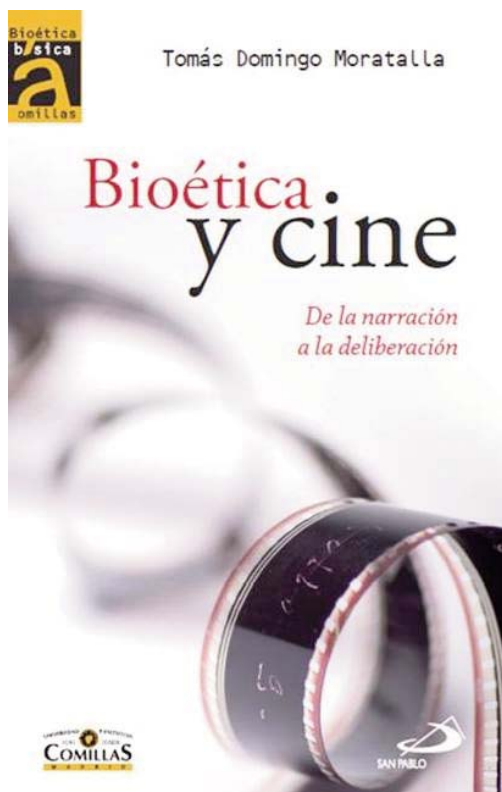


...Bioética y cine. De la narración a la deliberación (2011)
(Bioethics and Cinema. From Narrative to Deliberation) (2011)



The aim of this book is to support the use of cinema in education, especially in the field of medicine and, particularly, in that of bioethics.

As a reflexive and critical response to scientific and technological advances in life and health sciences, bioethics provides analyses which should not just be exercises of speculation, but which should open up to life. This is the reason why the encounter between bioethics and cinema becomes relevant in the contexts of study and education. Cinema, as a reflection of life, proposes and generates a unique opportunity to ponder ethics and humanities in general.

Undoubtedly, the most interesting aspect of this book is its conception of film narrative as a form of narrative thought, capable of expression and of acting as an engine to encourage reflection on human condition. Consequently, cinema is not treated as a merely decorative element, complementary and illustrative of education referred to values, it is rather seen as a specific form of thought. As the author himself points out: "The main contribution narrative can make (to novels and film) is the possibility of widening understanding of our rational faculties, and the possibility of escaping the narrow limits that modern thought has set for reason". This narrative thought attempts to present intentions, actions and human experiences in terms of an account that requires interpreting and that obtains its meaning in that search for understanding.

Cinema acts as a means of expression for the world and allows quite immediate processes of identification, since viewers are swept into the plot, become immersed in the aesthetics and identify with the characters. In today's world, which is more audiovisual than reader-oriented, and more related to narration expressed as images, rather than as written texts, cinema becomes an excellent means of presentation and, what is more, an instrument for moral deliberation. As T. Domingo points out: "We can learn to deliberate by watching films. In this way we could speak of narrative deliberation". Therefore, we are dealing with bioethical narrative, an argument to justify ethics.

The book is not only focused on the explanation of how cinema can be a useful tool for teaching bioethics, but it also proposes a method for the analysis

Technical details

Title: *Bioética y cine. De la narración a la deliberación.*

Author: Tomás Domingo Moratalla (PhD in Philosophy and Arts. Lecturer of moral philosophy at the Complutense University of Madrid. Collaborating lecturer of philosophical anthropology at the UNED [Spanish Distance-Learning University]. Outstanding among his research topics are the application of philosophy to issues and problems such as: technological development, political space, bioethics, education and social communication media; the teaching and transmission of philosophy and ethics; and the development of an ethics of responsibility based on hermeneutics and deliberation).

Language: Spanish.

Publisher: San Pablo and Universidad Pontificia de Comillas.

Year: 2011.

Pages: 264.

of films as narratives that present conflicts of values and that stimulate deliberation. The suggested method is based on the approach made by Diego Gracia, who insists on the fact that the different positions that can be adopted in face of a same conflict can be interpreted and understood through the process of deliberation, finding a sensible and balanced solution.

Furthermore, cinema not only allows for deliberative analysis, but film narrative, like any other account, is a mediation, a way of presenting and opening up to new possibilities, both from a reflective and rational point of view, and from an expressive and emotional one. And as well as acting as a vehicle for transmission and as a display stand to promote identification, empathy, judgment and reflection, it also carries transformative potential, since it influences life and originates processes of appropriation. The excellent analysis made by T. Domingo of the hermeneutical and narrative perspectives of bioethics through film stresses this idea of the “reshaping” of moral life:

“Paul Ricoeur used to say that narrative was a ‘moral judgment laboratory.’ We can also extend this to cinema. Moral life is narratively, or almost narratively, built. We often see our decisions as accounts or films, both in the positive and the negative sense of the expression, that we tell ourselves and others. We act and decide as if we were characters in a film; consequently, we sometimes see ourselves and present our decisions as heroic, while at other times we see things as subject to fate and destiny; we see ourselves either as protagonists that make the plot develop, or as mere supporting actors that have no other choice than to go with the flow.”

The book is divided into two main parts: the first is devoted to a detailed, rigorous and thorough analysis of the relation between bioethics and cinema.

The first chapter provides the arguments for this didactic approach of cinema to the field of bioethics and ethics. The line of argument develops around the tradition of hermeneutics – P. Ricoeur and, also, Ortega y Gasset’s philosophy – without ever losing sight of the “applied” educational interest of the proposal.

Following a short introduction to bioethics, the second chapter defines the contours of what the author calls “narrative bioethics”. Perhaps the most outstanding aspect of the proposal, in this chapter, is how it shows the rationality of what is being put into practice. The use

of cinema is not merely an embellishment, it is not entertainment, but it encourages our education in the ability of ethical judgement.

The third chapter brings together the results of the preceding two (from cinema to bioethics, the first one, and from bioethics to cinema, the second one) in its proposal for narrative education in the practice of deliberation. Deliberation is the method proper to bioethics. As we have pointed out, the author follows in the footsteps of the proposal made by Diego Gracia, completing (developing) it along narrative lines. Bioethical deliberation is also narrative deliberation. Imagination and narrative come together.

Following the previous developments at the level of the argumentation and justification of the proposal, the fourth chapter presents a method for interpreting films in a deliberative manner. Chapter five describes the implementation and exemplification of the method using one of the most significant films in the field of bioethics: *Wit*.

Chapter six represents the second part of the book and is devoted to the presentation of a number of films that might be used in education and bioethical training (medical ethics). The most original aspect of this chapter is its classification of films according to the most relevant topics in bioethics, which can prove very useful in the event of proposing a course on bioethics, and which can also be used as an extremely appropriate tool by those who wish to use cinema as an educational resource. It is a full, if not exhaustive, review of films organized by topic, together with the guidelines on how to use each of them.

Therefore, it is a book that magnificently blends together a reflection on narrative deliberation, well-grounded on a hermeneutical ethics understood as an ethics of responsibility, and the proposal of a method for the application of cinema to the teaching of bioethics, together with a useful selection of well-chosen and commented films that will undoubtedly be useful for bioethical analysis and training.

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Received 17 March 2011.