The November 2016 issue of JRFM explores the possibilities of cinema to relate to the world, and its capacity to express social criticism and the hope for a better world through stories and images. In particular, this issue focuses on the œuvre of the Dardenne Brothers and their specific style of “responsible realism” (Philip Mosley), from their first documentaries in the 1970s to their feature films. Their attention to individual characters within their socio-economic context allows for empathy with their individual struggles, and at the same time points out the larger structural problems restrict them. This criticism of social conditions is transcended by a vision of hope and the possibility for transformation, both individually and socially. The Dardennes represent a valuable case for the study of the social commitment of cinema because their clear vision of the problematic issues within their Belgian context (and more broadly speaking, the industrialized North-Atlantic sphere) is grounded in a particular filmic style. From the perspective of the study of religions and theology, their cinema is interesting for a variety of reasons, such as the ethical challenge to assume, individually and socially, responsibility for the other; the persistence on the possibility of transformation within the conditions of the world as a form of secularized religion; the way in which images, sound and narrative are used to carefully observe a particular situation while, at the same time, transcending its specificity.

This issue then pursues two goals: first, the analysis and evaluation of the critically acclaimed, rich work of the Dardenne Brothers from the perspective of the study of religions and theology; and second, departing from this analysis of the Dardennes’ cinema and through the comparison of their work to that of other socially committed filmmakers in relation to the broader debates about realist filmmaking, a more fundamental reflection on the relationship between cinema and “reality” and the questions of responsibility and hope that may emerge from it.
Therefore we invite articles that focus on:

- issues of style, filmic language and narrative in the filmic representation of social criticism;
- specific social justice issues and their representation in the cinema of the Dardenne Brothers;
- the Dardennes’ cinema as a unique possibility of relating to the world in a form of secular religious practice;
- hope as a religious and/or secularized, political principle in the films of the Dardenes;
- the analysis of specific films of the Dardenne Brothers with regard to the relationship between filmmaking, social responsibility, and possibilities for transformation;
- comparison between the stylistic and narrative approach of the Dardenes and other filmmakers;
- the social context of the filmmakers and its influence on their work;
- theoretical reflections on the relationship between reality, aesthetic creation, social commitment, and a transformative imaginary in the work of the Dardennes and beyond;
- other topics related to the overall theme of this issue.

Articles of 25,000-30,000 characters (including spaces) should be posted online for peer review by August 31th, 2016 on the journal homepage www.jrfm.eu. We kindly ask authors to register. The publication is scheduled for November 2016. For any questions regarding the call for papers or the submission and publication process, please contact Stefanie Knauss (stefanie.knauss@gmail.com).