

# Bioethics and cinema. From narration to deliberation

## Bioética y cine. De la narración a la deliberación

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<https://doi.org/10.36105/mye.2021v32n3.06a>

**Tomás Domingo Moratalla.** *Bioethics and cinema. From narration to deliberation (Bioética y cine. De la narración a la deliberación)*. Comillas-San Pablo. Madrid, 2010, pp. 260.

The author starts from two key questions, which he answers in the pages of the book: 1) What are the reasons for using film in bioethics education? And 2) How do I use film for bioethics education? Is there a method?

In the initial three chapters he attempts to answer the first question. From cinema, as a narrative and image of human life; from hermeneutics and its influence on people, he goes on to define cinema and its interaction with a hermeneutic bioethics, or life as narrative and responsibility. Finally, educating narratively for deliberation; in cinema as a laboratory of moral judgment.

In many of the works on bioethics and cinema, this effort of substantiation is dispensed with, an aspect that seems to him una-

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Reception: March 16, 2021. Acceptance: April 30, 2021.

voidable, in order not to lose the sense of using cinema for bioethical education. The use of cinema must be grounded, contextualized, if we do not want it to become a pastime or entertainment.

In the fourth chapter, from what has been achieved at the level of the foundation of the encounter between bioethics and cinema, the author proposes a simple method so that the use of cinema can be productive. The aim of the method is to promote deliberation through storytelling. He exposes the styles of interpretation and how to ethically explain a film.

Then, in chapter five, he outlines the use of the method in a very significant film in the field of bioethics: *Wit-to Love Life*.

He points out three phases of the method: preliminary work, viewing of the film and subsequent work.

In the sixth and last chapter, he presents a list of films classified by thematic blocks of bioethics. In each thematic block, he highlights and analyzes five films and adds a reference to others that are useful.

The objective could well be to elaborate a complete bioethics course, selecting a film from each block, or to select a film that, because of its quality of content, would provide material for a complete course.

The book is a proposal for an encounter; an invitation to cinema and bioethics; to cinema through bioethics and to bioethics through cinema. Narration and deliberation meet, join forces and summon us, each one of us, as good narrators and deliberators.

Cinema is presented as a tool for teaching bioethics, to learn more and better. In order to do this, it is necessary to establish what moves us to use cinema, with a didactic strategy, a methodology. The author shows the encounter between bioethics and cinema in view of bioethics training at various levels of study; he tries to recover the film forum applied to bioethical issues, but within a rigorous methodology, with a formative and educational purpose.

Cinema, one of the great «inventions» of the 20th century, producer of dreams and fascination, is considered the «total art», a representation of the world. Indeed, it communicates experiences, reflects life and worlds; it is a living, complex and difficult portrait of the human being. It can be used to know the world and, therefore, to transform it.

It is a means of education, an open path, not yet fully explored, in the task of educating, even in the field of bioethics. However, there is an important lack of reflection on the use of film in bioethics, as well as of articulated and coherent methodological proposals. Often the film becomes something circumstantial; at other times, works on bioethics and film become an occasion to defend certain convictions.

The author suggests an encounter that contributes to the intertwining of bioethical issues and the experiences that cinema transmits. There are few reflections that support the encounter between bioethics and cinema and that propose a method for the formative action that cinema can develop. The philosophy that serves as a basis for this encounter is hermeneutics, as a field of interpretation, and ranges from the narrative texture of human life to that of culture and the world. To speak of narrative bioethics we must do so from hermeneutic approaches; from the philosophy of moral deliberation, because to think in a bioethical perspective is to deliberate, which contributes to prudent and responsible decision making. It proposes the use of cinema in bioethics in the perspective that contributes to autonomy, responsibility and prudence, thus becoming an instrument of moral and narrative deliberation.

However, the encounter between bioethics, cinema and education is more complex than it seems. It will depend on what is understood by these. By favoring the encounter between bioethics and cinema, we seek a more open, critical, vital bioethics and a cinema that narrates experiences. This must be the reason behind this encounter, hermeneutics and narrative.

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