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WG4: The Constructive Strategies in Teaching Humanities with Films[81]

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Abstract

Our contribution investigates the question whether is it possible to apply constructionist methods of education in teaching humanities with fictional films. From a more sceptical viewpoint one could argue, that this is not possible for several reasons. The article starts the discussion, suggests some arguments for justification of positive answer and reveals several different possible experiences of including constructionism in teaching humanities with fictional films. The theoretical basis for these approaches are the pragmatic pedagogy of John Dewey, the Deleuzean theory of cinema and Paul Ricouer's theory of personal identity. The article deals with the several different possible experiences of including constructive strategies teaching humanities with films.

Keywords

Constructionism; humanities; teaching films; Deleuze; film theory; personal identity

1. Introduction: The Challenge of the Sceptic

Let's start to analyse the problem from the sceptical challenge. One can say that teaching social issues with fictional movies is not in line with constructionism for several reasons. 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? The sceptic does not trust in teacher's or professor's moral sense. 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 interest of society as a whole. For any educational process we should ask if it is beneficial for 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, Constructionist learning is when learners construct mental models to understand the world around them and learning can happen most effectively when people are active in making tangible objects in the real world. But there is hardly anything more passive, according to the sceptic, than watching a fictional movie. It tries to involve us emotionally, to incite feelings like anger, guilt, pity, pride, love, fear, empathy, curiosity, etc. The fictional movies merely give the audience the feeling to be involved at best, which is not in the sense of the active involvement required by constructionism.

Fourthly, the sceptic supposes the best what one can expect from the fictional 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. This 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 sound track 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 *s*tudent-centred, discovery learning.

Firstly, despite of these doubts the sceptic supposes that some movies, albeit usually not the ones dealing with social issues, have large followings (Start Trek, Rocky Horror Picture Show) that attend 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, satisfying the haptic element of Constructionism. 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.

2. Theoretical Basis: Addressing the Scepticism

The response to the challenge from the followers of using fictional movies in constructionist learning would be following. First of all: to the challenge that 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 rational agent is able to understand the essence of 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 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: 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 antisemitic 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 we see 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 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. 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 humanitarian 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 encounter, which inspires a thought. But not the thought stemming from the sources of everyday experience, but the special type of the thought, in Del;euze words "the identity of thought with choice as determination of the indeterminable" (Deleuze 1989: 171). The spectator of serious movies faces the problem: how to withstand something which is unbearable and unthinkable in reality. So firstly, we do agree that it is possible and useful to use methods of creating the different endings of films stories, the same as it would be possible to play with the written texts. It can create much fun and amusement for the 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 the 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: 166).

3. Methodology

The research is provided using and combining theoretical analysis and three case studies. The thought experiment is used in justifying the possibility of applying the constructivist methods in teaching humanities with films. The analytical review of critical literature is used to clarify the theoretical premises of research. The qualitative experiment is used investigating the possible involvement of students. The phenomenological method is used reflecting the analysis of the data. The comparative method is used to investigate the distinction between associational and differentiational type of thinking. The hermeneutical method is used link the Biblical texts with possible interpretations of the film.

4. 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). The other one, which is elaborated by Jasson Walin in *A Deleuzean approach to curriculum. Essay on a pedagogical life (2010)* and Jan Jagodzinski *Visual Art and Education in an Era of Designer Capitalism (2010),* also their publications in the book *Deleuze and Guattari, Politics and Education. For a People-yet-to-Come (2014),* suggests 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. Construction of concepts, thoughts and meanings - in other words - ways of thinking are very important

for both of them. Learning by construction of knowledge forms the basis of constructivism (Phillips, 1995, von Glaserfeld, 1995, Piaget, 1955, Vygotsky, 1997), and constructionism (Papert, 1980; Berger, Luckmann, 1967). Both traditions mentioned above are sometimes refered to with either of those terms by scholars, depending on approach and arguments. We suggest the way which allows going beyond constructionism.

Some of scholars, investigating constructionism and constructivism, and separating *cognitive constructivism* from the *metaphysical constructivism* think, that "metaphysical issues are irrelevant to the pedagogical enterprise except when explicit philosophical issues arise". (Grandy, 1998, 415). This is the state which is applied by Grandy to science teaching. We are thinking about social and humanities having in mind studies on pedagogical or teacher's training courses, teaching as well as learning at school. We think that metaphysics plays an important role for pedagogy and when teaching critical thinking and agree with the idea of Rosi Braidotti about the purpose of humanities, expressed with these words: "We know by now that the field is richly endowed with an archive of multiple possibilities which equip it with the methodological and theoretical resources to set up original and necessary debates with the sciences and technologies and to meet other grand challenges of today" (Braidotti, 2013, 15). So in which sense humanities and teaching to think constructively is important during the classes for film analysis and why it is beyond constructionism?

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, asocial/risk families, bullying, addiction, depression, aids marginalization of cultures, care about animals and others sensitive topics (30 social issues). These problems are suggested by Russell to analyze because of related to American social life, culture and pedagogy, but not only; it is 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 fabula (how they understand 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 to avoid the scenes of violence and sex.

What does Russell use for theoretical standpoint and methodology? It is mostly Driscoll and Engle teaching 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. Dewey it calls interest. Interest is the main vehicle. So films give great possibility to compare what is already in students experience and to think following 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, 137) and adds quite 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, 145). Theory of teaching with films, based on this standpoint, suggests construction of world view and especially understanding of social field through critical and reflective thinking and decision making. It deals with connection of various elements and involvement of new elements, which appears in the process of learning, also reconstruction of presented ideas based on students own understanding, values and experience. Russell states, that such tool 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, 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), which are awarded in international films' festivals. They are very good and undoubtedly fit for analysis of social issues, giving a lot of material for the interpretations. On the other hand, some films, when teaching to perceive situations associatively and to make decisions in accordance, give cliché instead of creativity.

Wallin and Jagodzinski suggest 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 the new way of thinking. Wallin suggests film of Jim Jarmush *Ghost Dog: the way of Samurai* (1999), also Quentino Tarantino *Kill Bill* (2003) and Todd Haynes *I'm not there* (2007). He demonstrates how to work with the problem of time and atemporal person, how to link different heterogeneous lines of actions, how newly to treat the absent of arguments for the agreement, and the problem of multiply identity. In that way he expects to protect students' thinking from cliché, stereotypes, and to escape technics of repression during pedagogical activities. Teaching with films according to him is step forward from banking education, criticized by Paul Freire. Wallin explores Deleuzean and Guattarian concepts and cinema theory about time-image, which interrupt into movement-image and in that way brakes dialectical understanding of film actions, instead - open space for imagination and unexpected combinations of elements which fulfill the cracks, gaps, ruptures in films, which appear by specific montage. Montage of such films is differing from classical montage, because is oriented toward presentation of intervals rather than connections of shots.(Milerius, 2013). It can be called as montrage[82]. Here is a lot of space for linkage of different heterogenous elements and planes, because the main vehicle in film teaching is not the interest, but desire and affect. How 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 creational process, which is not personal, it means being a part of assemblage. So the construction is not personal and even not social, much more mechanical , depended on 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 individual, but about individuation and becoming. 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 other patterns, becomings rather than stories".(Deleuze, 1995, 59). Breaking, crossing and displacing appear as main tools as well as cracks and ruptures. Stemming from Jan-Luc Godard 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, 179,180). Such a method Deleuze calls "Between": between two visual or sound images, between two affectations, between sound and visual image et ctr. Wallin also uses Godard 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, 194).

Working in the same tradition Jagodzinski analyzes films such as Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, (1925), Joaquino Fernandezo, Colino Gunno *Indoctrination* (2011) or Lana and Lilly Wachowskis *The Matrix* (1999), when first one demonstrates dialectical move and spectator involvement into action and third one – erases border between reality and hyper reality. Using these and other films Jagodzinski pay attention onto the message of ideology, which is perfectly demonstrated in the film of Eisenstein and from the other side – possibility of another construction of world view, which is much more complicated and much more rich, integrating what is imaginary, virtual and only possible, as it is in the film of Wachowskis. In both cases students are inspired to understand the construction of their worlds, though access is different in both films cases: to construct one's vision according to ideology and concrete expectations (*Battleship Potemkin*) and to show how one can be constructed in modern, much more complicated reality, through the erasing borders between real and imaginary, natural and technological, human and not human (*The Matrix*). Jagodzinski criticizes construction of people consciousness, especially of students, and following Deleuze outlines 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 usual way of thinking, which is easy going for manipulations, dominant policy and dominant pedagogy.

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[82] According to Nerijus Milerius (2013) it stems from the word *montrer* (fr. to show)

The other kind of films, which he chooses for the analysis in the classes – is of performansist 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 absolutely different speed of movement in it. That is also related to different time perception, quite close to filming in style of slow mood. Jagodzinski's examples of video projects and fiction films allow understanding world as infinitive; 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, percepts and concepts. So the student during the humanities lessons participating actively and creatively 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 films allows to be much more closer to 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[83] advancement" (Jagodzinski, 2016, 104).

The author of this sub chapter experimented with many films, using different methods, working not with school students, but with university students of pedagogical studies. The main result working with them is their huge interest in new paradigm, new way of thinking, constructing their inner and extrinsic world not with very concrete separate elements of clear shape and content, but with elements of absolutely different level, plane, from the 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 V*isual studies and education*. Students already created their own multimodal projects, trying to find proper images for their ideas, to combine them, to add any existed or to create sound track. They presented wonderful examples of mixing elements of different 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 complicated with the sound track, which was created separately and was not diegetic - not coincided with visual image. The feeling of reality was mixed with fantasy of creator and spectator. The perception and understanding of separate events were blundered and in that way created enigma of the film. The other students' film used the image of the legs of school children, their move under the tables, and special sound track. This combination provoked to think the idea of film in many directions. The question is – why educational programme students, who are ready to go to work in schools choose to experiment with sound and image in unexpected way looking for new combinations in contrary to the creating projects in traditional way? The same tendency is evident during the analysis of films in the classes, such as Peter Weir *Dead poet society (1989),* Eric Toledano *Intouchables (2011),* Hal Hartley *Unbelievable truth (1989)* and Wim Wenders *Wrong move (1972)*, then huge attention was shown for the *Wrong move*, which mostly expresses new way of thinking; thinking of infinity, experimenting, inventing and thinking in different directions according to the unpredictable vectors of nomad. The result of teaching with films is not students' thinking according to given new constructs of 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 link of all fields- human and technologies, natural and artificial, actual and virtual, and it is beyond constructionism. Through the differentiation, cracks, ruptures, inbetweenness, involving also new elements, it deals with broad scale of elements in the same time is the part of much bigger creational and constructional process, which is more than human. Coming back to the question about empathy, feelings, which are expressed in the films: will we skip

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[83] VCAE- Visual, cultural and art education

them? New teaching thinking does not stress emotional field. It combines perceptions, sensations and thoughts. All are important, though thoughts are axis for the construction beyond already legitimated constructionism.

5. Constuctivism in Cinema: What Films are Suitable for Humanitarian Education?

Matthew Kearney and David F. Treagust demonstrated how in teaching Physics the educational research on constructionism can be united with the development and use of a multimedia computer program. 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. (Matthew Kearney, David F. Treagust 2001). We ask alternative question: can the educational research on constructionism and multimedia be useful in teaching not only Physics, but also and Metaphysics, having in mind not only Philosophy, but also the Humanities in the broader sense. Is multimedia able to elicit students pre-instructional conceptions of Human reality and encourage discussion even about education itself? Can it be considered as the Copernicus turn in Humanitarian education?

Our preliminary hypothesis is that some cases of multimedia really are able to meet this particular challenge. We restrict this particular our research to fiction movies.

The history of fiction movies reveals the origin of the term 'constructionism' and its practice. It originated in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century in the sphere of revolutionary architecture and design. It was also used and reflected by Russian film director Sergej Eisenstein in the process of creation of the revolutionary movies. Eisenstein discovered not only the possibility of the dialectical editing, but also reflected how to construct the fiction movie in order to impress the public and to impose the ideas the creator intends to impose. Every piece of art, says Eisenstein, has an educational purpose (Eisenstein). This educational purpose in film is reached by the dialectical construction of the film as organic whole, which leads to the pathos experienced by the spectators when the film reaches its climax. Eisenstein realized the artistic essence of the cinematic image as "*producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*" (Deleuze 1989: 151). In his book *Problems of Film Director* Eisenstein step by step reveals the inner laboratory of the constructing his the most popular movies, which imposed the belief of the inevitability of the Socialist October Revolution in masses. Was this revolution in reality so inevitable? Or maybe just the result of the successful conspiracy of the small group of Bolsheviks and Eisenstein with his films persuaded the public of its historical meaning? After watching the Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, reflected; "anyone who had no firm political conviction could become a Bolshevik after seeing the film.' The most celebrated scene in *Battleship Potemkin* is the massacre on the Odessa Steps. The sequence is built from separate shots combined in a very dynamic, rhythmic way. Eisenstein edited the film to produce the greatest emotional response, so that the viewer would feel sympathy for the rebellious sailors of the Potemkin and hatred for their overlords. The case with the Eisenstein's constructivist approach used for the aims of destructive and dangerous propaganda reveals the limitations and possible pitfalls of the constructivist approach. If the truth about the reality is unattainable and we rely as on knowledge on our own world view constructed by ourselves, why not to construct our own truth and by the means of personal genius not to impose on the rest of population? Where are the limits indicating the film director have to stop? As a matter of fact Eisenstein in the history of film making as usual is praised for his genius findings in technique of film constructing and the destructive impact of his movies to the history of his country as usual is skipped with silence and tolerance (see Baranova 2017).

The opposition to Eisenstein's constructivist theory of editing was anti-constructivist approach to film editing suggested by the Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky. Tarkovsky in his book *Sculpting in Time* opposing Eisenstein conception of montage wrote: "I feel that Eisenstein prevents the audience from letting their feelings be influenced by their own reaction to what they see. When in *October* he juxtaposes a balalaika with Kerensky, his method has become his aim, in the way that Valery meant. The construction of the image becomes an end in itself, and the author proceeds to make a total

onslaught on the audience, imposing upon them his own attitude to what is happening" (Tarkovsky 1987: 118). Tarkovsky rejects constructivist approach trying in films to catch the glimpses of reality itself. The signs of reality coincide with the signs of time. Reality reveals itself through flowing time. "Time in cinema becomes the basis of bases, like sound in music, colour in painting", writes Deleuze reflecting Tarkovsky's idea (Deleuze 1989: 288). Montage, says Deleuze, as following Tarkovsky, can be only indirect representation of time. But how to reach the direct image of time? How to approach the reality itself? To our research the following question is also very important: has an educator moral right to use films in teaching process in the manner of the constructionism practiced by Eisenstein (organic model of cinema education, using Deleuze's terms), or should an educator encourage the students to be influenced by glimpses of flowing reality he is able to discern in *hors-champ* (beyond field) of the film (crystalline model of cinema education)? Can the films be used as ideological materials in education or just as the source of more profound questions about human reality? If one chooses for the answer the second alternative the questions still remains: how it is possible to create the movie without ideological input? Do such type of a film have any educational meaning at all? What kind of film should be used in humanitarian education?

Deleuze would had answered: good films. Not depending on genre or topic. Good films, according to Deleuze, are those which are able to restore the link between man and the world which is recently broken: "Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears", concludes Deleuze (Deleuze 1989: 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 139). Watching films one encounters the glimpses of possibilities from the different specter 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 Krzystof Kieslowski 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. All the views were expressed during the seminar in the form as a conference. 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 methical 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 and Treagust 2001: 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 humanitarian education? Or the educational outcome from

this teaching experience is the encounter with the inevitability of living of 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 essay starts the reflection of movie from sceptical tones. He had read in advance and before that from all the trilogy of Kieslowski *Three colours* this particular film *White i*s 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 – hypothetic 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 humanitarian education are the films which resist one straightforward interpretation and create the field for possible multidimensional social constructionism in learning. Deleuze in his philosophy of cinema discerned two kinds of constructionism in film making: the idea of a vertical construction going right to the edge in both directions suggested by Eisenstein – and already discussed; "The whole was thus being continually made, in cinema, by internalizing the images and externalizing itself in the images, following a double attraction. This was the process of an always open totalization, which defined montage or the power of though" (Deleuze 1989: 193). On the other side Deleuze mentions the constructionism of French director Jean Luc Godard who's aim was not to construct the whole, but who supposed that 'the whole is the outside'. The point of constructionism of Godard is quite different. In the first place, says Deleuze, the question is no longer that of the association or attraction of images. "What counts is on the contrary the *interstice* between images, between two images: a spacing which means that each image is plucked from the void and falls back into it" (Deleuze 1989: 193) From the point of view, of virtual constructionism, which tries to reach the whole Godard experiments with the disconnected images which bring together Golda Meir and Hitler in *Ici et ailleurs, Deleuze acknowledges,* would be intolerable. We are also not ready to suggest the reading of Godard films for bachelor students. But for the master students who took the course of Deleuze studies seminar the experience of reading of Gardard's films can be productive. Godards experiments with the Hitler created the scandal. Deleuze is on the side of Godard: "But this is perhaps proof that we are not yet ready for a true 'reading' of the visual image. For, in Godard's method, it is not a question of association. Given one image, another image has to be chosen which will induce an interstice *between* the two. This is not an operation of association, but of differentiation…" (Deleuze 1989: 193).

6. Film as an imagination for creating identity

Already Aristotle pointed out the mimetic character of the arts that lead to a catharsis. The *catharsis* - hardly described by Aristotle in *Poetics* - can be understood as the therapeutic concept and insight into one's own emotional relationship to reality and the harmonization of emotion and reflection. The *catharsis* is the result of the mimetic-narrative structure of the identity. In narrative mimetics, the *idem* is challenged to follow the long path of emotional identifications that can lead to a cathartic insight into the narrative constructed identity as *Mimèsis* II. The film *Va, vis et deviens* (Radu Mihaileanu) illustrates this process. Within educational processes he forms an invitation and challenge to purify the own mimetic processes by placing them in a broader metaphorical context. The film is the imaginative-metaphorical enactment of the identification process

The impressive film *Va, vis et deviens* paints the intriguing fates of an Ethiopian child who gets lost in the misery of an African refugee camp in Sudan. As an adopted orphan, Solomon grew up in Israel. He studied medicine in Paris as an adult and married the girl with whom he had been in love for a long time

in Jerusalem. Eventually the main character returns to Sudan as a *Médicin sans frontières* and finds his old and shriveled mother in an emotional scene.

At the heart of the movie there is a kind of Talmudic discussion between the white Jewish boy Michael and the black adopted son Solomon. The question of Adam's skin color is at the heart of the discussion. Like in a miniature, the central challenge is meticulously worked out.

The imposed question is: "What is color of Adam's skin?" Solomon had asked the rabbi to participate in the discussion in order to prove his Jewish identity. The white Michael is the first to be given the floor and makes the following statement, skillfully supported by references to the Torah:

Michael:

> Adam was created after the image of God. And the beautifully chosen color was white. We were all this, in the beginning.

> After the flood Noah and his sons left the ark. Noah cursed the descent of his son Cham, whose grandson Canaan said "Cursed is Canaan: slave to his brothers he will be" (Genesis 9:25).

> Kush, the eldest son of Cham, is the heir of another curse. Certain descendants of Cham are said to have black skin.

> This is how it happened: Kush became black and from him were born the *Kushim*, the black people of Africa. The descendants of Cham have become slaves and blacks.

Michael's argumentation is built up in the three steps of the classical mythical narrative of the golden origin, the decay and the restauration. First of all it is said that man was originally created after the image of God. The objective reference is linked to a subjective interpretation from which the conclusion is drawn that everyone originally belonged to the white race. The white skin is linked to the created original. Then social inequality is justified by the flood and by the curse of one human being by another. The curse as a sanction leads to the slave status. Finally, the racial differences are also explained by a curse. Social inequality is linked to racial inequality.

Salomon initially wants to repeat the starting point of his opponent, as it fits within the genre of the proposed discussion:

Salomon:

> Are Adam and God of the same color, white?

> ... Michael has said. ...No.

After the hesitation and interruption of the discourse, Salomon looks at the Qes Amhra, the Jewish black religious leader who had fled Sudan with him. Solomon had come to know the man as the figure who protested against the second-class position of the Falasha Jews by invoking their recognized Jewish identity as legitimate descendants of the Biblical king Salomon and the African queen Sheba. The Qes helped him write letters to his mother in Sudan, thus forming the symbolic link between Solomon and his lost homeland. When Salomon wants to follow on from Michael's argumentation, the Qes nods no. Solomon remembers his words immediately preceding the discussion. When writing to his mother, his letter was rejected as a mere repetition of pre-existing models and formulas:

No, this is not good. Interpret, Schlomo, do not repeat like a parrot. Interpret. Insert Schlomo into the text. Let us take this up again.

Salomon interrupts his discourse, which threatened to result in a mere repetition of the existing arguments. The duplicate can never have the qualities of the original. Pure repetition of actions and speech leads to decay. It lacks the imagination of *Mimèsis* II that links the present with the past and the future. Ricoeur understands human identity in a non-substantialist way. Human identity is a fragile phenomenon. It rests on a twofold dialectic. The identity can be understood as sameness (*idem*) and selfhood (*ipse*). Within this dialectic, identity is formed by a threefold *mimèsis*. Sameness expresses the permanence in time, the structure of my identity, or *what* I'm. Selfhood expresses the changing identity of *who* I am. Within this dialectic, there is an apodictic element. As sameness, identity expresses the permanence in life, the constant element of identity. But this apodictic identity is not adequate. The

discovery of the meaning of one's own lidentity is a life-long adventure. Moments of joy and fear, life and death, self-loss, psychological traumas, erotic experiences and hospitality form the concrete content of the person I am ultimately. This construction of identity is happening in a narrative way. Understanding oneself takes place in the exploration of the meanings of the ever-changing *ipse*. By means of narrative identifications, the subject constructs the diachronic self-constancy of the experienced identity within the continuity of the identity (*ipse*). Therefore, identity is not a fact that can be unfolded, but the long detour in which the identity gets a concrete meaning throughout the story of life. The alterity is multifaceted here. This narrative aspect has a triple mimetic structure. The second, central mimesis (*Mimèsis* II) interweaves the activity of storytelling with acting in its temporal character. It is the textual configuration (emplotment) that links with the past (*Mimèsis* I) as prefiguration and with the future (*Mimèsis* III) as refiguration. This has an imaginative structure. In the narrative mimetic process, the identity construction takes place. The relationship to the triple absence of time is constitutive. A metaphorical texture is woven through the *mimèsis*, in which the *idem* acquires meaning as an *ipse*.

Salomon makes a radically different choice and takes a new start. The act of speaking is congruent with an alternative vision of creation. The contradiction between the two visions of creation summarizes the stake of the film in a very concentrated way. Unlike Michael, Solomon understands creation as a continuous beginning and a call to responsibility. Alluding to a Midrash passage on Psalm 90:3 where the word and the Torah are marked as preceding the creation of the world ("In the beginning, two thousand years before the heaven and the earth, seven things were created, the Thora, written with black fire and white fire") and alluding to the opening of the Gospel of John ("In the beginning was the word"), Solomon takes a new beginning.

At first, there was the language, the word. God created the earth and life by giving breath to the word. God has believed in Man. In everyone.

Creation begins anew in every human being and God believes in every human being. In every human being there is a new beginning. In this vision, creation is not a one-off event in which every new person is a repetition of the original, broken condition of existence that is marked by evil. As Franz Rosenzweig elaborates in detail, creation is the continual re-creation of new forms of life, the abundance of being born over and over again. Nothing precedes this creation. This means that no determining or limiting factor - or determining logic - precedes creation that would restrict free creativity. Every creation is a radically new beginning. In this context philosophers and theologians speak of a creation from nothing or a *creatio ex nihilo*. We find this thought very richly expressed in several texts by Jean-Luc Nancy. In his book *Being Singular Plural*, this French philosopher reflects on human existence as absolutely irreducible and singular, but also as fundamentally committed to our fellow human beings:

Right away, then, there is the repetition of the touches of meaning, which meaning demands. This incommensurable, absolutely heterogeneous repetition opens up an irreducible strangeness of each one of these touches to the other. The other origin is incomparable or inassimilable, not because it is simply "other", but because it is an origin and touch of meaning. Or rather, the alterity of the other is its originary contiguity with the "proper" origin. You are absolutely strange because the world begins *its turn with you* [le monde commence à son tour à toi].

The repetition referred to here is not the faithful copy, which is an imitation of the previous one. However, there is a repetition of constantly recurring sources of meaning that are mutually irreducible. Every human being has its own individuality because the world in every human being miraculously begins anew. Through this new beginning every human being is connected with his own origin. Nothing precedes this origin. In other words, being human is not conditioned by the past, the body, the colour of the skin, the gender, etc. Nancy explicitly links this thought with the *creatio ex nihilo*: "Not only is the *nihil* nothing prior but there is also no longer a 'nothing' that pre-exists creation; it is the act of appearing [*surgissement*], it is the very origin – insofar as this is understood only as what is designated by the verb to originate."

The statement about the ever renewed creation is of course not a cosmological statement. It concerns the human condition and the ethical responsibility of the human being. Creation takes place by

interpreting and giving meaning to life and existence over and over again. In order to bring this about from his own life and name, Solomon invokes the text:

He gave us the word so that we could all give it a personal breath, miraculous, different, deep, human. By interpreting the word. As for Adam, his name is derived from *'Adamah'*, which means 'earth' in Hebrew. God created Adam with the earth of clay and with water. He breathed his breath and breathed into the miraculous, as he did with the word. That's how Adam was born. Adam has the color of clay: red. Like the Indians. Red in Hebrew is: *'Adom'*. You see, Adam is neither white nor black; he is red.

As is well known, Hebrew is written in the square-letters, which consists only of consonants. The first word of the Torah looks non-vocalized as follows: ב ר א ש י ת. In the first centuries of our era, in order to avoid any misunderstandings when reading, the Masorets added the vowels in the form of small dots and signs. In his Hebrew grammar, Spinoza reiterates the Jewish-mystical intuition that vowels are the soul of the letters. Without vowels, the consonants are a body without a soul. The consonants become readable when they are animated by the vowels. This inspiration is found in reading. Solomon speaks of man from the same image. Being created is a spiritual event. As a creature, the individual human being is not determined by the burden of the Flood with the racial differentiation, but every human being is a double being: well-founded and rooted in the earth, but also spiritually brought to life. Human existence arises in the creative act: every time physicality is animated and breathed life into in all its diversity. In other words, each person is his or her own origin, a *creatio ex nihilo*. This implies that the colour of the skin does not determine identity. And if there were any doubt about that: if the first person already has a colour - which is actually an irrelevant question - then it is red.

After the liberating perspective from creation, Solomon interprets the discussion from his own breath, his own personal process. Eroticism and an offspring have an important role here.

But, does he feel good, alone, red, in this new world?

Then God thought of Eve. But Adam did not understand what God wanted, what he asked him to do. What was he supposed to be and do down here?

Salomon meets Sarah, a white Jewish woman with curly, red hair. She is the daughter of a politically and religiously highly conservative father. By choosing Solomon, she, like the wife of Biblical Abraham, has to break all ties with her family. As a white Jewish 'princess' - which is the translation 'Sarah' - she wants to create a new generation by marrying the dark king Solomon. For Salomon, however, the intimacy of the sexual relationship means the physical revealing of his identity as a non-Jew. After all, he had not been circumcised. What is his responsibility here?

The question of identity is elaborated narratively in the film in the face of tests:

And what about all these tests?

The tests are represented by moments in which the main character looks at the moon with a dreamy gaze. The moon depicts the mother who stayed behind in Sudan: the absent origin of his identity. Salomon looks at the moon five times. Five times this points to an important turning point. The arrival in Israel sealed his fate as a refugee in order to grow up in a foreign country far away from his mother. He speaks to the moon and he reverses the stone that his mother had given him as a fetish. Then there is a conflict in the school where he is forced to eat and where he claims not to be guilty. The school symbolizes the structural initiation into culture. In the conversation with his mother, he tells that he wants to keep his own identity and that he refuses to adapt to the new culture. He takes off his shoes in a very symbolic way and walks barefoot to the South. A third time Salomon looks at the moon after he has read the opening sentence about creation in the Hebrew Bible. After the acquaintance with the Torah he asks himself the question what it means to be Jewish: to become white, to speak Yiddish or as the well insane Mrs. Silbermann who survived the camps, constantly saying 'Oï, Oï Mein Gott'. After asking this question, he was excluded from school and walked barefoot to the South again. A fourth time he looks at the moon when his ultimate proof of being a Jew - winning the Talmud discussion - is not convincing. Previously he had become a *bar mitza*, fell in love with Sarah and was sent away by her father. After the Talmud discussion, he went to his adoptive parents and told them not to be their son. He leaves for a *Kibbutz* and tells Sarah that he has a new girlfriend, Mandela. However, the resounding name of the African liberation hero is assigned to a bovine animal intended for slaughter. A fifth time

after seeing images of the famine in Africa, Solomon wants to return to Sudan. De Qes prevents him from doing so and tells his own life secret: he has lost wife and children and says he is condemned to live. This condemnation consists of an ethical responsibility: to help those who have survived. Ethical responsibility is not a free choice of human beings, it is a condemnation. After this, the Qes shows the only object he has left from his 'homeland': an old, damaged Thora scroll. In the Talmud we read a strange story about the Torah (*Shabbat*, 88a):

Rav Abdimi bar Chama bar Chassa said: this teaches us that the Holy-Blessed-Be-He has bent the mountain over them in the form of an inverted tub and he said to them: If you accept the Torah, the better; if not, it will be your tomb.

We remember that after the exodus from Egypt, the people were wandering through the desert for forty years. At one point Moses received the Law from God on Mount Sinai. Rav Abdimi bar Chama bar Chassa is said to have said that God, by the gift of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, had placed the mountain like a tub above the people. When the people "listen and do" the Torah, life comes into being. Otherwise the mountain remains a private tomb. Doing the Torah is an ethical task the human being cannot escape. But the guidelines of the Torah (Rosenzweig translates the word as *Weisung*) are also the only thing man is given: no country, no people, no religion, nothing. As in the story of the Second Testament about Lazarus and Abraham the Qes says to Solomon: you have the Torah, that's enough. There is no more as an orientation in life, you have to do it with that: *va-t-en*!

The symbol of the moon is in tension with the Jewish identity: land, education, race, language, the Shoah, a community ideal (*Kibbutz*), the Torah... The tension can be summed up in the topic of the lost homeland. What is Salomon's homeland? The Greek *éthos'* means dwelling place. The material, political, cultural, domestic identity of a concrete existence connected in an established people or the ethical homeland of the Torah? During the struggle with his secret, Solomon did not find a house or 'home' in Israel, but became ill from nostalgia for his country of origin. He wants to go south barefoot.

In the film, the moon symbolizes homesickness for the homeland: a concrete, historical reality or an ethical homeland? In order to develop this, we start from a description of dwelling, inspired by Hannah Arendt and Emmanuel Levinas. Identity is never an abstract given, but arises in the course of a lifetime. One is not a human being, but becomes a human being. The course of life is always linked to a place of dwelling, a home. A small phenomenology of dwelling shows that the identity is supported by a threefold attachment. This connectedness is always supported by a separation or an openness to the other. The time of living is characterized by three events: natality, eroticism and fertility. These events form the connection between the past, the present and the future – the emplotment of *Mimèsis* II.

Natality or being born shows the passivity of human identity: no one is the origin of his own life. Natality points to some irreducible dimensions of human existence. Man is the result of a relational event of which he is not the source. This means that man is fundamentally intersubjective and is carried by a past that is unobtainable. The physicality of the birth refers to a transcendental origin. In addition, man has been thrown into the world and physically by birth. The fact of the *In-der-Welt-Sein* - which, unlike Heidegger, is understood from the perspective of natality and not death - shows the human openness to life in the world. The closed intimacy of natality is through physicality the possibility of life in the world.

In eroticism man gives himself over to a rhythm of time that is not controllable. Life is physically shared with the other person. This interaction is not the sum of a mutual initiative, but the origin of a new experience. As in creation, a new sentence springs from the eroticism. This takes place at the crossroads of identity and connection. In eroticism one finds oneself through the connection with the other. This event creates a new meaning and future. In eroticism there is an ambiguous interplay of simultaneity and dissimilarity, presence and 'coming'. The eroticism as a concrete time of 'living together' indicates that man is not an original and pure identity (a monadic without windows or doors), but grows in relationships with very concrete others.

Through parenthood, mankind experiences a new future in a child. The term future can be understood in two ways. The French *'futur'* refers to the future as the realization of a project or a plan that man sets out for himself. In this vision, every future moment is the extension of the present or the same. It is the time in which man makes 'projects' that are realized through the development of strategies and manipulations: future reality is calculated and manipulated. The French *'avenir'*, on the other hand,

points to this future that literally 'arrives' at man. It is the unexpected and the unplanned that can take place in a lifetime. This future rises above all project thinking. It is the time of the difference in which the other or the strange 'arrives' at man. Parenthood is the flesh-covered experience of the future: in the child a time is opened that is irreducible for any systematic thinking.

The threefold structure of natality, eroticism and parenthood shows the dwelling place of mankind. Man is carried by a triple absence. The origin cannot be repeated (*Mimèsis* I: the stakes of the discussion about the meaning of creation); the erotic connection puts identity at risk and forms her (*Mimèsis* II: Solomon's refusal to reveal the secret of his non-Jew in the eyes of Sarah); fertility is a concrete and physical experience of a different future (*Mimèsis* III: the birth of the son coincides with the retrieval of the mother in Sudan).

The process of constructing identity can respond to this absence in a double way. Either the absent can be recovered: the natality or the origin is then understood as the blood identity (the one-time creation of the white man as an image of God); the erotic becomes profit and selfishness (the temptation scene through the whore and the beating through her pimps); parenthood becomes the insurance of the future (the vision of Sarah's father and Salomon's adoptive father). The double figure of Solomon, however, is the rebuttal of this: his origin is always a lost origin and he goes in search of lost time. The flawless erotic relationship with Sarah is impossible because Solomon conceals the secret of his non-Jewish identity. Parenting is not the establishment of his Jewish identity, but the crisis of homesickness.

The identity is characterized by the tension between *idem* and *ipse*. Is the identity anchored in a substantial and original presence? This is Michael's thesis. When we approach the identity construction from the outlined characteristics of dwelling, it can be seen as a search for the *ipse*. The place of dwelling of this *ipse* is marked by difference, which makes an ethical identity possible. Is identity an ethical identity? Solomon's tests are the question of his responsibility. What am I doing here on earth? The difficulties in exploring the relationship with Sarah show the problems of identity and solidarity.

In education, constructing identity is a search between the *idem* and the *ipse*. Mimetic narrativity can be the royal way in this quest. The inscription of one's own life story in a mimetic plot - for example, provided by a film - leads to the question what is the place of identity: bound to a solid origin or challenged by the fluidity of an increasingly absence. The answer to this question requires mimetic imagination that leads to a *catharsis*.

8. Summary as Conclusion

The authors discovered and suggested the three possible constructive strategies in the process of teaching 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.3. Using film as a challenge to purify student's own mimetic processes by placing them in a broader metaphorical context. he film in this case is the imaginative-metaphorical construction of the personal identification process. The authors discuss the three strategies as parallel, not opposing or excluding each other. All three 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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