## Cinema Feminist Agenda as a Source for Gender Studies

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**Abstract**

The present article analyses the philosophical potential of a film for gender education. The researcher contemplates the outcomes of the course *Feminist Approaches in Social and Political Theories* taken by the 4-th year bachelor university students. As a final task the students submitted essays on the problems of feminist studies presented in five popular feature films with feminist agenda: *Suffragette, The Iron Lady, Little Women, The Help, Colette.* The found gender-related problems were to be discussed in the essay and grounded with the theoretical material of the course. It was also necessary to incorporate the terms of feminist studies covered in the course into the analysis of the essay. In this article, the author outlines the plots of the listed films with feminist agenda. Then the researcher points out feminist issues of the films as they were given in the students' works. Fourteen gender-related problems are listed. Most often and less often discussed gender questions are systematized. The applied terms are summarized. The article provides personal students' stances towards gender-related issues reflected in their analysis. The work highlights students' perception of cinema use for educational purposes. In the end, the author recaps the educational experience of the students and their overall evaluation of the educational cinematic journey.

**Keywords:** cinema, film, gender-related issues, feminist studies, bachelor philosophy education, essay, reflection, personal stance, educational tool, university.

### 1. Introduction

*Philosophy* is a subject that is different from the other disciplines in the university curriculum. There is no exact definition of its scope or method, or even exact answers to its questions. There is no specific list of literature works for reading, as such a list would, probably, be never-ending. Speaking of philosophy's material, that is life as it is. *Philosophy* scrutinizes life and seeks answers to eternal problems and puzzles of the humanity. *Feminist studies* is a disciplinary area that appeared within the vast scope of *Philosophy*. It is also quite a special research area, which does not have any certain subject or object, or outcome. What is even more fascinating about philosophical disciplines is that the sources for their studies are everywhere. It is important to mention, that these sources are mostly immaterial. They manifest in people's actions, attitudes, stances, and identities. The object of research for *Philosophy* and *Feminist studies* as disciplinary divisions is evolving together with the society. The process-like and people-oriented nature of the research object of philosophical disciplines makes *cinema* a perfect source for their analysis. Indeed, *cinema* is also an evolving phenomenon representing people's lives, their actions, attitudes, stances and identities.

While it may be problematic to come to a common decision discussing this or that philosophical topic, such as a gender question, cinema gives a rich material for analysis. Cinema images and plots come as demonstrations of hidden connection between life and society. Due to

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cinema's dynamic development, we are able to see the society's changing standpoints towards the issues of gender relationship and gender identities depending on various life situations in all their diversity. In a quality film its director does not give any ready-made solution to the problems discussed in it (Sunikka-Blank et al., 2020; Fedorov et al., 2021). It is up to the viewer to come to the conclusion and form an attitude towards the drama cry moments or comedy practical jokes. Drawing on their own bibliography and educational background, the audience considers the dubious moments of a film and puts the individual impressions into the experience suitcase. Human feelings evoked by the cinema make it even more productive in terms of forming an educational luggage, because emotionally processed data remains forever.

In this paper, we are going to present the educational experience of bachelor philosophy students of Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, studying Feminist Theories as a university curriculum discipline. The outcome of the study course were the students' essays analyzing gender problems in five popular films containing feminist agenda. The students' ideas as expressed in their papers have been combined in a systemic way to present an academic performance result. The collected data is bound to demonstrate the course terminology and problems interiorized by the students and the way gender topics have been interpreted by the learners, taking into account the open-ended nature of many gender questions.

## 2. Materials and methods

In this study, we analyzed 27 students' essays on the problems of feminist studies presented in five popular films with feminist agenda: *Suffragette* (2015), *The Iron Lady* (2011), *Little Women* (1994 or 2019*)*, *The Help* (2011), *Colette* (2018). Two of the works were on *Suffragette,* three – on *The Iron Lady*, six – on *Little Women*, seven – on *The Help* and nine – on *Colette*. The authors of the essays are 4-th year bachelor students of Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov. The task of writing an essay was a final part of the course *Feminist Approaches in Social and Political Theories*, which covered a wide range of gender related topics. It was also necessary to incorporate the terminology of feminist studies covered in the course into the analysis of the essay. It should be said that the main theoretical source of the course was *12 Lectures on Gender Sociology* by Zdravomyslova and Temkina (Zdravomyslova, Temkina, 2015). The students were given a choice of five mentioned films to watch with the purpose of detecting feminist issues in these films. The found problems were to be discussed in the essay and grounded with the theoretical material of the course. A number of questions were suggested to answer in the course of the students' analysis, namely:

- What points in the film's plot point to feminist issues?
- What theoretical knowledge from the course *Feminist Approaches in Social and Political Theory* describes the plot of the film?
- In your opinion, did the filmmakers succeed in highlighting the situation of feminist issues that is typical of the time described in the film? How realistic do you think the gender issues of that time are portrayed?
- Did watching the film prompt you to look for more information related to gender issues specific to the time described in the film? What kind of information were you looking for?
- What new things did you learn about feminism after watching the film?
- How could the film's coverage of feminism be made even brighter, in your opinion?
- How successful is the use of the feature film genre as a tool for working on feminism issues?
- Reflect on the use of this genre for public education and professional purposes.

Our analysis of the students' works implied pointing out feminist issues of the films. We were interested in following the personal students' stances towards gender related issues reflected in their analysis. Another point of focus was to see the studied terminology of the course and their understanding as expressed in the essays. As film cannot be considered a traditional learning tool in the university education, we were also curious of students' perception of cinema use for their studies.

*Films with feminist agenda suggested for students' analysis*

The events of the film *Suffragette* take place in Great Britain at the end of the 19th century. The background is the birth of the Industrial Revolution and the first wave of the feminist movement. The main character is a young laundress Maud Watts, who receives 13 shillings a week for her hard labor. Watts witnesses one of the suffragettes' actions for women's suffrage. The activities of the suffragettes attract Maud, and her husband's decision to give up their child to another family strengthens her determination to become part of the movement. This new passion

leads to major troubles: imprisonment, dismissal from the laundry, and separation from her husband. For the sake of freedom, however, Maud is willing to sacrifice anything, even her life.

The film *The Iron Lady* tells the story of Margaret Thatcher's life, the first woman prime minister of Great Britain. When Margaret won the election and entered Parliament, she was the only woman among the other members of the House. Dozens of men attended party meetings, constantly expressing snobbish doubts about the correctness of the new Prime Minister's course. This should have broken her spirit and tempered her ardor. However, Margaret Thatcher was a very stubborn and hard-working character. Eventually, she becomes a respected world politician, leading Britain to victory in the Falklands War. The price of victory is high: mental illness accompanied by hallucinations, frustration, loneliness.

*Little Women* is a film (films) based on the novel by Louisa May Olcott, which has been screened eight times. In Russia, the screen versions released in 1994 and 2019 have become really popular. The plot in these screenings is identical and corresponds to the content of the novel. The film is set in the United States in the 1860s-70s. The main characters are four young girls-sisters from a poor aristocratic family. The four young ladies are trying to fulfill themselves in their lives. However, for each of them, self-actualization is hindered by the issue of money and the stereotypical view that any woman's main goal is to marry appropriately. Jo is a writer who denies the very idea of marriage. In her rebellion, Jo does not understand how she feels about the opposite sex. Her main goal is moral and financial independence, which she plans to achieve by writing novels while her budding feminism defies societal norms. Emmy is the youngest sister, who adores drawing, but realizes that she will not become a brilliant artist. According to the heroine, only a woman of genius deserves respect in the world of men. Therefore, Emmy chooses a different path, starting to date a very rich man to provide for her family. Meg sees no need for the new outfits that her peers dream of. However, public opinion constantly sows doubt in her soul. After much internal tossing and turning, Meg finally comes to the conclusion that she would rather be happy with a husband who cannot provide a new dress than with one whom she does not love, because that is her right. The image of Bede, the fourth of the sisters, is given a little less attention because of her illness and early death. Each of the heroines is endowed with some kind of talent: the first dreams of becoming a writer, the second – an artist, the third – an actress, the fourth – a pianist. But only Jo manages to break into the profession.

*The Help* is a screen version of the novel written by Catherine Stockett portraying Mississippi of the 1960-ies, the time of the Black Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Eugenia "Skeeter" Philan, having graduated from university, returns home. She dreams of becoming a journalist or a writer. However, a decent girl from the South shouldn't even think about such a thing. According to her mother, the girl should get married and have children. Still, Skeeter gets a job at the local Jackson Journal, where she is assigned to run a column titled *Tips for Housewives to Clean the House*. Inexperienced in the matter, she seeks help from Abilene, a wise black woman who has spent her life in white homes and raised seventeen other people's children. Skeeter sees life injustice in the attitudes towards black maids. One of such unfair attitudes is the separation of the bathroom for the owners of the house and for their black maids, with the maids' toilet necessarily located outside. The so-called rational for this is the idea that black people are much more likely to get sick and spread diseases. Skeeter does not support the idea and decides to write a book that should contain the maids' stories of their hard work and ingratitude on the part of white people.

*Colette* is a biographical drama based on the life of the French writer Colette. Colette, a country girl, becomes the *literary slave* of her husband. With her novels Colette brings fame to her husband, but one day she refuses to write a new book under his name. The woman begins a struggle for creative freedom, challenging society's notions of literature, fashion and sexuality. Colette's new sense of gender is ritualized in her hair and clothes. She hardly tolerates the corset and hurries to give it up at the first opportunity. The new Colette opts for loose dresses and then pants. She gets rid of her *maiden beauty* – luxurious long hair. One of the most significant feminist manifestations of the film is Colett's role in the pantomime *Egyptian Dream* at the Moulin Rouge. In this pantomime, Colette mummy returns from the realm of the dead thanks to a kiss from a scientist portrayed by Mathilde de Morney known as Missy, a friend for many years, whom she calls *he*, respecting her gender identity.

### 3. Discussion
*Philosophical potential of a film*

Philosophers of the XXI century refer to the media discourse as an ample source for analysis (Loyo, 2018; Petrenko, 2015; Tedtoeva et al., 2018). Philosophical value of cinema has been considered

by such authoritative philosophers as G. Deleuze, U. Eco, R. Barthes, A. Bazen, S. Zhizhek, V. Kurennoy (see Zashikhina, 2021). One of the reasons is cinema's capacity to give subjects for theoretical reflection, since film is a sample of a cultural practice operating within cultural modes of re-presentation (Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2019; Kretz, 2019; Petrenko, Starodubtseva, 2009; Radošinská, 2017; Tan, 2018). Cinema visualizes philosophical plots and concepts of the past and contemporary times. The prevailing majority of individuals receive information mostly through the eyes (Camarero et al., 2019). That is why films make a perfect tool to see life as deeply as it is only possible. Researchers notice that films have an immersive effect when a viewer can feel the atmosphere through sensory organs, live through the events (Genova, Khilko, 2021). Cinema produces a major and daily impact on a modern individual as a centralized system of storytelling (Gerbner, Gross, 1976: 18). Thus, media sources contribute to the reader's knowledge of historical and cultural values (Golubev et al., 2022; Munazza Batool Tahir, 2010; Tyunnikov et al., 2022).

Plots of films are no less than drops of our lives (Popaa, Gavriliu, 2015). "Media only reflects the social, personal, and cultural elements already present in the society" (Farooq et al., 2021). Film is an art of recording that is always imbued with a pre-existing reality associated with a social and physical context, within given cultural, political and environmental circumstances (Sunikka-Blank et al., 2020). Cinema makes a specific data bank that contains representations of lived societal practices. An individual may never think of a definite idea or experience until they watch a film that presents the idea or experience. Cultivation theory says that society and discourse are interdependent, meaning they both influence each other (Farooq et al., 2021). In case discourse understood as a social practice, it comes as an agent forming society and its functioning rules. Cinema not only depicts the society values and morals but shapes the citizens' opinions about right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable (Erofeeva et al., 2021; Farooq et al., 2021). As it has been discussed by P. Bourdieu (2002), the social practices represented in the media impact the definition of social norms and behavioral patterns in terms of gender identities and gender differences (Bourdieu, 2002). After all, cinema is a rightful element of the social structure of contemporary society (Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2001).

*Film as an educational tool*

Media language, media representations and media agencies provide a rich source for learning (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022; Gálik et al., 2021; Harshman, 2018; Miyao, 2019; Yeh, Wan, 2019). Mediatization of education has made cinema a fruitful tool for academic university curricula in various disciplinary areas (Bykov et al., 2022; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022; Fedorov 2022; Fedorov, Levitskasya, 2022; Frolova, Rogach, 2022; Tselykh, Levitskaya, 2022; Tyunnikov et al., 2022). It will not be an exaggeration to say that film is an indispensable source of data for such a philosophical discipline as *Feminist studies* because of its open interpretative nature. What is important here, a viewer does not have any ready-made decisions while watching a film. The content needs personal processing and interpretation. The emotions film heroes share with the audience involve viewer's individual experience. It is through our own bibliography that we accept the artistic information. As each person's bibliography is different, the outcome of our film watching experience will be exclusive. This open for interpretation character of a film makes cinema an especially attractive learning means for young people, who value the possibility of their own judgement (Shuneyko, Chibisova, 2022). Films are capable of problematizing vital life questions, prompting students' value-based understanding and even bringing them into the dialogue with film director (Tyunnikov et al., 2022). Speculating on film events, students adopt tolerant attitudes towards those modes of life that had previously seemed unfathomable to them (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022).

In our common use of media, we refer to it mostly for entertainment (Shuneyko, Chibisova, 2022; Tyunnikov et al., 2022). However, the animation effect of films is the first, outer layer that a viewer peels off a film when watching it. The consumption of media content may be adapted for the benefits of learning due to its limitless potential as so-called food for thought. Researchers pay attention to the fact that watching films has become scarce as compared to the consumption of social networks and cyber games services or use of search engines (Djumanova, 2022). At the same time, with an appropriate attitude cinema also becomes a vital source for analysis. Film becomes a reflection source when we consider the cinematographic product as a text. This idea has been used productively in structuralist studies from Barthes and Eco to Lotman and Yampolsky. The textualization of cultural works allows us to apply the apparatus of semiotics and poetics to their analysis (Kalyuzhnyj, 2009). Any social technology like cinema is a semiotic and material tool and at the same time nominating practice, which involves a subject (Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2001:

112). Interpretation of a media product invokes the context for meaning and establishes whatever is pertinent about such meaning (Andrew, 1984). Contextual analysis of a film, using Thomas Kuhn's wording, *makes visible the invisible* – and that is the goal of any philosophical discipline.

Media text is syncretic, multimodal and polycode. The symbolic nature of a film is not homogeneous and invites for a complex analysis (Tyazhlov et al., 2021). Loaded with figurative meanings, film manifests an ideal educational puzzle. Speaking of filmmakers, researchers note that they are often dubious of assessing social events and actions. They are rather searching for meanings than suggesting a final stance (Fedorov, Levitskasya, 2022). So, a learner has a chance to come to their own conclusion related to film's symbolic meanings and interpreting its implicit modalities. Many open-ended problems of the modern world need a creative approach and can only be discussed without presuppositions and biases. Film takes a unique place in this decision-making process. Ensuring a realistic representation of the world, it also gives a chance to employ an individual's inner repositorium: their background knowledge, bibliography circumstances and creative power. In educational environment, film watching becomes a professional act of philosophical thinking and reasoning. Saturating the media image with professional knowledge, a student engages in the process of theoretical information application. Student reproduces, preserves and broadcasts the social values conveying culturally and socially loaded assessment. Both individual and collective experience become a part of this assessment combining semiotics and philosophy. Thus, knowledge of a film becomes professional competence producing innovative meanings and adding to the existing professional philosophical repository.

Conceptualizing film's boundless learning potential, Tyunnikov et al. point out the following constructive functions of cinema in education: illustrative; motivational; axiological; hermeneutical; therapeutic; correctional; adaptation; heuristic; energy (Tyunnikov et al., 2022).

*Gender problems as an attraction point of public interest*

Gender problems constitute a serious bulk of research in the modern science (Garstenauer, 2018). The popularity of feminist issues in the cultural space of the 21st century society is evidenced by the huge number of headlines and references to this topic both on the news pages of the Internet, in media publications, social networks, and in the coverage of these topics in contemporary culture and art (Belokrylova et al., 2020). The terms "feminism," "feminist," and "feminization" are in most cases self-explanatory because they are known to a wide audience. Changes in gender relations and the changing understanding of the role of each individual in society, regardless of gender, is one of the features of the socio-cultural context of the 21st century. This is reflected in the strong resonance of the subject among the general public. The fashion on gender talk makes it is only natural that feminist theories is an attractive theory for young people to study. The research by Shafeeva shows that students demonstrate a high level of interest in feminist studies. The respondents of the survey that investigated the matter of gender questions relevance believe that feminism is a significant matter for study. At the same time, it was found out that students knew little of feminist ideas (Shafeeva, 2019).

The object of feminism cannot be defined in any exact terms. It is an unlimited range of situations and difficulties faced by women in the process of self-realization in society. The aim of this theory is to develop a critical attitude toward society in order to make it more just and humane. Contemporary feminism draws attention to three problems. First, the invisibility, insufficient moral and material promotion of women's social potential, even in situations where their contribution to the functioning and development of society is undoubtedly significant (motherhood, education, health care). Secondly, an explanation of why women's role in society is still a non-priority, subordinate one. Thirdly, how can we change and improve the social world to make it more equitable for women and for all people? (Lengerman, 2002). Postmodern feminism focuses more on what "woman" means (and everything associated with her) than on what she is. The essentialist approach is alien to the postmodern methodological principles of feminism (Ladykina, 2004). Today, the focus is increasingly on "anonymous ethics", i.e. a system of values and norms internalized by both men and women that regulate their social behavior, including the relationships between them. In this light, gender relations are not primarily determined by legal rights or even by external social control and public opinion but by inner motivations immanent to the spiritual world of each individual (Groshovkina, 2014).

Topics explored by feminism include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression and patriarchy. At the core of feminist ideology is the quest for a world in which rights, privileges and social status should not be determined by gender (Trofimova,

2006). There are different strands of feminism, differing in philosophical and political criteria and social programs, but there are theses that are shared by all varieties. Among these are:

- a critique of patriarchy, which builds on the recognition of the biological identity of men and women, but takes into account psychological characteristics (gender equality includes the right to differences between women and men);

- the need to improve the social status of women;

- the fact of differences between women themselves, which actualizes the socio-historical approach.

Modern feminism takes the *intersectional approach*, which appeared as a result of Marxist and radical paradigms, as one of the most potent (Tugarov et al., 2015). In Marxist theory, gender relations and in particular discrimination against women are explained on the basis of a historical study of the evolution of the household and of social production. The emergence of private property and the transformation of the public household into a private, enclosed space in which, for certain reasons, women were predominantly employed, led to their exclusion from public production to discrimination in reproductive labor and, consequently, to discrimination against women. The replacement of the maternal right (female inheritance) by the paternal right was accompanied by the exclusion of women from the political, economic and social spheres (Engels, 1984).

Rather popular today is radical feminism. This form of feminism remains indifferent to social change, at least to changes in the status of women, regarding gender inequality as a social problem. Radical paradigm of gender research traces its philosophical basis back to biology and objectivist naturalism. Radical feminism eliminates patriarchy, that is, the system of male dominance over women, as the core of women's unfreedom. Men control culture, religion, language and knowledge. This limits the ways in which we can think and causes patriarchal assumptions to be internalized by women as well as by men (Bryson, 1992). The radical approach denies everything that is essentially social about gender inequality, believing that "the tendency to oppress" is a property of any man, and "the tendency to submit" is a property of any woman. The oppression of women has no basis in biology or any other pretext, and thus can and should be challenged and destroyed.

The core idea of *intersectionality* is that people live according to multiple and multilayered identities that are conditioned by social relations, history, and power structures. Intersectional method is a tool of concrete social analysis. It helps to reveal the actual social structure in all the diversity of positions and relationships of individuals and groups. The value of the method is that it takes into account all the identities into which a particular individual is currently inscribed. Intersectional analysis can address different levels of sociality: personal, group, institutional, and systemic. It brings together different paradigms of social knowledge that recognize multiple mechanisms of power, such as domination and oppression. The intersectional approach is an analytical tool that allows for identifying a multitude of interrelated and complex axes of power that permeate a multidimensional social space (Temkina, Zdravomyslova, 2017).

In tune with the complexity of the feminist methodology, media image manifesting gender identity is also a complex one. On the one hand, a media image functions in public realm as an existing representation, a fragment of the information reflection of the reality (Erofeeva et al., 2021). Gender identities as represented in films replicate the traditional stereotypes about femininity and masculinity. Women are depicted as objects of desire, adoration or violence, as passive subjects (Caradeux et al., 2013). They are supposed to be housekeepers and not allowed active roles. Being hysterical and capricious Is rather common for a cinematic representation of a female.

On the other hand, prevailing attitudes to a certain issue recorded in the media form a media image that acquires social and ideological tasks (Erofeeva et al., 2021). According to Judith Butler, the formation of politics 'that represents women as the subject of feminism is itself a discursive formation and effect of a given version of representational politics' (Butler, 1990: 2). Saturating a media image with feminist agenda implications is a two-way process. It works in both directions. A viewer may accept information of gender-related quality from the screen. At the same time, analyzing the events of a film, the characters' behavior, and articulating the standpoint towards the topics transferred by the filmmakers, viewer becomes the author of meaning. This way, the literary and explicit contemplation on a film acquires a constructive quality and builds attitude towards gender-related issues.

### 4. Results

The outcome of our analysis is presented in Table 1. *Gender issues discussed in students' essays related to films Suffragette, Iron Lady, Little Women, The Help, Colette.* In their writing, students contemplated on the fourteen questions given in the table.

**Table 1.** Gender issues discussed in students' essays related to films *Suffragette, Iron Lady, Little Women, The Help, Colette*

| # | Gender issue | Film | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Iron lady* (2011) | *Colette* (2018) | *Little Women* (1994 and 2019 | *The Help* (2011) | *Suffragette* (2015) |
| 1 | Harassment of minority women | | | | + | |
| 2 | Marriage as the main criterion for a successful woman | | + | + | | |
| 3 | Courage, boldness, determination, etc. as unacceptable features in a woman | + | + | + | | + |
| 4 | Woman's financial independence as a queer indicator for the society | + | + | + | | |
| 5 | Inability to give birth to children as a woman's deficit feature | | | | | + |
| 6 | Limitation of woman citizen's rights | + | + | + | + | + |
| 7 | Violence (domestic or public) towards women | | + | | + | + |
| 8 | Women's social initiative as a queer indicator for the society | + | + | + | + | + |
| 9 | Professional discrimination. Prohibition on producing the results of woman's own labor and talent and the appropriation of the results of women's labor by men (literary writing, political career) | + | + | + | | + |
| 10 | Household duties as the only possible women's engagement accepted by the society | | + | + | + | |
| 11 | Untraditional sexual orientation as unacceptable in a woman | | + | | | |
| 12 | Accessibility of women's education | + | | + | | + |
| 13 | Reproduction of social attitudes in women's everyday behavioral patterns | | + | + | + | |
| 14 | Lack of physical attractiveness as a deficit in a woman | | | | | |

According to the students' analysis, the *most often covered topics* in the mentioned films are:
- limitation of woman citizen's rights and
- women's social initiative as a queer indicator for the society.
Among the other questions that often found their place in the films are:
- unacceptable features in a woman (courage, boldness, determination, etc.),
- women's professional discrimination.
*Less discussed gender issues* are:
- harassment of minority women and
- untraditional sexual orientation as unacceptable in a woman.
In three of the essays, students also discussed the idea of lack of physical attractiveness as a deficit in a woman. The point is that this idea has not been touched upon in any of the five films. At the same time, students noted that this is quite a common idea to dwell on in films with feminist agenda.

*Feminist studies terms discussed in the essays were the following:*

- gender display: presentation of oneself as a man or a woman by means of clothes, hairstyles, cosmetics and other bodily markers that are perceived by the senses, e.g. long hair in a woman, beard in a man;

- social role: a pattern of behavior oriented toward a certain status and recognized as appropriate for people of a given status in a given society;

- gender role: a pattern of behavior, a system of prescriptions that an individual must learn and conform to in order to be recognized as a man or a woman;

- gender order: historically formed hierarchically organized system of relations between the sexes at the level of society;

- gender contract: the rules of interaction, rights and obligations that define the division of labor on the basis of gender in the areas of production and reproduction and mutually responsible relations between women and men, including belonging to different generations;

- intersectional analysis: the study of the intersection of different forms or systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination;

- gender frame: interpretation of cultural and semantic meanings related to gender characteristics;

- glass ceiling: social situation that prevents a women from rising above a certain level in career and social hierarchy;

- hegemonic masculinity: a position of power that allows for the exercise of dominance over women (Zdravomyslova, Temkina, 2015).

The terms were correctly applied; no problems were detected with their use.

*Students' personal impression and feedback*

Emotional response is vital for learning new things (Hernik et al., 2018; Lim et al., 2020). So, it was essential for our professional evaluation to figure out the students' perception of doing the task. We elicited the following ideas:

- The film really managed to awaken in me a storm of feelings and thoughts, to think about important issues.

- It is necessary to raise the issues of feminism through films. First of all, it is always easy to access feature films, which are all available on the Internet. Secondly, serious topics are easier to understand through the protagonist's persona and to see from the outside what is going on.

- It is a real miracle, which is a delight: Collette broke the system – the system of total prejudice, she realized herself as an individual, achieved social and economic independence.

- Collette went from being a *puppet* playing the role of wife and housewife to a great independent puppeteer!

- The film prompted me to look in detail at the biography of the French writer and her contribution to French feminism, since the film shows only the initial phase of her work.

- Generally speaking, there are not many tools that can be used to adequately illuminate problems in society. Movies are one of the best, along with books or computer games.

- The film did a great job of exploring the concept of black feminism. I literally felt the emotions of the minority that they had to experience. The few words that came to mind after watching it were shame, disagreement, incomprehension, and pity.

- The film piqued my interest in this moment in the United States; I am hardly a history buff, but now I really wanted to study the material on the subject.

- I think, film is the only way to educate people who don't read social science research. After all, the eyes are the organ through which we get the most information.

To sum it up, the overall impression of the task was quite positive.

Students approved of the use of cinema as an educational tool for the goals of the course *Feminist Approaches in Social and Political Theories*. There were no negative responses to the suggested task or to the choice of films. Many of the essays expressed deep satisfaction with the fulfilled task. At the same time, there were suggestions of adding other films to the task, e.g. *Libertarias* (1996), *Sex Education* (2019) and *Euphoria* (2019).

### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion we should say, the cinema is a significant inspirational source for philosophical ideas, that is capable of conveying socially meaningful topics and images. Feminist issues, which have a philosophical nature, find a vast reflection in a popular feature film. Artistic and esthetic

impact of screen images allows for profound consideration on the represented problems of a film. The emotional effect of cinema also makes it a productive educational tool. As a learning material, film presents a whole array of topics for students' analysis. The learning potential of a film is tightly interrelated with the background knowledge of the student. To grasp the full range of ideas as they are expressed in a film, a learner needs to have an appropriate command of the given disciplinary area. If this condition is assured, a film makes an enjoyable means of mastering a target academic material. Students' attempt at perceiving the messages of the filmmakers prompts them to refer to the academic sources in their goal to get to the core of the issue. The creative impact of a film allows for a smooth and focused learning. Our further research of the film use in education is connected with the search of relative films in other philosophical disciplines, e.g. in the "Philosophy of Language" course.

## 6. Acknowledgements

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