taking aside the role of film in contemporary culture, the second lesson is that film is important to communicate culture at the university, whatever 'culture' might be. The notion of culture has become ambiguous, and this vagueness is part of the problem concerning humanistic or liberal education. It is not only a question of words, but a symptom of the structure of our time. The fall of the liberal education did not

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happen yesterday. Already in the sixties Allan Bloom (1991) pointed out the flaws of university education due to lack of philosophy, literature or history of art. But Bloom was thinking about the *great philosophy* or the *great literature* since that he was defending a *canon* of major works with permanent and universal meaning. Fortunately Martha Nussbaum recently proposed a wider and non-elitist view of liberal education. Using Nussbaum's approach we can eschew both the culture definition problem and that of canon. Nussbaum distinguishes between liberal education for the elite, for a higher rank whose political mission is to govern, and liberal education for the citizens, for the vast majority of the population. This educational projectis not worked out fornow free people, but to help people to become free. Liberal education is intended to «produce free citizens», as Nussbaum says, because «they can call their minds their own» (Nussbaum 1997, p. 293). To get this we do not exactly need a canon but the capacity to judge on canons, and skills to influence on our culture (whatever a culture might be). In that way liberal education aims at developing three capabilities: a critical way of thinking, a capacity to see and judge beyond the conventions of our born culture, and to use a *narrative imagination* (Nussbaum, 2010). The educational project *To look, think and debate* has focused just on the first and the last ones, and we do so in the remaining paper.

Narrative imagination is a capacity for empathy, notably for rejoicing and suffering with the joy and sorrow of other human beings. There is a long philosophical tradition dealing with this issue, including classic works like Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Smith 1976), and contemporary workslike Nagel (1980), Parfit (1984) or Sen (1993). As Smith noticed, empathy requires imagination because it is not only a capacity for passive feeling. As narrative imagination relates to emotion, it has a cognitive dimension. Through the use ofthat kind of imagination, we are able to adopt the point of view of other people. As Nussbaum holds, this is not a static possibility but something with a wider scope. Bythe narrative imagination we can imagine how other people experiences are, and so we are able tofeel a genuine interest for their needs and longings. That is to say, we are able to interpret the alternative narratives of other lives, notably the diverse worth while ways of life. Everybody can make use ofher narrative imagination; nevertheless it is something we need to foster since it requires not merely intellectual training, but also education of sensitivity and taste. Like literature, cinema can play a major role in narrative imagination and critical thinking.

4. Results and discussion: Spectatorship as hermeneutics in liberal education.

4.1. The case of Saura's La Caza (The Hunt).

Admittedly, film discourse is scarcely praised for its ethical complexity and for its potential as a trigger of narrative imagination (Muller, 2001), but films could be used like case studies «filled with the subtlety and messiness» of real life (Kupfer, 1999, p. 32). As an instance of one of those case studies, we turn now to the use of *The Hunt* (*La caza*, Carlos Saura, 1966) in a module for undergraduates called *History of Ethical and Political Thought*. The Spanish film director Carlos Saura shot *The Hunt*in 1965. The film

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was awarded with the Silver Bear at Berlin Festival 1966. *The Hunt* tells the story of three old friends who spend a hunting day near Madrid. The three of them are in their fifties. Enrique, a twenty year old youngster, goes with them. He is the brother-in-law of one of the friends, and it is the first time he hunts. The entire story happens during that day, and through the dialogues we can infer just a few details about the characters previous life. We grasp that José, Paco and Luis were business associates in the past, and that there was another partner who died (we never know how).

The film was shot at an arid place, almost a desert, south of Madrid. Location is quite important because Saura wanted to 'leave' the characters in an isolated and unpleasant place during a terribly hot and sunny day. Through that narrative device characters are placed outside the society, so they come back to the 'state of nature' as the day and their hunting goes on. The kind of hunting is important too: they hunt rabbits, many of them, so they almost make a slaughter. A wise spectator can easily infer that the film is a metaphor of the Spanish Civil War, a forbidden topic in the time of the film. At a more general level, the film conveys a symbol of the violence and nastiness of human relations when they are poisoned by hidden offences.

To escape from censorship, Saura created a claustrophobic allegory to represent the still fresh injuries of the Spanish Civil War. Berliner's jury announced that *The Hunt* was awarded for *the braveness and indignation used in his fashioning of a peculiar situation of his time and society*. This is true, but we think *The Hunt* goes beyond. It makes possible to address an issue related with the Civil War but of a wider scope, namely the relation between memory and political justice. Changes of political regime (like from dictatorship to democracy) involve specific problems of justice. Elster used the expression *transitional justice* for this issue (Jon Elster, 2004). Part of the problem lies in the attention that we should devote to the victims caused by the former regime, and the role victims should have in the new regime. These are hard practical problems, because it is not always clear who was responsible of unfair behaviors, and because there might be terrible crimes whose cruelty and injustice any new regime cannot repair nor even punish. Still there is a relation between justice and the memory of the victims. Indeed, political killers strive to lessen the importance of their crimes, and for this reason memory and justice go together as oblivion and injustice do.

Films provide a way to restore somehow the memory of the victims, particularly by the hermeneutic relation between the film and its audience. Landsberg called 'prosthetic memories' to those devices that let people feel alien memories as real ones, for example in films like *The Thieving Hand*, *Blade Runner* or *Total Recall* (Landsberg, 2004). Films themselves are not implanted memories but they can be used to enhance and enrich collective memory since films are a kind of *cultural prosthetic memory*, a social and cultural device to understand human experience. Because of memory helps to shape social memory, as Landsberg points out, we set up the screening in AFA projection room to arouse a critical look on that politically-shaped, prosthetic memory. In the hope that our student could imagine a more plural and complex collective memory, we proposed *The Hunt* as a text for conscientious hermeneutics.

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In the sixties, when Saura made his film, the remembrance of the victims, the Historic Memory, was a forbidden issue. Since recently the Historic Memory is part of the Spanish political debate of nowadays. The topic has two main sides: the Civil War victims and the terrorist group ETA victims. Regarding the first side, Civil War victims and their heirs, many people think the whole issue is just political opportunism because the problem was solved in the political transition during the seventies. But many other people think that Historic Memory is still due. We think *The Hunt* was useful to pose this debate in a dispassionate and unbiased way, because films can develop the narrative imagination that is necessary to tackle issues like that. The audience at the The Film Institute of Andalusia's projection room realized immediately that the Civil War was the hidden issue of the film. Actually, it was something Saura might insinuate but not mention. Yet not everybody agreed on the role of the Historic Memory, on the disturbing presence of the victims. They died many years ago and Saura alluded to them very subtly: in the course of their shooting party, the hunters discovered a corpse inside a cave. Then one of the characters sanctions:'*every corpse deserves his grave*'. Clearly, Saura was meaning the confinement of memory. That corpse symbolizes the incarceration of the memory of Civil War losers, and how much the winners despise remembrance (and so Luis, one of the winners, cries '*Burn down that cave!*'). Saura's film lets our students to use their narrative imagination to adopt others points of view in the Spanish biased debate on Historic Memory.

4.2. The case of Erice's El Sol del membrillo (Dream of Light).

Cavell has raised the question whether films could make people morally better. In the previous section we tried to answer that question through the role of film within a contemporary *Weltanschauung*. In his *Film in the University*, Cavell answers in the affirmative since some movies are of works of art, and art arouses hermeneutical enquiries (Cavell, 1981). It is this line of thought that we shall pursue in this section.

A film could be considered a special kind of *text*, but it does not become either a work of art or a philosophical reflection. On the other hand, the hermeneutical approach adopted by the *reception theory* draws a distinction between works of art and texts, because «the work of art is the constitution of the text in the lector mind» (Iser 1987, p. 149). Therefore it is important not just watching a movie but also paying attention to the way we look at it – particularly in an educational context. In fact, the use of the AFA facilities instead of the Faculty's was planned to get a self-conscious and critical audience, as we said previously. Watching a film in an appropriate projection roomand in an academic contextis like offering a 'reader pact' to the student. Sartre said that writing and reading are two sides of the same coin. Writing, said the French philosopher, is an invitation to read, but, taken together, writing and reading constitutes a *pacte de générosité* or *generosity pact* (Sartre 1965). In the same way, filmmaking and film watching are linked by this *generosity pact*: on the one hand the director makes a proposal to the spectator, specifically from his personal view of the world, his*own* world; on the other hand, the spectatoris free to accept the director

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invitation. If he does, he shall look *into* the screen in order to watch what is happening in the film's virtual space. We encouraged our students to agree on this *generosity pact* in a self-conscious and open-minded way. Let us recall this seminal Edgar Morin's text:

Spectators in the 'dark room' are passive subjects in their purest form. They can do nothing, they have nothing to give, not even their applauses. They are patient, and agonize. They are suppressed, and suffer. Everything happens very far out of their reach. At the same time, everything occurs in them, in their psychic sensibility, if we can put it this way. When the influences of the shadow and the double merge on a white screen in a dark room and the channels are blocked, the locks of the myth, the dreams, the magic are opened for spectators, who are sunk in their alveolus, an entity closed to all except to the screen, wrapped in the double placenta of an anonymous community and the darkness. (Morin 1956, p. 14)

Film theory has been developed a lot since the fifties. Nowadays we know that spectatorship is not a fully passive experience as Morin suggested. Indeed if it were, cinema could hardly be used in a humanist model of education (Zumalde-Arregi, 2011, pp. 326-49). Still Morin is right when interpreted as searching for a suitable educational *environment*. Accepting the *generosity pact*, students are exposed to a strong intellectual stimulus for a hundred minutes. For that we need to catch their attention. In an article on learning and teaching innovations, Jesús Salinas makes this suggestion:

[…]integration of new materials, new learning behaviors and practices, and new beliefs and conceptions according to Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) are changes related with the processes of innovation and certain improvements within the methods of teaching and learning. According to Fullan and Stiegelbauer, the use of new materials, the introduction of innovative curricular approaches or the latest technologies are just the tip of the iceberg: the complexity is related not only with the development of new skills encouraged by the teachers and associated to the change, but also with the acquisition of new believes and some conceptions linked to it. (Salinas 2004, 4).

We agree that, somehow, the difficulties showed in several innovation projects are related «not only with the development of new skills encouraged by the teachers and associated to the change». Coming back to Salinas's words, not a minor difficulty has to be place into those 'conceptions' linked to the innovation process, because when we try to innovate we have to be convinced of its necessity. And we say '*its necessity*' since when we enter a process of innovation, at first, the only thing we are convinced is the necessity of a change in perspective, a turn in the design of our modules and the curricular material. Uncertainties and the implicit complexity of any change process frequently lead to some of the mayor difficulties in the development of new conceptions. In other words, since we are at the beginning of a course of action, we hold some doubts about it results and consequences. At any rate, we claim that the role of film as an innovative method to teach philosophy should not be a minor one. Using films is a way to start studying deep philosophical issues. Furthermore, film language and screening analysis are a way to pose quite important philosophical questions to our students, and as a result to improve our courses methodology.

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If we are to use films as special learning tools in Philosophy, then we need to change the philosophy teachers mentality. Philosophy teachers are accustomed to work with documents -as in textual comments and close readings of philosophical works-, or even with works of art as illustrations of philosophical topics. Compared to those ones, films have a further complexity since they raise a particular relation between meaning and interpreter. Apart from their artistic aspects, films are hard to interpret due to that relation. As other works of art, films have not definitive meaning because they are opportunities for *understanding in the way of interpretation*. For this reason films are more than just instruments to decipher a given meaning. On the contrary, works of art cross the boundaries of pre-established meanings because the process of comprehension is shaped as a *hermeneutical circle* between work and interpreter. Since this circle makes possible a permanent renewal of contents and contexts, both philosophy and philosophy teaching are transformed as well.

Apart from the mentioned reason, the choice of film material is particularly sensitive, since depending on the artistic nature of the chosen cinematographic works, we can improve and enhance some different impressions on the students,and a diversity of readingsand nuances which are present in our modules' contents. Thus, both the teacher-student relationship and the relationship between the planned subject matters and the selected films are constantly enriched.We are nor just into a simple circle (Illustration 1) but into circles of much more complexity and richness (Illustration 2).

Illustration 2 highlights two circular and interdependent relations: a circular teaching-learning relation teacher (T) - student (S) through the film work (F) and the interplay between the players (teacher and student) and their own 'anticipations' (A) –

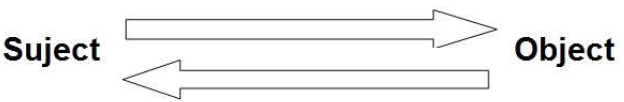

Illustration 1: A Circular Subject - Object Relationship

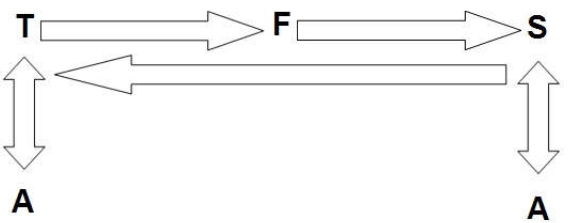

Illustration 2: Teaching-Learning Relationship through Film. Interplay between the Players and their Anticipations

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'prejudices' in Gadamerian terms. The film acts as an introduction to our topics but, particularly, as a medium for proposing and qualifying some of the most difficult or controversial subject mattersof our syllabus. Like other works of art, film is a enriching medium to get into philosophical questions, but what makes film specially proficient to help the student within his learning relation and approaching to philosophy is its particular architecture and display. It goes without saying thatin the teaching-learning relation through film the benefits do not liejust in the fact that the students get a better understanding of a movie and the contents that it encloses, but alsoin the fact that the teachers get new insights to explain philosophical topics (Lastra 2009, pp. 33-39). And even more, it is possible that we can reach to a situation where, as what Jacques Rancière has pointed out:

If the identification of cause [teacher] and effect [student] can be thought as a principle of the stultification, the principle of emancipation is the dissociation of cause and effect. The paradox of the ignorant master lies therein. The student of the ignorant master learns what his master does not know, since his master commands him to look for something and to recount everything he discovers along the way while the master verifies that he is actually looking for it. The student learns something as an effect of his master's mastery. But he does nor learn his master's knowledge. (Rancière 2007, p.277)

To demonstrate let us come back to *The Hunt* for a moment. The film was useful for students to get a critical perspective on Spanish recent political history, but also for teachers to revisit the issues of social contract and state of nature. Saura's film casts a new light here because Saura proposed the hunt as a metaphor of the state of nature. Therefore the film suggests a link between a Hobbesian state of nature and a void of civic memories that could be take into account in future editions of our courses.

But in order to make Illustration 2 clearer and the meaning of the mentioned 'interplay between the players (teacher and student) and their own *anticipations* (A)', we suggest an approach to the comprehension

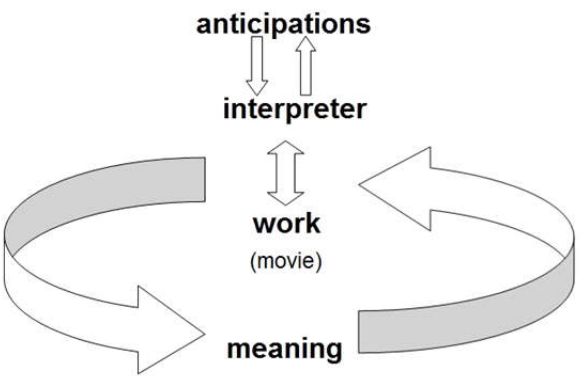

Illustration 3: Understanding as Interpretation

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relationships within the 'hermeneutical circle' (Illustration 3) as conceived by Hans Georg Gadamer (Gadamer 1975). The following sketch attempts to communicate its linchpin.

Clearly influenced by the Heideggerian conception on the understanding pre-structures, Gadamer assumes that 'understanding' as 'interpretation'is a process where the anticipations (*prejudices*) which determine the way the interpreter interacts on his relation to the work are always interacting withinthe circular process between that relation and theendless discovering of meanings.

We used the term 'work'instead of'text', because when explaining the application of the *circle*, Gadamer (1975, pp. 399-410) makes clear that whenever we try to understand a signal, a work of art or a musical composition, one is confronted with something that cannot be put into words:

In this regard he evokes the very revealing example of the painter, the sculptor or the musician who would claim that any linguistic rendition or explanation of his work would be beside the point. The artist can only discard such a linguistic interpretation, Gadamer contends, in light of some other 'interpretation that would be more to the point. But this interpretation, as an accomplishment or realization of meaning, is still geared to a possible language, even if it espouses the form of a dance or a mere contemplation. The important idea for Gadamer's notion of interpretation and its inherent linguisticality is that the listener be taken up by what he seeks to understand, that he responds, interprets, searches for words or articulation and thus understands. It is in this response that Gadamer sees the applicative, self-implying nature of understanding at work. (Grondin 2002, pp. 36-51).

To think about the linguisticity of the work of art involves a number of problems and difficulties that we can not analyze here in detail. Some of those problems get a whole new dimension when we address the film work. We have mentioned above some of the film's contributions that could help to teach Philosophy, but there are even more inputs that may be relevant in the hermeneutical context we are discussing: in the context of the movies, the linguistic character of the work is out of question, since movies narrative is one of its key structure. Even more, when the discourseis established through the combination of cinematographic and verbal languages, when facing with words and images, the circle of understanding is enhanced remarkably.

Let us consider another of the films used in our discussion group: *Dream of light* (*El sol del membrillo*, Víctor Erice, 1992). Antonio López, the celebrated contemporary Spanish painter, is trying to paint a quince tree planted in his garden during its ripening season (Autumn). Throughout his life, almost as a necessity, the painter has worked on the same theme for many times. As usual within most of his works, López does not try to paint and finish a picture, but to capture the changing steps of light on the objects in this case, a quince, a natural being which means that the painting runs along a natural period of time and, sometimes, it lasts for years. In this case, Antonio Lopez's primary purpose will be to go along the tree in the ripening of its fruits, turning his work into a deep reflection about the light and its ability or potential to establish and redefine reality.

In his third feature film, and fascinated by the approach that Antonio Lopez uses in his

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works, Victor Erice goes along the painter in his pictorial approach to nature and light. The film chronicles this experience and everything which is involved around. When Winter announces its arrival, ripe quinces -falling from the branches and bringing the work of the painter to an end- started a process of decomposition in the soil. Then, the painter tellsus a dream, which is nothing but the extraordinary reflection of Erice aboutLópez's painting and his treatment of light.

Víctor Erice and Antonio López share a reverential behavior to reality (we mean 'reality' not 'realism'). They share similar attitudes, but two different ways of access to reality which enter into dialogue. As the director says:

At a time like the present, when the audiovisual inflation has become extravagant, the question that imposes itself more than ever is: how to make visible the art of painting, how to film a painting? [...] Throughout this century, painters and filmmakers have continued to look each other, perhaps because they have had, and continue to have more than one dream in common, among others, to capture the light but, above all and because their work reflects the same mythical impulse, this is, the original necessity to overcome the time through the continuity of the form the completely psychological desire of replacing the outside world by its double (Erice, 2004).

We scheduled this film in our *Contemporary Hermeneutics* module in order to address two questions in connection with the problem of the relation between truth and the work of art on the base of Heidegger's (1996; 2002) reflection on the work of art as a domain for the unveiling of truth ('truth'considered as*aletheia*, following the pre-classic meaning of that word). These are two questions we have tried to develop along with our students are: first, how can we conceive an analysis of the concept of truth as a analysis on the concept of reality; second, how our conceptions of reality can be analyzed and described in the context of 'a reality constructed through images'?
Lately, we have added another two questions: could we conceive the reality created through images as a preferred space where the real is disclosed? Is not the reality but a process of imaginative disclosure?

It is interesting to read how Erice usually insists that, on his search for reality: «everything is already there,what you just need is to be patient,waiting until things would able to unveil for themselves» (Erice, 2004) But how to contribute, how to witness the unveiling of the reality?It can help to bear in mind what the director says about himself: «I live as a 'backpacker', with my camera in the bag, trying (very patiently) to pay attention to the unveiling» (Erice, 2004)

It is in this context that we recall what the painter Antonio López is trying to do: to understand and to interact with light, to illustrate how essentialis the influence of light on determining a more subtle perception of reality. Then, we realize that he is trying to illustrate it through his living experience with a quince tree from his garden, and by capturing and paying attention to some aspects of our daily live and objects that we usually do not consider to be of particular interest. Herewe may recall what Andrew Klevan has pointed when he reflects on the ability of films to 'reveals' what Cavell called the 'missable': «Those apparently insignificant moments in whose power a part of the power of film rests[…] Any 'motion and station', any 'posture and gesture' may hold a wealth of significance, and further may

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adjust our way of seeing everything else in the film» (Klevan 2011, p. 51).

5. Conclusion.

In brief, the educational project*To look, think and debate* was intended to integrate film narrative into the teaching of philosophical topics. This goal involves both didactical problems and new learning chances. Notably the use of films in liberal education entails adapting and expanding the course contents. Not only this change but also that expansion is a side-effect of film watching as a hermeneutical experience. In any event a thorough lay out is needed to arise a fruitful learning process, including a right film selection, suitable projection rooms, and a final lively debate.

Films are a privilege media to take the students into our philosophy modules: not just as a starting point to draw them to some of the more relevant philosophical topics, but also as a staging of philosophical contents. To achieve this purpose, we need among some other practices some *new perspectives*, because a technical professional development alone is not effective: we need innovations that can lead to changes in the contents and the contexts. Film and philosophy appear as two interrelated areas which produce the kind of novelty that Salinas has pointed when talking about «subjective and objective innovations» (Salinas 2004, p. 6), *i.e.*, the need of a change in our representations and the implicit theories from where we can interpret and adapt the innovations. Among these, some of the main practices that are subject to change are: the teaching content, the methodological strategies and curricular materials as well as the approaches and assessment practices.

We can conclude that the impact of our educational project among the students has been determined by different issues: on the one hand, by a careful selection of works and topics analyzed through the films and by the level where a particular module is integrated. For instance, in the module of *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, Erice's film became not just a dynamic element to go further into some of our topics, but also a way to understand the process of interpretation outlined by Hermeneutics.On the other hand, the influence was also determined by the context of the new actions adopted in our teaching practices.

The learning impact was diverse, plural and unexpected to some extent. It can be divided into the impact on the regular students and the UCO University for the Elderly students. Quite possibly their differences coincide with their different degree of personal maturity, so that elderly students interact more, and more spontaneously, in the debates at the Film Institute of Andalusia. However, their participation using the blogs was zero. Nevertheless it should be take into account that elderly students do not need a positive mark to pass their courses, so their implication is spontaneous but in the very short term. Regarding the undergraduate students of the UCO Faculty of Arts, learning impacts depend primarily on the year (first and second against third and fourth years) and not on the films. Additionally, some courses were especially suitable for the use of films as «Contemporary Hermeneutics». In this case films became an object of study (as philosophic texts are others), and not only a teaching strategy for liberal education.

However, we are afraid that our project final results have been received with some negative criticism among some of our

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colleagues. Interestingly enough, problems did not come from the educational outcomes we have achieved, because these outcomes have been completely positive. At the beginning of our project implementation we did not realize that an «honorable objection to the serious, humanistic study of film» (Cavell 1981, p. 265) would be the first negative criticism we could received, and the first problem that we would have to face from our Faculty fellows. We are convinced that this kind of objection should not be *honorable* anymore.Many of the criticisms we have received arise from a complete misunderstanding about the role that film can play for philosophy. Nothing to do with those opening words that Jerry Goodenough (Readand Goodenough 2005, p. 1) wrote - quoting Cavell «film is made for philosophy»- in his *Introduction* to *Film as Philosophy*.We thought that this confusion could be overcome by the positive results and feedback we have achieved from the essays written by our students, the lively philosophical debates heldat the classroom, and the new forums on film and philosophy that the students opened at Moodle.Anyhow, negative criticism will continue unless until new perspectives are shared with colleagues from other fields, specially the areas of History of Art, Literature and English Philology.

When we began to outline how to use the cinema in a liberal education we started from the perspective of film 'as' philosophy, in agreement with Goodenough statement that «watching a film, engaging both perceptually and intellectually with the cinematic events in front of you, can be another way of doing philosophy» (Read and Goodenough 2005, p. 25). But after the completion of our project, we think we have to go a bit further and claim that film can be understood as philosophy and as an art *with an essential 'distinctiveness'*, because films *expose*, depreciates and breaks some of the ritual and cult values where the works of art have been enclosed, as Cavell pointed (Cavell 1981, p. 267). As it happened to Cavell and, we suppose, to many of our colleagues, when we have been through a number of curricular battles trying to introduce film in the new curricula, what we find is not just a misunderstanding about the role that cinema can plays, but a battle for a 'new'or a 'restored' conception of what could be the model for a liberal education.

As Joseph E. Champouxhas pointed (Champoux, 2007, pp. 5-9), the learning functions of film as case analysis, as a metaphor, symbolism and as meaning and experience are some recognized roles that film can play in the teaching and learning process of philosophical syllabi. However, the particular structure of film, and the screening of a movie in a cinema theater is an experience especially well related with some of the most essential philosophical topics concerning, e.g., our relations and conceptions on reality. It is not just to watch at the screen as an stargazer who contemplates and admires the wonders of astar-studded sky, but to learn from the movie that we are gazing and listening, and that helps us to think.

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