



# Call for Papers

## Faith, Film and Philosophy

### “Parent and Child in Film”

### 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014

Gonzaga University’s *Faith and Reason Institute* and Whitworth University’s *Weyerhaeuser Center for Faith and Learning* are pleased to announce their Eighth Annual Seminar on Faith, Film and Philosophy, entitled “**Parent and Child in Film.**” Not only is the parent-child relationship among the most central in defining our nature as human beings as well as our unique identity as individuals, it does so in a way that is as evocative and poignant as perhaps only *eros* can match. Thus, it is not surprising that parenting and the interactions between parents and children have long been a central theme in cinema. The films of the last several years, however, seem to reveal a particular urgency in thinking through this relationship and coming to terms with its power. Parenting is a perennially successful theme for popular consumption, but it is of particular interest that it is at the center of so many recent critically acclaimed films. The “Best Picture” nominations from the last three years read like a cinephile blogger’s list of “Best Parent-Child Themed Movies”: including, *Philomena*, *Nebraska*, *Gravity*, *The Help*, *Les Misérables*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *Tree of Life*, *The Descendants*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *The Kids are All Right*, *Blind Side*, and *Winter’s Bone*. This does not include many other well-regarded movies with similarly strong parenting themes, such as *Saving Mr. Banks*, *The Spectacular Now*, *Frozen*, *Brave*, *Iron Man*, etc. This conference is a call to reflect, in a rigorous and thoughtful way, on the meanings and implications of recent cinematographic depictions of the parent-child relation.

Conference papers may explore the implications of the parent-child relation in a single film, in the work of a single director (such as Steven Spielberg or Wayne Wang), or through a comparative approach. We are particularly interested in reflections on the philosophical and theological implications of these film depictions. Luce Irigaray and others famously argue that philosophers, starting with Plato but most radically in the Modern period, have forgotten the rootedness of subjectivity in the home and the relation with Mothers and Fathers. This conference will look at the ways in which the fictitious depictions in cinema of the relations that children have with their parents can enrich our understanding of our nature and our relation to reality. Papers might address the following questions:

- How does film compare to other fictional media, such as theater, music, poetry, and the novel, in its portrayal of the parent-child relationship?
- What is the role of faith and/or metaphysical commitments in shaping this relation?
- How does film reveal the parent-child relation as a sacramental sign of the relation between the human and the divine?
- What is the connection between depictions of parent-child love and erotic love?
- How does the depiction of the home figure in the portrayal of the parent-child relation?
- How are the recent Disney Movies, such as *Frozen*, *Brave*, and *Tangled*, re-envisioning the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century understanding of the fairy-tale and the parent-child relation?
- What is revealed in the great disparity between the critical disdain and the audience enthusiasm for a movie like *Because I Said So*?
- What is the relation between academic discourse and on-screen parent-child interactions. Including, but not limited to:
  - Attachment theory (John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth etc.)
  - Difference feminism (Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva etc.)
  - Virtue ethics
  - Natural Law
  - Evolutionary psychology
  - Origin myths/ religious studies
  - Trinitarian theology
- How does film explore the characteristically human role of allo-parenting? (the extended role of “parenting” children taken on by grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, social workers, members of religious communities etc.)

The conference committee is particularly interested in a reflection on films made in the last 20 years, although there may be exceptions to this rule.

Proposals not longer than two pages (double-spaced), and in Word format, should be submitted electronically to Dr. Brian Clayton at [clayton@gem.gonzaga.edu](mailto:clayton@gem.gonzaga.edu) no later than **30 June 2014**, and should include title, author(s), institutional affiliation (if any), mailing address, email address, and the text of the proposal. The seminar organizers will send **acceptances** by **8 July 2014**.

The seminar and its associated public events are part of a series of jointly-sponsored programs focused on “Faith, Reason and Popular Culture.” The conviction behind these programs is that if Christian institutions of higher learning are to respond properly to their charge to be places where faith seeks understanding, then they must engage contemporary popular culture. Film is among the most powerful and important forms of popular culture. Thus, the seminar organizers seek scholars who will engage in two days of discussion investigating issues of faith and philosophical import raised by contemporary popular film. Presenters need not have any formal academic appointment.

For further information please contact Dr. Brian Clayton, Director, Gonzaga University Faith and Reason Institute at [clayton@gem.gonzaga.edu](mailto:clayton@gem.gonzaga.edu), or Margaret Hoersch, Program Coordinator, at [faithandreason@gonzaga.edu](mailto:faithandreason@gonzaga.edu).