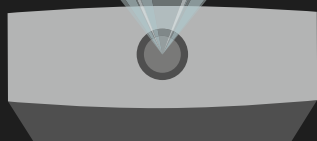# CINEMATIC PHILOSOPHY

TAL S. SHAMIR

Cinematic Philosophy

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Tal S. Shamir
New York, New York, USA

To my mother, my teacher, PhD adviser, and colleague,
Dr. Ruth B. Shamir.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS

Introduction I: Central Innovations and Clarifications

The Goal of This Study

The goal of this study is to establish cinema as a new platform for philosophy. It is a comprehensive analysis of the nature of philosophy's need and potential to be manifested cinematically. This study, drawing on the realms of cinema, philosophy, and media studies, adds cinema to the traditional list of the ways in which philosophy can be created, concentrating on the potential of the cinematic platform to create philosophy. This project reveals that there are different possibilities for creating philosophical wisdom and that philosophy should not be confined to its traditional formats (in other words, the written and oral platforms). The cinematic platform, with its unprecedented potential for exploring uncharted new ideas, presents us with a radically new way of creating philosophy.

The central questions that have guided my research are as follows:

- Why is the relationship between film and philosophy so important to our era?
- What is it about philosophy that demands to be expressed cinematically?
- Why has philosophy always needed cinema?
- What can the cinematic platform offer philosophy that other platforms (whether verbal or written) cannot?

The Main Innovations Presented in This Book

I want to briefly mention here the main innovations presented in this book, as a way to orient the reader. Although the following paragraphs can only touch on each of these innovations, they will assist the reader in getting a clearer view of the contributions of this study.

Turning the Exploration of Film and Philosophy on Its Head

Instead of using the common methodology for establishing the relationship between film and philosophy—which consists of searching for philosophical evidence within individual movies—I turn the exploration on its head by searching for cinematic evidence in the history of philosophy. This is an unprecedented move for the field of film and philosophy, and it provides an answer for why philosophy has always needed cinema. This is an important question, because if philosophy has always needed cinema, it establishes that the bond between film and philosophy is based on necessity. The necessary nature of this relationship has essential implications for the discipline of film and philosophy.

Cinematic Thought Experiments Offer Much More than Traditional Thought Experiments

My methodology differs from the usual methodology in film and philosophy, which argues that certain films could be considered to be thought experiments; what I stress, instead, is the dramatic difference between cinematic thought experiments and traditional ones. The technical possibility of manifesting thought experiments as onscreen experiences (rather than experiences that are confined to the mind or the imagination) creates a version of the thought experiment that is so transformed that it can no longer be considered a traditional thought experiment. By definition, thought experiments are experiments that happen in the mind or imagination. But cinematic thought experiments are essentially different in that they take place in a physical incarnation—on a screen. Therefore, I reexamine and redefine cinematic thought experiments and argue that because of their differences from traditional thought experiments, considering a film merely as a traditional thought experiment, an illustration, or a representation of a philosophical theory leads to a limited perception of the philosophical potential of the film.

THE PHILOSOPHY WITHIN A GIVEN FILM IS NOT DEPENDENT ON TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Unlike most theoreticians of film and philosophy, who try to show that a given film illustrates a particular philosophical reference, I show that a philosophical notion can be evoked by, and understood through, a film without any need for a theoretician to connect it to some "proper" philosophical text or some reference from the history of philosophy. In other words, the comprehension of a philosophical idea that is evoked by a specific film is independent of the work of any theoretician. This further supports the idea that the cinematic platform can create valid philosophy, as valid as any other kind of philosophy.

A RADICAL NEW POTENTIAL FOR CREATING PHILOSOPHY

The common view on film and philosophy is that, at best, certain films can illustrate or represent certain philosophical ideas; I argue, however, that the cinematic platform has an unprecedented potential to create a unique type of philosophy—namely, philosophical *experience,* rather than philosophical *reflection*. This is an unprecedented possibility for the discipline of philosophy: we are no longer limited to simply reflecting on or imagining philosophy, but can experience it.

THE DOGMA OF FILM AND PHILOSOPHY

I uncover a dogma buried deep within the discipline of film and philosophy that holds, consciously or unconsciously, that the written text is the only proper platform for creating philosophy and that any other possibility for philosophy is degraded. Through many examples, going back to the birth of philosophy, I show that the written platform is not a pure or objective platform for philosophy and that philosophy can, should, and must be created in other platforms too.

ORAL PHILOSOPHY, WRITTEN PHILOSOPHY, AND CINEMATIC PHILOSOPHY

To replace the obvious and dogmatic separation between disciplines, with cinema at one pole and philosophy at the other, I call for an alternative disciplinary articulation, based on different platforms: oral philos-

ophy, written philosophy, and cinematic philosophy. This redefines the boundaries between cinema and philosophy and shows that we are dealing not with two separate fields that are artificially connected, but with the possibility of creating philosophy in different platforms. Drawing on the Spinozistic spirit, we could describe this alternative division as being made up of different attributes that manifest a similar essence or substance through different expressions. Rather than dismissing a specific platform as degraded (as many theoreticians of film and philosophy do), I argue that each platform provides a different and unique access to philosophy, leading to different and unique types of philosophical works.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF FILMS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CINEMATIC PHILOSOPHY

Since we are engaged with a new platform for philosophy, I stress, as I have already mentioned, that the philosophy that emerges from this new possibility will be radically different from what develops in traditional platforms (oral and written). The way in which any philosophical issue is expressed, used, and understood via the cinematic platform is very different from the way in which it is expressed, used, and understood via the written or oral platforms. However, because many theoreticians of film and philosophy judge these expressions, uses, and understandings by the parameters of traditional written and oral philosophy, it should come as no surprise that they see the use of cinema only as a degraded possibility for philosophy. What I do here, instead, is explore and articulate the different potential for creating philosophy that is offered by the cinematic platform, which then leads me to develop a different set of criteria for—and expectations from—cinematic philosophy.

GROUNDING PHILOSOPHY IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Not only can cinematic philosophy cause us to experience philosophy, it also holds the potential to ground philosophical ideas within a contemporary context. Because of the unique composition of cinema from diverse elements, including plot, acting, cinematography, editing, sounds, music, special effects, lighting, mood, and colors, as well as the empathy it evokes for its characters and story, a specific film has the potential to construct

a vivid journey, allowing the audience to place itself in a world that is oriented by a philosophical idea. No longer is philosophy an abstract idea that can only be imagined, one that is far distant from the audience's everyday life. It is now right there in front of the audience that gets sucked into the experience, which then leads to a deeper engagement with the philosophical idea. In this way, cinema can ground a philosophical idea as a tangible, plausible, contemporary experience that is relevant to the audience's everyday life.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS

Before I go on to summarize my argument and give an outline of the contents of this book, I want to offer a few important methodological and semantic clarifications.

Methodological Clarifications

This book offers many important new features; it is not just another book on film and philosophy based on case studies that identify or analyze philosophical references in movies. Although the analysis of movies is an important undertaking, I argue that while it can strengthen an already existing connection between film and philosophy, it cannot prove that existence. How many philosophical references within movies would it take to prove that the cinematic platform has the potential to create philosophy? 5? 50? 500? 5000? And how do we measure the quality of each analysis? Would one poor analysis be sufficient to disqualify cinema as a new platform for philosophy? In other words, how many and what kind of such analyses would it take to convince people that the cinematic platform itself possesses the potential to create philosophy?

Since I consider these questions to be unanswerable, I am less interested in analyzing specific films that might possess philosophical wisdom than I am in the question of whether the cinematic platform itself has the potential to create philosophy. I believe that the answer to this question is an emphatic Yes, but in order to arrive at this Yes, we need to examine philosophy itself, which entails a dramatically different methodological path—namely, searching for cinematic evidence in the history of philosophy. Therefore, although I do, in fact, analyze many case studies that demonstrate the presence of philosophical wisdom in specific movies, this specific method is secondary to this project.

Semantic Clarifications

Cinema

There were other possibilities, but I have chosen to use the word *cinema* in this book because it comes from the Greek *kinema*, meaning *motion* or *movement*. *Cinema* best articulates what I want to describe since it expresses an idea that is experienced and understood through moving images and sounds, which is a key element in this study. It is not merely a visual possibility, since a visual possibility could be understood as a still image without sound and without movement. It is also not merely a narrative possibility, since a narrative possibility could be understood as something one imagines when reading a book, rather than something that one sees or experiences. Cinema, however, incorporates visual images and sounds as well as a story or an idea that is expressed through movement or motion.

Furthermore, here and now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, cinema resembles an octopus, morphing and expanding into different structures, formats, and possibilities. I understand and refer to the cinematic possibility as a phenomenon that includes a wide spectrum of forms and variations that can appear on different screens and in various manifestations, including the movie theater, television, videos, mobile phones, tablets, video games,[1] and computers. Although throughout this book, I use a variety of phrases, including *cinema*, *movies*, *films*, and *videos*, along with other variations, I consider all of these as included under the umbrella of the cinematic phenomenon. Having said this, I am aware, coming as I do from the discipline of media and communication, of the significant importance of the differences among all of these media. However, for the purposes of this study, I will not explore the different implications of experiencing cinema in the movie theater versus via a television set, a mobile phone, a tablet, or online videos. My goal is to examine the cinematic phenomenon as a metaconcept; therefore, I will consider all of these different variations to be part of the cinematic phenomenon.

The Important Distinction between Film Theory and Cinematic Philosophy

As the twenty-first century begins, philosophy and film have been variously juxtaposed to produce such categories as film and philosophy, film as philosophy, film-philosophy, the philosophy of film, film theory, and the philosophical theory of film. These are just some of the phrases in use, with overlapping attributes and meanings. The lack of semantic clarity creates unnecessary confusion.

With respect to the theory I will propose here, the most important semantic distinction to be made is between film theory[2] and what I refer to as cinematic philosophy.[3] In essence, film theory is theoretical reflection on film/cinema, on the same level as literary theory. It is where the analysis of content, structure, form, reflection, authorship, narrative, and genre is conducted, without necessarily being labeled as philosophy. (Although film theory and cinematic philosophy may sometimes overlap, not every theoretical reflection in a given discipline—in this case, film/cinema—should be labeled as philosophy. The unnecessary use of the word *philosophy* creates a great deal of confusion.) Cinematic philosophy, on the contrary, concentrates on how philosophy can be created through cinema (in the same way that philosophy can be created, for instance, orally or through writing). Therefore, in essence, cinematic philosophy explores the possibility, potential, and limitations of creating philosophy via the cinematic medium.

There are many film-related studies and theories that refer to philosophy (or include "philosophy" in their titles), but do not deal with the potential of the cinematic medium to evoke philosophy. Such fields as cognitive film theory, psychoanalytic film theory, postmodernism, Marxist film theory, neorealism, semiotics, auteur theory, and gender and film, though related to philosophy, do not strictly deal with the possibilities, potential, and limitations of the cinematic medium for creating philosophy. These fields, therefore, are not relevant to this study.

Platform, Medium, and Format

I use the words *medium*, *platform*, and *format* in this book to express a similar meaning—a particular form or system of communication. Examples of such forms or systems range from print books to cave paintings, papyrus scrolls, television, radio, photographs, cinema, and so on.

Not Every Film Expresses Philosophical Ideas

Although my goal is to establish that the cinematic medium or platform can create philosophy, my argument does not lead to the conclusion that every film counts as philosophy. For instance, although the written and oral media both possess the potential to create philosophy, not every written text or oral lecture is philosophical. The same principle applies to the cinematic platform: the fact that the cinematic platform has the potential to create philosophy does not entail that every film can be considered to be philosophy.

NOTES

1. I view video games as being part of the cinematic phenomenon, as they cause us to see and experience, in an enhanced way, an idea that is expressed in moving images and sound. Video games, however, demand further investigation that is beyond the scope of this book. This is true of the other specific formats as well.
2. Also referred to as *the philosophy of film* or *the philosophical theory of film*.
3. Cinematic philosophy is also known as *film as philosophy*, *film-philosophy*, *film and philosophy*, and so on.

Introduction II: Summary

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT OF *CINEMATIC PHILOSOPHY*

Because of the complexity, range, and ambition of this study, I believe that it would be helpful to the reader to begin here with an overview of its structure and essential propositions. What follows, therefore, is a brief summary of the main argument of the book.

The Foundation

The wide range of this study, as well as the need to touch on and emphasize a variety of different issues in order to acquaint the reader with the complexities of the subject, means that a comprehensive exposition of the relationship between film and philosophy is required. For this reason, I begin with three chapters that briefly introduce some of the essential writings that have significantly influenced cinematic philosophy. These first three chapters present the shoulders on which cinematic philosophy stands.

Chapter 3: Foundation I—The Evolution of Film and Philosophy

During the course of my research for this book, I realized that the most pressing contemporary issue within the field of film and philosophy is the lack of a comprehensive understanding or methodology with which to establish a firm relationship between film and philosophy. Most

theoreticians of film and philosophy have no clear structure for finding philosophical evidence in individual movies. They take a scattershot approach, with no big picture to guide them. The essential questions that I believe to be missing from this approach include such questions as: Why would anyone find any value in articulating a philosophical potential in film? What can the engagement with cinema offer to philosophy that other platforms cannot? As Thomas Wartenberg and Angela Curran (2005) point out, although there is an unprecedented contemporary interest in the realm of film and philosophy, there are very few discussions about what it is that legitimizes films as the bearers of any philosophical wisdom.

My main goal in this first chapter is to begin examining what kind of positive relationship can exist between film and philosophy. In order to do so, I present an overview of different theories that propose a methodological basis for the creation of philosophy through film, concentrating on the thinkers who have served as the main inspiration for the evolution of cinematic philosophy, including Henri Bergson, Hugo Munsterberg, Germaine Dulac, Rudolf Arnheim, Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean Epstein, Gilles Deleuze, Stanley Cavell, Angela Curran, Thomas Wartenberg, Daniel Frampton, Stephen Mulhall, Jay Bernstein, Jacques Rancière, Alain Badiou, Jerry Goodenough, Julian Baggini, Henry Unger, Rupert Read, Phil Hutchinson, and Simon Glendinning.

Chapter 4: Foundation II—The Critique of Film and Philosophy

The second part of my comprehensive three-part overview explores some of the main challenges to the possibility of creating philosophy via the cinematic medium. This is an extremely important part of this overview, since there are, at the time of writing, many more opinions that argue against the possibility that films could create any significant form of philosophical wisdom than there are arguing for it. On top of that, most theories that do allow for the possibility of the cinematic platform creating some sort of philosophical wisdom only admit a very limited version of that possibility.

Since my eventual goal is to claim that cinema can create significant philosophical wisdom, this chapter is structured not only to present theories that challenge the potential of films to create philosophy, but also, to offer responses to each of those challenges, exposing most of their weak points. The chapter focuses on the theories of thinkers ranging from Plato to Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Richard Gilmore, Ben Little, Thomas Wartenberg, Murray Smith, David Davies, Herbert

Granger, Bruce Russell, Peter Lamarque, Stein Olsen, Paisley Livingston, Aaron Smuts, Robert Sinnerbrink, Catherine Elgin, Jerome Stolnitz, Noel Carroll, Kevin Stoehr, and John Norton.

One of my main conclusions in this chapter is that within the discipline of film and philosophy, there is a pervasive misunderstanding, a misplaced expectation that the cinematic platform should act as if it were the written platform. In other words, most theoreticians reduce the properties and potential of the cinematic medium to the properties and potential of the written medium. If our goal is to realize the philosophical potential of the cinematic medium, however, we should avoid judging one method of inquiry according to the parameters of a different method. I use the analogy of two different forms of transportation, such as an airplane and a submarine. A submarine cannot fly, and therefore, it is a very poor airplane. But if that was as far as we took our evaluation of the submarine, we would be missing out on its potential. If we want to explore different forms of transportation, then our goal should be to realize the different potential of each mode of transportation, rather than to judge one mode of transportation by the parameters of another. For philosophy, the case is similar: we should beware of confusing the parameters for different media for philosophy.[1] This is a key concept in this book: because the cinematic medium is completely different from the traditional media of philosophy (i.e. the verbal and written platforms), the philosophy that is created through the cinematic medium must also be radically different from anything ever known about philosophy so far.

But before I can move on to explore what type of philosophy exactly might be created via the cinematic medium, I need to investigate whether the cinematic medium has any potential to create philosophy, in the first place. This brings me back to the most pressing issue within the discipline of film and philosophy: the need to establish a clear understanding of how movies can create philosophy. I believe that the place to begin looking for this possibility (and for the *necessary* relationship between film and philosophy) is in the area of thought experiments.

Chapter 5: Foundation III—Thought Experiments

The third part of the comprehensive overview begins to explore whether we can identify a relationship of necessity between film and philosophy. If we can articulate such a necessity, if we can establish that philosophy has always needed cinema, then this need will supply the basis for establishing

a firm bond between film and philosophy, and may demonstrate the possibility of creating philosophy via the cinematic medium.

As I have mentioned, I believe that the place to begin uncovering this need is within the area of thought experiments. But at the same time, we also need a different perspective on what has already been written on the relationship between thought experiments and cinema. I begin by examining some of Thomas Wartenberg's writings on the relationship between thought experiments and cinema, and then, go on to challenge them.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the first three chapters is the need to establish a firm relationship between film and philosophy that will show how cinema can create philosophy. I take that as my cue to proceed to the heart of my findings, as I begin to answer one of the most important and exciting questions in the discipline of film and philosophy: "Why has philosophy always needed cinema?"

Chapter 6: Why Philosophy Has Always Needed Cinema

Chapter 6 has two main goals: first, to establish the idea that thought experiments demonstrate an essential need within the disciplines of philosophy (and science) for a cinematic type of thinking; and second, to show that cinematic thought experiments, which we experience onscreen, are dramatically different from the traditional thought experiments that take place in our imagination. This then leads us to the argument that the evolution of thought experiments as cinematic entities offers an unprecedented possibility for philosophy.

In order to establish that film can create philosophy, philosophy and film must be equally valued in the process. Establishing a firm and true relationship between the two will not be possible if the cinematic medium is viewed as no more than a degraded platform for philosophy; if that is how it is viewed, than the discussion on film and philosophy will always be confined to the category of a small niche with little significance. Thus, the key to any research in this field is understanding the relationship between film and philosophy. By asking why philosophy has always needed cinema, by looking for the relationship of necessity between film and philosophy, we may be able to establish that understanding.

Using the methodology of looking for philosophical evidence within specific films has never established, nor will it probably ever be able to establish, why exactly philosophy has always had a need to manifest its ideas cinematically. In order to find an answer to the question, we must

examine philosophy itself. Thus, instead of searching for philosophy within cinema, I take the untraditional road (although it may seem—on the face of it—impossible, because the technical apparatus of cinema is so very much younger than the discipline of philosophy) of searching for cinematic evidence within the history of philosophy.

Can Thought Experiments Serve as the Evidence for an Ongoing Cinematic Need within Philosophy?

I believe that within philosophy (and science), the entire subdiscipline of thought experiments points to an ongoing essential need to cinematize certain thoughts. Let us take Plato's much-discussed allegory of the cave (in *The Republic*). I hold that the most important question regarding this allegory is why Plato needs to use such a cinematic (or visual, or narrative) allegory to explain his metaphysics. Why does Plato, who has been one of the greatest challengers of art's capacity or ability to express truth, choose to include a device with such a cinematic (or visual, or artistic) flavor in his *Republic*? And similarly, why does Isaac Newton (*A Treatise of the System of the World*, 1728, *Principia Mathematica*, 1687a, 1687b) explain the orbit of the moon using an analogy with cannonballs? Why does Albert Einstein (*The Evolution of Physics*, 1966; *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory*, 1952) explain the equivalence principle via elevators? Why would any philosopher (or scientist) decide to use a technique with such a cinematic (or visual, or narrative) flavor to it? I argue that in order to explain his philosophy, Plato needs to envision a cinematic type of thinking 2000 years before the invention of cinema. But it is not only Plato who does this; all we need to do is examine the list of philosophers and scientists who employ thought experiments within their theories, and we will immediately detect the pattern of cinematizing certain thoughts. I believe that the pattern of using thought experiments points to an essential need within philosophy to think cinematically. It is for this reason that I argue that thought experiments signify an essential need that is located at the heart of philosophy, and that they may well establish the evidence I seek.

Turning the Exploration on Its Head

One of the main maneuvers undertaken in this chapter is to argue that if we accept the idea that certain films can be considered to be thought experiments, then there is a good possibility that the acceptance of thought experiments as somewhat cinematic will follow. Thus, what I essentially do is to take Wartenberg's conclusions on thought experiments and turn

them on their head. If, according to Wartenberg, certain films can be considered thought experiments, then looked at another way, certain thought experiments can, at least in spirit, be considered cinematic.

This exposes the fact that the discussion of thought experiments is directed not merely toward thought experiments, but toward the need that they indicate. I believe that the device, or technique, of the thought experiment signals an essential need, within the heart of philosophy and science, to think cinematically. This need for a cinematic type of thinking can be clearly seen in the extensive use of thought experiments all through the history of philosophy (and science).

This methodological route of mine is completely different from the common methodology used by traditional theoreticians of film and philosophy. Instead of naming specific films and pointing out how they function as thought experiments, I argue that the phenomenon of thought experiments per se signifies a cinematic need within philosophy. Thus, by turning the exploration of the connection between film and philosophy 180 degrees, I discover the answer to the question of why philosophy has always needed cinema, which allows me to establish a firm relationship—based on necessity—between cinema and philosophy.

Cinematic Thought Experiments Are Not Merely Traditional Thought Experiments

The second part of Chap. 6 centers on the idea that cinematic thought experiments are dramatically different from traditional thought experiments. I argue that the technical ability to produce thought experiments as experiences onscreen (rather than simply as ideas confined to the mind or imagination) allows for the creation of a wholly new kind of thought experiment, which can no longer be considered to be the same thing as a traditional thought experiment. As a result, I closely examine the new possibilities of these onscreen thought experiments, which have many properties that differentiate them from traditional thought experiments.

I go on to explore what happens to a thought experiment when it is presented in the real world, in a physical place that is not inside the laboratory of the mind. I look at thought experiments in diagrams, paintings, and photographs, but mainly in computer simulation models. This exploration strengthens the idea that traditional thought experiments are very different from cinematic thought experiments, and therefore, require a very different approach and further examination. In making this argument, I use theories by James R. Brown, Yiftach Fehige, Thomas Kuhn, Ernst

Mach, Lawrence Souder, Thomas Wartenberg, Ezequiel Di Paolo, Jason Noble, and Seth Bullock.

When we consider films as nothing more than traditional thought experiments or as simple illustrations or representations of a philosophical theory, we also limit our perception of their philosophical potential. Traditionally, thought experiments have been used as illustrations, as a way to help us understand a given philosophical (or scientific) theory. No matter how important they were, then, they were always secondary devices, in service to the theory. And herein lies one of the main problems with identifying films with traditional thought experiments: if we do so, we are likely to understand the films as devices for illustrating philosophical notions. This process has led many of the traditional theoreticians of film and philosophy to essential misunderstandings that jeopardize the building blocks of the discipline. However, once we begin to see thought experiments as signifying a type of thinking that has always been needed within philosophy, a type of thinking that can be realized through the cinematic platform in a way that was never before possible, then we can free ourselves from the idea that these films are simply sidekicks to the real philosophical theories.

Once we stop reducing films to traditional thought experiments and stop considering them as mere sidekicks to philosophy, we also open up the possibility that these films can create philosophy on their own, by offering a new platform for it. If philosophy has always needed the type of thinking represented by thought experiments, and if cinema can create this type of thinking in a way that has never before been possible, then we are on the path to establishing a new medium for philosophy.

The history of thought experiments is the history of a cinematic need within philosophy. The possibility of manifesting this need as a cinematic experience, onscreen, will lead to a new philosophical possibility, and eventually, to the recognition that the invention of cinema opened the way for nothing less than a new type of philosophy.

Chapter 7: Cinesophia

In Chap. 7, I investigate how the cinematic platform can create philosophy, which I do by exploring what cinematic philosophy can offer that other media (i.e. the written or oral platforms) cannot. In essence, I argue that cinema's potential for creating philosophy lies in its ability to manifest the *experience*, rather than the *reflection*, of philosophical wisdom (the reflection being what emerges from written and oral media).

*Can We Understand a Philosophical Argument without the Aid
of Traditional Philosophy?*

In this chapter, I ask a simple question: would it be outrageous to think that a philosophical notion could be evoked by and understood through a film, without the viewer having read any written text and without the aid of a theoretician to connect the film to a specific theory from the history of philosophy?

When I saw *Groundhog Day* (Harold Ramis, 1993) soon after it came out, I enjoyed it very much. A few years later, as a student of philosophy, I came across Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence (*The Gay Science*, 1882, para. 341), which, for me, immediately evoked the film *Groundhog Day*. I realized that I was already familiar with a concept that was very similar to Nietzsche's concept, but that I did not know it from any of Nietzsche's writings; instead, it came from a film. In addition, I have occasionally found myself engaged in conversations about ideas that seemed very similar to Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence. When I have asked whether any of my interlocutors were familiar with Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence, I have only gotten strange looks. But when I ask whether they have seen *Groundhog Day*, they immediately know what I am talking about, which then rekindles the conversation about eternal recurrence. I couldn't help but find it interesting that we were having engaging conversations about the topic of eternal recurrence with no reference to Nietzsche, and in fact, without some of the participants even having read Nietzsche.

Thus, an understanding of the philosophical idea that is evoked by the film *Groundhog Day* is not dependent on a theoretician connecting it to the proper philosophical text or reference. This understanding is independent of and indifferent to any such "interpretation"; it can be arrived at with or without knowing that sometime around 1882, Nietzsche formulated a similar idea. There is nothing wrong with connecting *Groundhog Day* to Nietzsche's text. But the point is that one can understand the philosophical issue at the heart of the film without any reference to Nietzsche. Therefore, I argue, insisting that *Groundhog Day* is simply an illustration or a representation of Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence is bound to lead to a wild goose chase that will always give priority to the written text, and will then, also lead to many other confusions.

Groundhog Day is actually a cinematic confrontation to an old, unsolved philosophical problem, which, although it has appeared throughout the history of philosophy, is in no way confined to its written or oral expressions. Consequently, because what we see here is a philosophical concept

that can be understood without engaging with "proper" philosophical writings or lectures, we can deduce that alternative paths for engaging with philosophy do, indeed, exist.

Show It, Don't Say It

So, what can the cinematic platform offer to the discipline of philosophy that other platforms cannot? In film school, the professors kept reminding us, "Whatever you want to express in your films, don't say it—show it." A few years later, I realized that this idea is key to the development of the philosophical potential of cinema. The idea is simple: audiences don't have to imagine an idea. Cinema allows them to see and experience the idea in motion, as a cinematic event. *This* is the unique potential of the cinematic platform.

If we take an inventory of the different possible ways of presenting philosophy within the cinematic platform, we can list video recordings of philosophy lectures, philosophical texts reproduced in cinematic titles, dialogues or voice-overs that restate a philosophical concept, and the creation of philosophy as a cinematic experience. I want to discuss the creation of philosophy as a cinematic experience by referring to *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis, 1999), which causes us to experience philosophy as an event in motion. Unlike earlier engagements with philosophical ideas, which asked their audiences to reflect on or imagine philosophical ideas, *The Matrix* manages to make us experience an epistemological gap between the two different worlds in which Neo (Keanu Reeves) lives. There are no voice-overs, titles, or talking heads expressing problems of epistemology—instead, there is a journey that makes us see and experience an epistemological gap as an action event. In this way, the film gives us the opportunity to comprehend an epistemological gap from a different and unique perspective.

The epistemological confrontation in *The Matrix* is not dependent on traditional philosophy. A viewer does not have to read about epistemology to understand the gap between Neo's two worlds. Simply by watching the film, one can come to understand aspects of epistemology without even knowing that it is called epistemology or which philosophers have dealt with this subject. *The Matrix* is not an illustration of the ideas of any specific philosopher, nor is it a direct representation of any specific thought experiment; it exemplifies how a film can confront an epistemological problem and evokes a new type of engagement with philosophy—the possibility of seeing and experiencing philosophy as an event in motion, rather than merely reflecting on the philosophy or imagining it.

The Unique Experience of Cinema
I have alluded here to the difference between restating, quoting, or down-loading philosophical ideas onto the cinematic medium so that the audience imagines the philosophy, on the one hand, and causing the audience to experience philosophy as an action or a cinematic event in motion, on the other. What, then, are the unique experiences that can be evoked by way of the cinematic medium? I use a few ideas from Gilles Deleuze and Daniel Frampton to explore this question in greater depth. The theories of both Deleuze and Frampton suggest that experiences created via the cinematic platform present a unique possibility that is still very far from being fully understood.

Cinematic Games of Experience
Following Deleuze and Frampton, I delve into the question of how cinema evokes a different experience of the world. Cinema possesses the potential to make us see, rather than imagine; theater and painting can do something in that direction, but with cinema, this potential is elevated to an unprecedented degree. Slow-motion shots, for instance, give us a different experience of the world, an experience of the world that did not exist before cinema. This is just one example among the many that reveal how cinema can push us toward new concepts, perceptions, and thoughts of the world. It is important to note that one path to under-standing the potential and limitations of human thinking is to look at it from the outside. But since it is the only thinking we have, how can we look at human thinking from the outside? In a world whose sole color is blue, one cannot see any blue; it is only by experiencing different colors that we can start discerning what is blue, what is red, what is green, and so on. Cinema gives us that option: it allows us to experience different types of thinking and perception, which in turn, allows us to achieve a better understanding of the potential and limitations of our own think-ing and perceptions.

Cinema evokes events that can be experienced onscreen, a potential that is very different from the potential of the written text, a medium that tends to evoke properties of reflection. When we undergo a cine-matic experience composed from an influx of information incorporating a variety of visuals, sounds, movements, narrative, and so on, we have very little time to reflect on it. Only when the experience is over, we have time to think about it. Written philosophy is mainly characterized by reflective thinking, but cinematic philosophy has, at its core, the potential

to create philosophy as an event—an event that we can experience on a screen. In *The Matrix,* Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) tells Neo (Keanu Reeves): "There is a difference between knowing the path and walking the path." Experiencing philosophy, likewise, is very different from knowing it, reflecting on it, or thinking about it. This possibility of experiencing philosophy, which is a new possibility for philosophy, is at the core of cinematic philosophy.

Chapter 8: The Intimate Relation between Art and Truth

The potential for creating philosophy in the form of events that are experienced onscreen is a new possibility for philosophy. But what orients this new possibility is the fact of its artistic creation, something that is not generally accepted in our time as a valid path for expressing truth, reality, or philosophy. Therefore, if we want to establish the idea that the cinematic platform can create serious philosophy, two key things have to happen: first, an exploration of how art (including cinema) possesses the potential to express truth or reality, and second, establishing that the written text is not the purest or most natural path, or the only way, for creating valid philosophy. Insights from Jay M. Bernstein, Martin Heidegger, John Dewey, Friedrich Nietzsche, Gilles Deleuze, Rudolf Arnheim, Nancy Bauer, Daniel Frampton, and Gregory Ulmer will be helpful in establishing these points.

This chapter covers intriguing ideas about artistic, visual, narrative, and cinematic thinking, and explains why it is just as important as rational, scientific, and linguistic thinking. I look at the crucial part played by art in revealing and creating truth as well as examine opinions that challenge accepted views on truth, reality, science, and language. The inescapable conclusion is that we must not grant one method superiority over all others, or the hegemony over truth and reality. But unfortunately, it is alien to most of us today to recognize the power of art (cinema included) to produce valid discourses about truth and reality. We all have the responsibility to open our horizons to new possibilities while confronting the chaos from a variety of different disciplines and perspectives.

Chapter 9: Cinematic Philosophy—A New Platform for Philosophy

One of the central implications of Chap. 8 is that philosophy has been gradually trying to escape its literary confines, and that the written text is not a pure, natural, or objective platform for philosophy. This is an important

observation, since in the eyes of contemporary film and philosophy, the written text is taken, dogmatically and a priori, as philosophy's natural, pure, or objective platform.

In this chapter, therefore, I redefine the boundaries between cinema and philosophy. Rather than observing the obvious and dogmatic separation between disciplines, with cinema at one pole and philosophy at the other, I call for an alternative disciplinary articulation and perspective that is based on different platforms, that is, the recognition of oral philosophy, written philosophy, and cinematic philosophy.

The Socratic Mistake

At the birth of Western philosophy, it was the oral, not the written tradition that was connected with the practice of philosophy. Long before writing took philosophy to unprecedented heights, people were suspicious of the potential of the written text as a philosophical platform. One famous example is Socrates, the canonical philosopher, who was, in fact, so suspicious of writing that, in the dialogue *Phaedrus* (1997), he devalues the potential of the written text to engage philosophy.

Socrates's mistake was to misjudge his era's emerging technology; he miscalculated the potential of the written text to engage with philosophy. One of the greatest philosophers ever could not embrace or comprehend the heights and the depths, the thoughts and the wisdom that the new technology of writing, hand in hand with philosophy, would bring to humanity. One of the greatest thinkers ever to engage with philosophical thinking, was used to a particular way of doing philosophy and was blind to the new potential. And if he could make such a mistake, then possibly, some contemporary thinkers may be making a similar mistake about our own up-and-coming technology. Philosophy was not born with writing and has no pure connection to it. Philosophy can, should, and must be created in other platforms.

Misleading Semantics within the Discipline of Film and Philosophy

There is a hidden dogma within the semantics of the discipline of film and philosophy. The obvious semantics of the words *film* (on one side) and *philosophy* (on the other) conceals an elusive element, an unconscious implication that there is a pure or natural platform for philosophy, which is not film. (Otherwise, why would theoreticians of film and philosophy feel the need to use the word *and* between "philosophy," on the one hand, and "film," on the other, when they talk about "film *and* philosophy"? No one seems to use phrases such as "philosophy *and* the written text"

or "philosophy *and* the oral lecture.") To avoid such implications, I suggest using "cinematic philosophy" rather than "film and philosophy" (or any other phrasing that implies a disciplinary separation). This phrasing also helps to establish the perspective that philosophy includes all of these things: oral, written, and cinematic philosophy.

Different Platforms, Different Possibilities

The main discourse of cinematic philosophy has to do not with two separate fields (film on the one hand, and philosophy on the other) that have been artificially joined, but with the possibility of creating philosophy through different platforms or in different media: the possibility of creating philosophy using written, oral, and cinematic platforms. Different philosophical platforms deal with a similar subject, just through different possibilities. This is the main reason why this research is intimately bound to the field of media and communications.

Each platform provides a different kind of access to philosophy and allows for the creation of different types of philosophical works and engagements. Rather than disqualifying any specific medium, we must explore the unique potential of each medium for philosophy. Since we are dealing with different philosophical platforms or media, we must implement key features from the field of media and communications. Ideas from Jack Goody, Walter Ong, Marshall McLuhan, Harold Innis, and Joshua Meyrowitz help to illuminate this project.

Misunderstanding a New Platform, Technology, or Medium

The phenomenon of misunderstanding the potential of a new platform, technology, or medium is observable throughout history and across disciplines. Such misunderstandings almost inevitably arise when a new medium, platform, or technological possibility is introduced. I use examples from a variety of different disciplines and media, examples that include lectures, websites, steamboats, World War I, and reduction in science to show this: we cannot reduce one platform to another; we cannot expect one to act like the other. We need to evaluate each platform or medium according to its own parameters.

Cinema will never be as good as the written text or oral lecture; the written text and the oral lecture will never be as good as cinema, either. This is why the future lies in an alliance among all of them: oral, written, and cinematic philosophy. The Socratic mistake is evidence that the written platform and the practice of philosophy did not begin with an obvious

affiliation either. Much like its predecessors, the cinematic medium, too, will change philosophical wisdom in unexpected and unprecedented ways.

Chapter 10: Cinematic Examples

The way in which cinematic philosophy is applied to specific films is important, as is the choice of films to be included in the realm of cinematic philosophy. In this chapter, I articulate my methods and model the choice and analysis of particular films to be included in the realm of cinematic philosophy, concentrating on the following films: *Blow-Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966); *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 2007); *Shakespeare in Love* (John Madden, 1998); *F for Fake* (Orson Welles, 1973); *The Draughtsman's Contract* (Peter Greenaway, 1982); *Sherlock Holmes* (Guy Ritchie, 2009); *The Conformist* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970); *The Life of David Gale* (Alan Parker, 2003); *Predestination* (Michael & Peter Spierig, 2014); *The Clock* (Christian Marclay, 2011); *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (Bryan Singer, 2014); *Shutter Island* (Martin Scorsese, 2010); *JFK* (Oliver Stone, 1991); and two short films of my own: *Desert of the Real* (Tal S. Shamir, 2010) and *The Vermeers* (Tal S. Shamir, 2011).

A Few Considerations When Analyzing Films within the Context of Cinematic Philosophy

There are a few methodological considerations to keep in mind when analyzing films within the context of cinematic philosophy. Because cinematic philosophy manifests philosophy experientially, it needs to be explored in a manner that is closer to the exploration of empirical events, phenomena, or experiments. Once we understand cinematic philosophy this way, we will have a different set of expectations of it. We do not expect empirical phenomena, for instance, to explain themselves or to be explicit[2]; instead, we put them into the context of an explanation or experimentation, in relation to a particular theory. It falls to the cinematic philosopher to position the experience of the film within the context of philosophy. Although this might sound like a contradiction to the idea that the audience can understand the essence of the philosophy within a film without a theoretician, it is not: the philosophical wisdom of the film is present; the only question is whether the cinematic philosopher and the audience are able to comprehend a fuller account of what they experienced.

When we look at any film in the context of cinematic philosophy, we are not looking at it as an illustration of traditional philosophy, but as a way of connecting two parallel confrontations, using different methods, with a

similar problem. The goal is to achieve an alliance between written, oral, and cinematic philosophy. We can think of it as these different approaches giving each other a boost, using their different perspectives and capacities to confront reality in multiple ways.

Conclusion: The Vision of Cinematic Philosophy

What started (and thrived) mainly as an oral tradition—at the Milesian school and in the Athenian marketplace—later left its origins for the secluded academic ivory tower; there, the practices of writing and printing had a significant influence on philosophy, taking it to magnificent terrains and heights. This endeavor became so successful, in fact, that now, ages later, the written text and academic curricula seem like they are the only proper media for philosophy. The price for this development, however, has been a slow process of alienation from everyday life, everyday language, and everyday people—alienation from philosophy's origins in the Agora (the marketplace).

Philosophy, the *love of wisdom*, is not dependent on a specific medium or solely situated within the written text or oral lectures. There is no one a priori, natural, or pure platform for philosophy; it can, should, and must be created across multiple platforms. If philosophy is alienated from its cinematic manifestation, philosophy is alienated from itself, or from whatever philosophy might be when it is not defined or created via the written or oral platform.[3]

It is no secret that the technological advances of the twenty-first century will make us ever more dependent on the cinematic phenomenon and on visual imagery; at the same time, these advances are bound to challenge the hegemony of the written word. We are now constantly surrounded by and engaged with an ocean of cinematic moving frames and visual images that constitute and direct our thinking. Our times demand that we explore and understand the full potential of this wisdom. Our times call for us to bring philosophy back to its origins, back to the people, back to where it matters. Our times call for us to engage with a new potential for wisdom and a new philosophy—cinematic philosophy.

Notes

1. Here, I assume that philosophy can appear on different platforms or through different media, a proposition that is developed in the following chapters, in which I differentiate between written, oral, and cinematic philosophy.

2. Expecting movies to do the philosophizing themselves is almost like demanding the particles of an atom, the ruins of the Pyramids in Egypt, or the elements of hydrogen to explain themselves or to be explicit.
3. I borrow the spirit of this description from Jay Bernstein (*The Fate of Art*, 1992).

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Foundation I—The Evolution of Film and Philosophy

THE SHOULDERS ON WHICH CINEMATIC PHILOSOPHY STANDS

In this chapter and the next two,[1] I will go over some of the main building blocks that have significantly influenced the development of cinematic philosophy. Because the existing research covers a broad spectrum of issues, we need to begin with a comprehensive exposition of the relationship between film and philosophy. The goal of these three expository chapters is to touch on some of the important writings on the subject so far, exposing the discipline's complex methodological roots in order to uncover the many unresolved issues that need to be addressed. Chapter 3 (*Foundation I—The Evolution of Film and Philosophy*) brings together the ideas that have been proposed in support of cinema's ability to create philosophy. Chapter 4 (*Foundation II—The Critique of Film and Philosophy*) mainly explores the existing critiques of the possibility of creating philosophy via cinema. Chapter 5 (*Foundation III—Thought Experiments*) explores the important relationship between thought experiments and cinema. The goal of these chapters is to present the shoulders on which cinematic philosophy stands, for the purpose of showing why the chapters that follow are of unprecedented significance to philosophy, media, and art.

In this chapter, I will only deal with the theories that serve as a basis for my own research and the theories that propose a methodological basis for the creation of philosophy through film. I made this choice because I realized, over the course of my research, that one of the most pressing issues within

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the discipline of film and philosophy is the need to establish the nature of the possible relationships between film and philosophy. This is one of the main reasons for the orientation of these foundational chapters toward theories that either advocate or challenge the idea that films can create philosophy.

A Brief History of the Evolution of Film as Philosophy, or Cinematic Philosophy

The earliest instances of a philosophical interest in cinema can be found in Henri Bergson (*Matter and Memory*, 1911), Hugo Munsterberg (*Photoplay: A Psychological Study*, 1916), Germaine Dulac ("The Essence of Cinema: The Visual Idea," 1925), and Rudolf Arnheim (*Film as Art*, 1932). Some of the other important and illuminating writers on the topic include Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer, Andre Bazin, Antonin Artaud, Jean-Louis Schefer, and Bela Balazs, but for now, I want to briefly focus on Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean Epstein. Their theories serve as an important inspiration for the potential of film to evoke a different, innovative, unique type of thinking that surpasses human thought.

Sergei Eisenstein was not only a groundbreaking filmmaker, but also, a brilliant theoretician (see Frampton 2006; Botz-Bornstein 2010). He was one of the first to comprehend cinema as a thinking process. Eisenstein's cinematic montage theory[2] was directly influenced by G.W.F. Hegel as well as by Karl Marx's dialectics. For Eisenstein, film is able to reconstruct the actions of the human mind; his theories of montage are an attempt to show that visual dialects are an expression of thought (Frampton 2006, 54). He sees the human mind as analyzing the world and breaking it into fragments before then creating a holistic picture from those parts. This primary and essential process of thought mirrors the filmmaking process (Frampton 2006, 60). The audiovisual counterpoint of montage mirrors the development of consciousness and is a direct reflection of human thought.

For Dziga Vertov, the cinematic eye captures its own reality, which is different from human perception (Frampton 2006, 50). The camera, as a mechanical recording machine, evokes nonhuman perception. This leads to the idea that the cinematic eye is able to place perception into matter—something that recalls Gottfried Leibniz's *Monadology* (1898), in which every object, even a stone, has a point of view.

Jean Epstein was an avant-garde filmmaker and theoretician who believed (much like Sergei Eisenstein) that cinema evokes thinking that

surpasses human reason. In *L'Intelligence d'une machine* (1946), Epstein claims that cinema is a thinking machine that can liberate us from the constraints of logic while transcending human physical and mental limits (Botz-Bornstein 2010). For Epstein, film has a unique quality of being an eye that can escape the tyrannical egocentrism of our personal vision (Epstein 1981). He believes that the truth of a thing and the truth of the camera are epistemically wed. He stresses that the authority of the film lies in its recording function, leading him to argue that cinema is true, but the story is false (Bernstein 2012).

Finally, for the phenomenologist[3] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, films are able to show us an expression of the mind (Frampton 2006, 40–41). Phenomenology reveals how in thinking the objects in front of us, we—in some sense—own them. This strange possession of the world mirrors film's possession of its characters and settings. This is one of the main reasons why Merleau-Ponty claims that philosophy is suited to film. Merleau-Ponty also argues that cinema is, in its essence, a temporal phenomenon (Botz-Bornstein 2010). The unique composition of cinema entails that each image depends on the previous image, an act that creates a new reality. By arguing that cinema is a temporal phenomenon, Merleau-Ponty rejects the reduction of cinema to the analysis of content and form or of individual images and sounds. In order to understand cinema, one needs to aim for a more holistic understanding of the cinematic experience.

GILLES DELEUZE AND STANLEY CAVELL

This brings us to two key philosophers, Gilles Deleuze and Stanley Cavell, whose work, starting in the 1970s and 1980s, sparked interest in directions that continue to influence and inspire the field of film as philosophy to this day. Their writings serve as an essential basis for any theory related to film as philosophy and are crucial to the evolution of cinematic philosophy.

GILLES DELEUZE: NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR EXPRESSING OR CREATING PHILOSOPHY

Gilles Deleuze (1999b, 140–41) notes that Nietzsche began the search for new means of expressing philosophy via certain arts. Deleuze also argues that in the second half of the nineteenth century, philosophy strove not only to renew its content, but also, to create new forms of expression to represent the philosophy of the future (1983, 233). In essence, Deleuze

views philosophy, science, and art as different avenues for confronting the chaos, (or truth, or the world we live in). And in this sense, cinema is not an extension of philosophy, but simply a different way of creating philosophy by other means.

For Deleuze, "Philosophy has not at all undergone similar revolutions or experiments as those produced in science, painting, sculpture, music or literature … [T]he search for modes of expression (both a new image of thought and new techniques) must be essential for philosophy" (2004, 140–41). He argues that there is a feeling that the old style of writing philosophy books cannot go on because they no longer interest students or the authors who write them. Deleuze calls for a formal renewal in and of philosophy and stresses the need for a massive expansion of concepts.

Deleuze (1999a, 2000) is as interested in filmmakers or artists as he is in philosophers. Although the creation of art is different from the creation of science and philosophy, there are remarkable similarities between the disciplines that can echo each other. There is an internal alliance among art (cinema included), philosophy, and science, which should be understood as separate melodic lines in constant interplay with each other.

It is important to mention that, for Deleuze, the encounter between art, philosophy, and science is not what takes place when one discipline reflects or monitors another (2000, 367). Rather, it is what happens when one discipline realizes that it has to resolve a problem similar to what another discipline encounters, and when each discipline solves the problem using its own unique possibilities. Deleuze aims at a heterogeneous thought composed of philosophy, art, and science, stressing that he turned to cinema because there were a few problems in philosophy that compelled him to look for answers in cinema. He never tried to apply philosophy or philosophical theories to cinema (2000, 366). Instead, he went straight from cinema to philosophy, and from philosophy to cinema.

Stanley Cavell: Film Is Made for Philosophy

In his introduction to *Cavell on Film*, William Rothman notes that Stanley Cavell saw the marriage between film and philosophy as a necessity and that Cavell is the only major American philosopher to have made the subject of film central to his work (Rothman 2005). For Cavell, "Film is made for philosophy; it shifts or puts different light on whatever philosophy has said about appearance and reality, about actors and characters, about skepticism and dogmatism, about presence and absence" (Cavell 1999,

25). Thus, for Cavell, film is, by its nature, a philosophical medium (Bauer 2005, 40). Cavell argues that the view of professional philosophy as a technical discipline reserved for specialists is a limited view. He claims that some of his own writings on philosophy rely on the way American films think about society, human relations, and their own conditions as films (2005a).

Cavell rejects the idea that film should serve as an illustration for philosophy: for him, film is a rediscovery of philosophy (2005b, 190–91). Cavell claims that film concerns a quest for transcendence or a step into an opposite mode, by recognizing who you are through accessing a different world (rather than by becoming another person or attaining an unattained self) (Rothman 2005, xxi).

For Cavell, films are strange and mysterious objects, unlike anything else on earth (2005a, 94). He stresses that a vision of film is that every motion, every human gesture, or posture, however glancing, has its poetry (96; Rothman 2005, xxvi).[4] Film democratizes knowledge, allowing all of us a glimpse of poetry, thereby blessing and cursing us. Rothman notes that within film studies, it has remained unquestionable that classic movies were ideological representations[5] that needed to be decoded and resisted (xiv). Film students have also generally been taught that in order to seriously learn about films, they must break their attachments to the films they love. Cavell's understanding of film stands at the opposite pole from these opinions. He advocates a sense of gratitude for the existence of the great (and enigmatic) art of film, which has attracted the devotion of audiences of all classes, all ages, and all spaces in the world where a projector has been mounted (Rothman 2005, xiv).

Cavell (2005b, 179) claims that any serious film resists interpretation and must be taken on its own terms. Many film criticisms and interpretations are condescending toward films, often giving the impression that the criticisms and interpretations believe themselves to be better than the film itself. Cavell (198) also insists that the intentions of the filmmakers are less important in understanding a film than are the ideas of the viewer or critic, who needs to discover the intention of the film by looking into the layers of the film itself. He suggests (186) that film can think, as a way of emphasizing that the intentions and opinions of the artist (the director) are less important than the exploration of why a specific film is as it is. Klevan (2005, 200) clarifies this point, claiming that students too often fall into such traps as asking what the director's intentions were or what happened on set, or examining the actors' lives. This habit excuses the

audience from its own responsibility for finding out what the film is about, while believing that they can learn about the film from outside of it.

Ignoring the Relationship between Film and Philosophy

I want to engage here with the recent dialogue on the capacities, potentials, and limitations of the cinematic medium for evoking philosophy.[6] This will also show that one of the main contemporary problems within the field of film and philosophy is the lack of a comprehensive methodology for establishing a firm bond between film and philosophy. In most cases, the theory of film and philosophy has no criteria, methodology, or clear structure underpinning the philosophical evidence found in films. The big picture is missing from most of these interpretations of film and philosophy. Serious questions—such as why anyone would find value in attributing a philosophical potential to film, or what the engagement with film can give philosophy that other possibilities could not—are missing. Thus, although there is a huge interest in film and philosophy, there are, at the same time, very few discussions about what it is that makes film a legitimate bearer of philosophical wisdom.

Nevertheless, there is, as we have been seeing, great interest in this field. Thomas Wartenberg and Angela Curran (2005) note: "over the past two decades philosophers have turned their attention to film in an unprecedented manner" (1). There is a growing bond between film and philosophy, observable in the flow of philosophical books and articles on film, the journals dedicated to the field, and the extensive use of film to present and explain philosophy in university classes. But, as Wartenberg argues (2005, 270), there have, at the same time, been very few discussions about what it is that legitimates the possibility that film can evoke philosophical content.

For Wartenberg, this failure to articulate the relationship between film and philosophy means taking an understanding of philosophical practice for granted, and, usually, simply assuming that a given film's goal is to illustrate a philosophical idea. He argues that there is an essential importance to articulating the relationship between film and philosophy, since that articulation could clarify what the different possibilities are for the cinematic medium of engaging with philosophy. He points out, for example (Wartenberg 2007, 13–14), that putting the written text of Descartes's *Meditations* onscreen to scroll up in front of our eyes, like the beginning of *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977), would not constitute a screening of

the ideas. (Nor, for that matter, we could add, would having the words spoken aloud on the soundtrack over a blank screen.) There is nothing about Descartes's argument that demands that it be presented in such a way; as Wartenberg suggests, in such cases, one should simply go read the book.[7]

Another critique of theoreticians of film and philosophy offered by Wartenberg (2005, 271–75) has to do with ignoring basic methodological questions about the relationship between film and philosophy. The theoretician Christopher Falzon (2007), for instance, explores how the film *Casper the Friendly Ghost* (Brad Silberling, 1995) presents Cartesian dualism. Wartenberg concentrates on the fact that after Falzon has shown that the film incorporates the idea of Cartesian dualism, he then uses the same critique that was used against Descartes to prove that the film is incoherent. Wartenberg's point is that in such cases, the transition between the two fields is made too quickly and without considering crucial methodological and relationship issues. Falzon, like many others, mainly uses film as a vehicle to illustrate philosophy's complex theories. Wartenberg rightly notes that before beginning on any analysis, the theorizer first needs to understand and articulate his or her own position on the relationship between film and philosophy. This is a key point, because it is complex and not at all obvious how to articulate, in a positive way, what is philosophical in film. Within the discipline of film and philosophy, all it generally takes for an approach to be accepted as philosophical is for it to refer to a specific philosopher or philosophical concept. This correlates with Daniel Shaw's observation (2008, 2–4) that most writing on film and philosophy simply shows similarities between one of the writer's favorite philosophers and one of their favorite films, while suggesting that the film could be better understood from a philosophical perspective.

Daniel Frampton (2006, 8–11) has a superb observation on the problem of ignoring the relationship between film and philosophy. He describes most of the writing on film and philosophy as being led by an analysis of plot and character, while the discussion of the power and impact of images and cinematic devices is usually left unspoken:

> These philosophers are simply concerned with how some films contain stories and characterizations that helpfully illustrate well-known philosophical ideas … So much writing within the area of "film and philosophy" simply ignores cinematics and concentrates on stories and character motivations. It only takes one character to say "man is not an island" for somebody to jump up and declare the film philosophical. (9)

Frampton stresses that cinema should not be a catalogue of philosophical problems, nor is the point to leaven philosophical lectures by showing a few scenes from a cool movie.

One of the most pressing issues within the discipline of film and philosophy, then, is the need to establish what kind of relationship is possible between film and philosophy. This is an essential issue because, in spite of the unprecedented contemporary academic interest in the field of film and philosophy, most of these theories (at least as of this writing) offer a very limited methodological structure or general concept as to why the relationship between film and philosophy is of any value. Most of these theories rush to find philosophical evidence within individual movies, without offering any big picture. In the following pages, therefore, I will review some of the contemporary theories of film and philosophy that *do* offer as well as advocate a methodological basis to the relationship between film and philosophy, presenting a variety of opinions on the possibility of creating philosophy via the cinematic platform.

ADVOCATES OF THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING PHILOSOPHY VIA THE CINEMATIC PLATFORM

The Trigger That Sparked the Recent Dialogue on Film as Philosophy

Stephan Mulhall's (2002) discussion of the four *Alien* films was one of the main triggers for recent interest in film as philosophy[8] and is an important step in the evolution of the discipline. Mulhall (2005, 67) identifies three different ways in which film is attuned to philosophical concerns. The first of these modes is film as philosophizing: Mulhall finds that the sophistication and self-awareness with which certain films develop a number of related philosophical issues suggest that they should be viewed as making real contributions to philosophical debate. Such films are not merely handy, popular illustrations of philosophical arguments; they actually reflect, evaluate, and think systematically in the ways philosophers do. Mulhall (2005, 67–69) does not consider such films to be raw material for philosophy, nor a kind of philosophical ornament, but actual philosophical exercises: philosophizing in action, film as philosophizing. The second mode in which film can do philosophy lies in the reflective analytical interest in the nature of the medium of cinema (usually called the philosophy of film). The third mode can be seen in certain films that manifest a general

preoccupation with the conditions of their possibility; the development and progress of such films is dependent on a reflection into their own possibilities. For Mulhall (69), the *Alien* quartet[9] exemplifies film as philosophizing, the philosophy of film, and film as philosophy.

Films as Thought Experiments

I have already referred to Wartenberg, one of the key theoreticians of film and philosophy, who holds that film has the potential to provide vivid examples that clarify philosophical stakes (2005, 2007). Wartenberg's main methodological approach is based on the idea that if a philosophical technique (such as thought experiments or counterexamples) can be put onscreen, then one can say that philosophy can be screened. He argues that in the realm of thought experiments, in fact, cinema can actually claim a distinct advantage in presenting philosophy. Although he admits that this does not address the question of what makes a work philosophical, it does show how philosophical techniques can be screened.

Film As a New Type of Thinking

In *Filmosophy*, Daniel Frampton's main goal is to show that film can evoke a new type of thinking (2006), positing that if filmmaking is to philosophize, it must introduce a new kind of possibility, not just of illustration, but of new directions of thought. For Frampton, film's main philosophical potential lies in its unique cinematic means of expression, which is capable of evoking new types of thinking. Film can create lines of inquiry that traditional forms of thinking (constrained by the mask of language) were not able to create. Therefore, cinema can become a new and unique type of philosophy that goes beyond the written and verbal traditions. Philosophy should make film a partner in the creation of concepts, because film evokes new possibilities for thought. Film, therefore, embodies new possibilities for philosophy. For Frampton, the end of philosophy lies in film.

Movies As the Great Democratic Art Form

Jay Bernstein (2012) calls movies the great democratic art form (maybe even the Holy Grail) that progressive thought always fantasized: an art form that is both popular and political (democratic and egalitarian). In fact, it may be precisely because movies don't look like the great works

of modernist fiction, poetry, painting, dance, and music that so many theoreticians have devalued it. It would be ironic if it turned out that the art form that was routinely condemned, suspected of not even being an art form, and criticized for being mass entertainment, then emerged as having been *the* democratic art form of the twentieth century all along.

Bernstein (citing the inspiration of V.F. Perkins 1993) holds that there are two main axes that compete for the authority of films (Bernstein 2012): the image axis and the narrative axis. (He notes that although image and narrative are not the only concepts necessary for understanding the social world, they are among the central ones.) The authority of the image comes from its representation as an imprint of the world, while the authority of the narrative comes from the patterning of action as an intrinsic property. Bernstein argues that this double dialectic in movies is a necessary integration of modern life.

With regard to the narrative axis, Bernstein holds that the main reason for movies not being recognized as a democratic art form is that they have been considered to be illusions producing mass art. Their easy accessibility means that they have often been interpreted as a mass art, rather than a popular one. Bernstein points to Jean-Luc Godard's condemnation of Hollywood films as paradigmatic episodes of ideological illusion. Godard's program, especially after 1968, was intended to be an inversion of Hollywood's cinematic practices and ideals. He viewed the classical cinematic narratives as fictions, which, for him, meant that they were the same as mystification, ideology, lies, deception, illusions, representation, and death. The Godardian attack on fictions was also given a political rationale: fiction equals mystification, and mystification equals bourgeois ideology.

Peter Wollen (1999, 500; see also, Bernstein 2012) argues that Godard's opinions are situated in the modernist tradition that is suspicious of the power of the arts (and above all, film) to capture its audience without apparently making it think. Bernstein (2012) also argues that the Godardian schema is hardly innocent, as it presents one view of truth in opposition to another. Compare Jacques Rancière (2004, 2006; see also, Bernstein 2012), who stresses that fiction should not be reduced to being a pretty story or an evil lie. The real must be fictionalized in order to be thought, while writing history and writing stories come under the same regime of truth. Politics and art construct fictions; they are material rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, and relationships between what is done and what can be done. They share an interest in shaping a sensible material medium to fit a

desired outcome. Jerome Bruner (1991) holds that narrative is an essential mental instrument that constructs our reality and essentially organizes our experiences and memories. He argues that in many cases, narrative ways of thinking have proven themselves to be successful antidotes to the shortcomings of the rational, empiricist project. Consequently, Bernstein (2012) argues that if human actions are made intelligent through narrative structure, then narrative structure serves as the patterning of human actions through time. Hence, if everyone is considered to be participating in the task of making history, then narrative can no longer be regarded as the imposition of an alien framework.

With respect to the image axis, Bernstein stresses that the way that the image is chained to its object in the world entails that movies, more than any other art form, are anchored in their time. Movies become dated with unspeakable rapidity, a pressure that no previous art form had to bear. The visual contact between movies and their time, along with the fact that their presentation aims to be a living, lifelike expression, entails that the slightest shift in fashion, linguistic habit, or social position can make the world presented on screen appear not to be our world.[10] Bernstein argues that any art is essentially composed from material that has been removed from the world. One of art's main problems is how a composition of such removed objects can acquire any attachment to the world. Cinema, on the contrary, solves this traditional problem naturally, as it acquires attachment to the world and to experience, without any effort. As Stanley Cavell notes, reproducing the world is the only thing that film does automatically (Bernstein 2012). Bernstein concludes that the interrogation of our world via film is an ongoing democratic (and philosophical) conversation about who we are and how we act in the world.

Cinema Evokes Impractical and Paradoxical Relations

Alain Badiou (2013) sees the essential connection between film and philosophy as laying in the idea that cinema presents us with a form of an ancient paradox, the paradox of the tension between being and appearance. For Badiou, philosophy exists in the spaces between paradoxical relations that fail to connect, since if every connection was naturally legitimate, there would be no need for philosophy. In this sense, cinema offers paradoxical relations between being and appearance, while the main philosophical response to cinema deals with the untenable relationship it creates between total artifice and total reality.

Badiou states that cinema is also able to bridge a paradoxical relationship between the masses and art, while stressing that cinema is a mass art. He defines mass art as artifacts that are seen and liked by millions without regard to social groups or to the moment of creation.[11] "Mass" is a political category (like democratic, communist, or socialist) while "art," on the contrary, is an aristocratic category. For Badiou, "aristocratic" has to do with creation and novelty and entails a means of comprehending, in other words, education, craft, an understanding of the history and the mastering of the language of art (something that usually demands a long apprenticeship). Badiou defines this as "aristocratic" because it is a privilege that is not available to all. Thus, "mass art" entails a paradoxical relationship between a democratic property and an aristocratic property. Badiou argues that cinema imposes impractical connections between aristocracy and democracy, innovation and familiarity, and novelty and general tastes. And it is because cinema is composed of these paradoxical connections that philosophy finds an interest in cinema (since, for Badiou, philosophy exists between paradoxical relations). Badiou also reminds us that philosophy began as a vast discussion with the theater and performing arts. Therefore, it shouldn't come as a surprise that philosophy today finds an increasing part of its activity in a discussion with cinema.

Rather Than Reflection: Films Can Make Us See

Jerry Goodenough (2005) and Julian Baggini (2003) both express the idea that while a book tells, a film shows; this is an illuminating point that will be developed in the chapter on *Cinesophia*. Within this idea is the essence of one of the main unprecedented potentials of the cinematic medium to create a new type of philosophy.

Goodenough (2005, 12–14) sees one of the key questions as being the question of what a film can do, philosophically, that a book cannot. In order to answer this, he compares Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) to the film *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982). Goodenough's analysis centers on the idea that with the novel, we are told, while with the film, we can see. Dick's novel tells us that the replicants in his story are intelligent and rational and possess the qualities of personhood. But Goodenough argues that this telling is essentially dry and lifeless compared to the possibility of seeing the replicants interacting on the screen, indistinguishable from humans in their appearance and behavior. The film *Blade Runner*, unlike the book, does not merely

make us intellectually aware that the replicants satisfy the conditions of personhood, but it gives us the opportunity to see the replicants' quest for life and survival, their relationships with each other, and their cold termination by Deckard (played by Harrison Ford). We see that they are more than just machines that are incapable of feelings; we see that human society has gone terribly wrong with its attitude toward them. "The film allows us to perceive and to feel, to experience what is happening at a deeper and more persuasive level than any mere written account could manage" (Goodenough 2005, 12).

Goodenough argues that the film manages to make the metaconcept of Dick's novel plausible in a way that a mere argument on paper cannot (23–25). He claims, therefore, that a film might be able to do philosophy, or at least, a different way of doing philosophy (25). But he says this with caution, adding that the philosophy to be found in or via a certain film might not always be deliberate philosophy; for instance, Goodenough makes no claims that Ridley Scott was consciously engaged with this kind of philosophical work.

Baggini has also pointed to the cinematic power of showing (2003; see also Goodenough 2005, 22–23). In essence, he argues that the possibilities of showing on display in the film *Rashomon* (Akira Kurosawa, 1950) demonstrate the potential of transforming what might seem impossible or unattainable in the context of a story into a visible and believable possibility on screen. Thus, for Baggini (2003), philosophy says, but film shows. He concludes that film, like philosophy, can make us understand reality, and that film achieves this through fictions that can include nonliteral modes of representation.

Cinema Creates Experiences

Henry Unger (1991) presents a fascinating view of the cinema of philosophy; his ideas on cinema as an experience have been a great inspiration to me in my research. Unger sees the goal of the cinema of philosophy as being able to merge an idea with a sensual experience—in other words, to merge philosophy with art (10). Cinema, for Unger, offers us a conjunction between ideas and senses, where ideas are defined as abstractions of the mind and sensations as perceptions of the body (14–20).

One of Unger's key points is that cinema creates experiences (31–32), and mastering the cinematic craft means that the filmmaker knows how to create an idea as an experience, as Orson Welles, Ingmar Bergman,

Bernardo Bertolucci, Roman Polanski, Alfred Hitchcock, and Stanley Kubrick have done. Connecting this notion to film and philosophy, Unger holds that cinema gives us the possibility of constructing a philosophical idea as a sensual experience.

The cinema of philosophy, for Unger, is an experience of cinema which has at its base an idea that has emerged from philosophical thinking (38–42). The engagement with philosophy via cinema is created through such devices as lighting, frames, visuals, camera angles, lenses, and plot, entailing the possibility of reaching the audience through the heart and the senses, rather than through the rational mind. Film does not explicitly tell us its ideas, and the ideas it presents do not come with a manual, but it gives us a world and enables us to experience it.

Unger is more interested in examining how the language of cinema deals with a philosophical subject than in identifying the philosophical content that appears in a given film (41)[12]: he is interested not so much in content as in cinematic language. In other words, we should be asking not whether Ingmar Bergman's protagonists represent some philosophical standpoint, but how Bergman, through the operations of the cinematic medium, makes us adopt a specific philosophical idea. We should ask Alfred Hitchcock not what he thinks of Thomas Hobbes, but how his ideas determine the way he divides space and light in the famous kissing scene in *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958). We cannot examine the subject matter or content in seclusion from the tools of cinema, since at the end of the day, the limits of cinematic language define the limits of its world (Unger 1991, 42).

Film Can Open Lines of Inquiry That Argumentative Prose Cannot

Rupert Read (2005, 29–30) argues that films can mirror aspects of Ludwig Wittgenstein's[13] activity of philosophizing, and in so doing, do philosophy (rather than merely illustrating philosophy). Given Wittgenstein's non-theoretical approach to aesthetics, his questioning of the utility of theory, and his emphasis on looking rather than merely thinking, Read points out, films mirror Wittgenstein's philosophizing activity. A film, like one of Wittgenstein's thought experiments, can engage the audience in a therapeutic process of dialogue, investigate the absurd, show a journey beyond the limits of thought, and deliberately collapse under its own weight. A film can show the life of human beings in ways that Wittgenstein himself suggested argumentative prose could not.

Read, following Cavell, does not consider films as the illustrative material for pre-existing philosophical theories or ideologies (Read 2005, 30–31). Serious conceptual thinking in films need not be governed by a systematic or pre-formatted theory. Unlike in classical film theory, Read's goal is not to subjugate a film to a prearranged philosophical criterion that is, in fact, alien to the film. Rather, it is to seek how cinema can be both a natural and an inherent source of philosophy. In order for this to be more broadly acknowledged within the discipline of philosophy, however, we would have to embrace a distinctive concept of philosophy as a nondoctrinal activity: philosophy as a set of methods and questions about whatever can be questioned and as a way of clearing the path for films to show us the thinking they accomplish and for us to think with and through films.

In a different article, Read and Phil Hutchinson (Read and Hutchinson 2005) make a few important comments on the unique experience the audience goes through in the film *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000). Read and Hutchinson argue that the structure of *Memento* is not just a cool or clever cinematic trick (2005, 80–81). By structuring the film through the peculiar/confusing/tragic condition of Leonard (played by Guy Pearce), the film allows us, the audience, to experience a similar peculiar/confusing/tragic condition. It forces us to confront the difference between Leonard's condition and our own, while allowing us a window into a mind that operates with a different structure than ours. Hence, one of the main goals of the film is to present us with the experience of Leonard's bizarre and unique situation and perception.

Read and Hutchinson consider (81–89) the main philosophical aspect of the film *Memento* to be an analogy to Wittgenstein's perception of therapy in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). They argue that one of the main attributes of philosophy, for Wittgenstein, has to do with liberation from the compulsion of any preconceived perception. *Memento* demands that the viewer be active and struggle for a similar type of liberation. As we inhabit Leonard's world, over the course of the film, we realize the monster he has become. Read and Hutchinson (88–89) see the film as an exercise in unreliable narration, paralleling Wittgenstein's use of pseudo-stories. They conclude that the therapy offered in the film is somewhat analogous to the therapy offered by Wittgenstein's texts.

Certain Ideas Can Only Be Created via a Specific Medium

One of the central ideas of this study is that different platforms or media entail different possibilities for thought. Simon Glendinning's (2005) examination of Søren Kierkegaard (1843) offers an intriguing analysis of how certain ideas can be most appropriately expressed within a specific medium (Glendinning 2005, 100–101). Kierkegaard's essay on Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* concludes that there are ideas whose most appropriate medium of expression is intrinsically musical: *Don Giovanni* does not simply render in music that which might be equally well or even better expressed in other forms, but rather, renders, in the music, a content that is somehow intrinsic to it, and for which, the music is an irreplaceable medium.

Glendinning argues that if music is understood as representing sounds and pictures are understood as representing sights (as in Plato's perception that artistic creation is a type of representation that is distant from truth[14]), then one would tend to think that music is not a sufficient medium for attaining truth (99–101). And yet, there are many instances when one feels that music expresses content that cannot be expressed in words, content that cannot be paraphrased verbally or otherwise, or in fact, in any way other than through music. In such cases, Glendinning suggests, we are dealing with an intrinsically musical idea, which cannot be adequately expressed in any other medium.

In the essay on *Don Giovanni*, Kierkegaard's central claim is that unlike in the world of language, whatever music expresses can only be given in the immediate moment (Glendinning 2005, 106–7). Kierkegaard distinguishes sensuality from spirit: music can express an immediate sensual experience (within its immediacy) without reflection or a conceptual determination by the spirit. This view suggests that what *Don Giovanni* presents is not a general concept, but the immediate expression of a seductive life, as it is sensually lived. Mozart's opera gives us an immediate expression of Don Giovanni's sensuous desire as something like a force of nature, rather than presenting the Don as a distinctive persona. Thus, the musical form is uniquely tied to the content being expressed, since Don Giovanni's essence resides in sensual immediacy, making the Don an intrinsic fit with Mozart's musical expression. This is why Kierkegaard asserts that *Don Giovanni* is unsurpassable as a musical work of art.[15] And for our purposes here, this analysis of *Don Giovanni* is an illuminating example of the fact that there are certain ideas, concepts, or entities whose

most appropriate medium of expression is something other than written or verbal language. My research is inspired by such ideas, and I make a similar argument: namely, that there are certain philosophical possibilities that are best expressed and created via the cinematic platform.

NOTES

1. Chapter 3: *Foundation I – The Evolution of Film and Philosophy*; Chap. 4: *Foundation II – The Critique of Film and Philosophy*; Chap. 5: *Foundation III – Thought Experiments.*
2. In essence, cinematic montage evokes an idea that is derived from the collision between two independent shots.
3. Phenomenology is essentially the philosophy of experience, the study of consciousness, concentrating on our experience of things.
4. Cavell gives Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton as examples who lived by this knowledge and may have elevated it to its purest expression.
5. In a conversation with Andrew Klevan (2005), Stanley Cavell refers to Laura Mulvey's (1975) influential paper on the male gaze. Cavell argues that Mulvey's warning to beware of the pleasure of film hindered the development of critical arguments on film. "But I think Mulvey's view helped to cause a violent misreading of, especially, Hollywood films … Mulvey's indiscriminateness was, I thought, harmful" (Cavell cited in Klevan 2005, 178).
6. The following discussion draws on many different theoretical perspectives, including those of Julian Baggini, Nancy Bauer, Jay Bernstein, Noel Carroll, Angela Curran, David Davies, Catherine Elgin, Daniel Frampton, Richard Gilmore, Simon Glendinning, Jerry Goodenough, Herbert Granger, Phil Hutchinson, Peter Lamarque, Ben Little, Paisley Livingston, Stephen Mulhall, John Norton, Stein Olsen, Jacques Ranciere, Rupert Read, Bruce Russell, Robert Sinnerbrink, Murray Smith, Aaron Smuts, Jerome Stolnitz, Kevin Stoehr, Henry Unger, and Thomas Wartenberg.
7. This leads Wartenberg to raise another interesting question: namely, whether there is anything necessary about the screening of philosophy that requires it to be presented visually rather than verbally (2007, 13–14).
8. Daniel Shaw (2008) argues that the recent dialogue about whether films can do philosophy was triggered by Stephen Mulhall's 2002 book *On Film.*
9. The *Alien* quartet, for Mulhall, does not merely reflect on human nature and embodiment, but is also self-reflective about itself and the condition of its own possibilities. The progress of the series could be seen as a conversation between the different directors, the protagonists, and the condition of

their possibilities. For Mulhall, reflecting on the conditions of possibilities is one of the main characteristics of philosophy, and with the *Alien* series, each director progresses in accordance to the previous films' possibilities while adding a new type of discussion and new layers and innovations.

10. Bernstein argues that unlike longlasting paintings and sculptures, movies that last longer manage to do so because the world that they address is still recognized as our world. If, for example, film noir is still popular, it is because it concerns the mood of shabbiness, venality, greed, and depravity that casts a shadow over any American successes, now more than ever. For Bernstein, this "momentariness" nature of films is also the source of their authority.

11. For Badiou, the moment of creation is important since we are dominated by a melancholy historicism, which is apparent, for example, in the fact that most people who go to museums go there because they regard the icons of the past as treasures.

12. Unger considers such identification of the philosophical content of specific films to be a trivial quest, not worth writing a book about. Asking whether the director of a given film is advocating any particular philosophical content would, in Unger's view, yield nothing more than a superficial overview of philosophical asides in cinema.

13. In essence, Rupert Read believes that Ludwig Wittgenstein's thought paved the way for appreciating the idea that film can philosophize.

14. In *The Republic*, Plato (1998, 598b, 597e, and 602c; see also Glendinning 2005, note 19) refers to artistic representation as being two generations away from reality: forms = truth; particulars = the first remove; and representations of the particulars, i.e. art = the second remove.

15. Glendinning notes that Kierkegaard was critical of any presentation of *Don Giovanni* that allowed moments of reflection or thinking into the presentation (Glendinning 2005, 101–11). For Kierkegaard, the Don's essence was desire, a sensuous inward immediacy. No other medium (including language) can express Don Giovanni better than music, since the Don embodies music's proper object.

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Foundation II—The Critique of Film and Philosophy

In this second expository phase, I explore some of the main challenges to the idea that films are capable of bearing philosophical weight. This is another crucial step in my comprehensive exposition of the most important building blocks in the development of cinematic philosophy. As I mentioned in Chap. 3, the goal of the three foundational chapters is to expose the discipline's complex methodological roots for the purpose of showing the many unresolved issues that need to be addressed. In my view, the most pressing issue is the establishment of a clear understanding of how films can create philosophy—a question I try to address throughout this book. But first, we need to look clearly at the background and history of this question.

Eventually, I want to claim that cinema can indeed create philosophical wisdom. In this chapter, therefore, I will present specific critiques of the potential of films to create philosophy, with a response following each critique to address its weaknesses. I want to note that although I may not agree with most of the challenges presented in the following pages, they are nevertheless essential to the discipline of film and philosophy and have been of great inspiration to me in my research.

The Segregation of Truth from Art

The general distrust of the capacity of visual images for truth and wisdom is not new, but goes back to Plato,[1] beginning with Plato's resistance to the hegemony of Homer. In *The Republic*, Plato excludes poets from the future republic that is to be grounded in reason. For Plato, truth is

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the matter of philosophical investigation that must have its object in the unchanging entities he classifies as Forms. Plato's ideas have evolved into the contemporary notion that art forms cannot produce real knowledge and the general agreement that images are not an adequate or realistic source for the creation of proper philosophy.

But we do not need to go all the way back to Plato to find a blanket denial of the possibility of cinema being a carrier of wisdom. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944) is probably one of the most influential theories to have come out of the twentieth century; that text was one of the main reasons I chose to engage with the theory of cinematic philosophy.[2] In essence, Adorno and Horkheimer stress that cinema cannot serve as a critical text or inspire serious reflection on social or philosophical issues. In their view, films are created solely for entertainment and commercial profit, and contemporary culture and mass media are controlled by industrial monopolies. This leads to what Adorno and Horkheimer characterize as a culture suffering from sameness: the differences between one film and another, one short story and another, one piece of music and another, and so on, reflect the desire to classify and organize consumers rather than any real differences in quality between the types of merchandise. "The schematic nature of this procedure is evident from the fact that the mechanically differentiated products are ultimately all the same" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944, 43). They stress that what the entertainment industry and cinema create is mere amusement, and that when one is amused, one makes no effort. Thus, this powerful tool not only controls the happiness and leisure time of the masses, but also, suppresses any attempt on their part to think or to resist the reality they live in. "Amusement always means putting things out of mind. … It is indeed an escape, but not as it claims, escape from bad reality but from the last thought of resisting that reality. The liberation which amusement promises is from thinking as negation" (57). Those in charge do not even try to conceal their real purpose and desires: "Film and radio no longer need to present themselves as art. The truth that they are nothing but business is used as an ideology to legitimize the trash they intentionally produce" (42).

Plato's claims, as well as those of Adorno and Horkheimer, serve as a basis for contemporary discourses that challenge the potential of films to create philosophy or any valuable wisdom. Let us, therefore, explore some of the recent theories that challenge the potential of film to create philosophical wisdom.

Challenging the Philosophical Potential of Film

In the previous chapter, we concentrated on theories that try to articulate in a positive way how films can create philosophy. These theories are not above critique, but I will not offer a detailed critique of each of them at this point. It would, however, be helpful to take one theory that advocates that film can do philosophy and examine that theory's limitations. I have chosen Richard Gilmore's (2005) theory, which exemplifies some of the existing complexities of the discipline of film and philosophy. The main reason I choose to begin with Gilmore's theory is that although he finds philosophical evidence in films, at the same time, he does not seem to be convinced that cinema can create proper philosophy—something I have frequently found to be true for other theoreticians as well.

For Gilmore, the key element in understanding the relationship between film and philosophy is the notion of transport (4–5), which he defines as a mechanism by which we can escape from our given condition and enter a new condition. At the same time, however, Gilmore stresses that the experience of transport itself is not enough, since a reflective acknowledgment of the experience of transport is also required (6–9). This is where philosophy comes into the picture, as philosophy is an excellent tool for achieving a reflective understanding. For Gilmore, therefore, to reflect on a movie is to do philosophy, and thinking reflectively, that is to say philosophically, about these films gives them depth, significance, and layers of meaning (ix).

Ben Little, however, challenges Gilmore's theory, writing that if every act of human reflection is considered philosophy, then the category of philosophy becomes empty. Any form of expression can lead to reflective analysis, and it is not clear why cinema is any different (Little 2006). Furthermore, to reveal the meaningful or manipulative layers of a film is not necessarily to be engaged with the practice of philosophy through film, but simply, to be engaged with critical thinking and analysis.

I would also like to note that Gilmore's analysis concentrates on the elements of character and narrative in cinema, while ignoring the other possibilities that the cinematic medium possesses. His analysis does not, therefore, bring us any closer to a discovery of the unique potential of the cinematic medium to create philosophy, since character and narrative properties exist in other art forms, such as theater and literary fiction, as well. I also observe that Gilmore sees cinema as appealing to the emotions, and this, he believes, makes it incapable of creating proper philosophy on

its own, as he stresses that movies need reflective activity (which he defines as philosophy) in order to reveal their layers (Gilmore 2005, 3).

Gilmore's theory is one example of a desire to articulate what is philosophical in films while, at the same time, according films only a limited capacity to create philosophy. It begins to show us that the identification of the philosophical property that might exist in films is a complex task, requiring an understanding of the nature of philosophy, the capacities of film that are exclusive to it, and whether philosophy and film can work together to create something new and different.

My study of the relevant literature has unearthed many more such opinions, stressing why it is that cinema cannot create philosophy or can create only a very limited type of philosophy. Therefore, I would like to explore a variety of different theories that challenge the potential of films to create philosophy. Thomas Wartenberg (2007, 16–31) has done an impressive job of collecting and categorizing these critiques into three a priori objections (the objections of explicitness, generality, and imposition, as we shall see) to the capacity of film to create philosophy.[3] I find Wartenberg's structure extremely helpful in exploring the variety of critiques of the possibility of creating philosophy via the cinematic platform.

The Philosophy within Films Is Not Explicit

The first a priori objection Wartenberg identifies is the *explicitness objection*, which concentrates on the notion that film lacks the ability to explicitly articulate and defend the philosophical claims it presents (Wartenberg 2007, 16–21). An example of this challenge can be found in Murray Smith's (2006) article "Film Art, Argument and Ambiguity." Smith points out the similarity between a thought experiment raised by Bernard Williams (1973), in which the mind and body of an emperor and a peasant are switched, and the plot of the film *All of Me* (Reiner 1984), stressing that although the text and the film share a very similar narrative, their philosophical implications are substantially different. The philosophical text is mainly concerned with the epistemological issues, while for the film, what matters most is the popular and/or artistic concern with its comedic aspects, which trump the philosophical notions. Smith argues that the very different structural goals of the two make the philosophical writings superior to a similar narrative presented in a film. David Davies approvingly recaps Smith's argument:

[Smith] rightly notes that, whereas philosophical (and indeed scientific) thought experiments involve narratively sparse fictions, with a minimum of detail, fictional narratives, whether literary or cinematic, are lush in detail. He then suggests that this difference reflects a difference in narrative purposes … the narrative of the film is much more detailed than the philosophical thought experiments, and the details sustain what might strike one as a more nuanced philosophical exploration of the issue. But Smith argues with some plausibility that the tensions within the cinematic narrative are best explained not in terms of philosophical nuancing but in terms of a different primary purpose, namely to entertain and amuse the reader. (Davies 2008, 5)

There are a couple of disturbing things about the claims made by Smith and Davies. First of all, the assumption that the primary purpose of cinema is merely to amuse and entertain seems to be an unjust a priori generalization. My answer to this is that even if the majority of films might seem to aim primarily at amusement and entertainment, this does not eliminate the potential of the medium itself to evoke philosophical wisdom. But even beyond that, and more important, it is unclear why amusement and entertainment should be considered to be entirely disconnected from any realm of wisdom or knowledge, as if philosophical knowledge and wisdom could not be evoked through amusement and entertainment. This seems to be based on a dogmatic bias that amusement and entertainment are at the opposite pole from knowledge and wisdom.[4]

Wartenberg (2007, 16–20) finds another example of the *explicitness objection* in an argument between Herbert Granger (2004) and Bruce Russell (2007). Granger claims that because the film *Le Feu Follet* (Louis Malle 1963) shows the protagonist Alain Leroy (Maurice Ronet) philosophizing about the meaning of life, engaging in philosophical inquiry, the film therefore deserves to be considered philosophy.[5] Russell, in contrast, claims that narrative films lack the explicitness that is a crucial part of philosophical argumentation. The film itself does not explicitly present the argument that Granger claims it does: its implicit philosophical arguments must be fleshed out and made explicit by philosophers (such as Granger). Russell also argues that there are perfectly plausible alternative interpretations of the film.

Wartenberg, however, argues that Russell's offer of alternative interpretations for the film does not supply a persuasive proof that film, as a medium, cannot philosophize (Wartenberg 2007, 18–20). An assertion that the specific film chosen for interpretation by Russell may be ambiguous does not

eliminate the capacity of the cinematic medium to create a philosophical argument. Furthermore, to Russell's assertion that film can only have a relationship with philosophy through the mediation of a theoretician/philosopher whose interpretation of what happens on the screen transforms it into a proper philosophical argument, Wartenberg replies that, here again, we find the explicitness of the philosophical text valorized over the ambiguity of art and films. In such views, films lack the explicitness necessary for a decent philosophical inquiry, while the written text is taken to be unambiguous or unproblematic for the presentation of philosophical argumentation. In such views, art (including cinema) does not possess the precision that is necessary for articulating philosophy. For Wartenberg, this is a reconstruction of the old Platonic separation between art and reality, the dogmatic a priori barrier between epistemological and artistic interests.

Wartenberg argues that although artworks are, to some extent, more implicit by nature, that does not imply that it is their audiences who construct an artwork's philosophical ideas; nor does the fact that an argument is implicit necessarily mean that it is imprecise (2007, 19–20). To this day, there are plenty of explicitly philosophical texts whose ideas remain unresolved even after centuries of ongoing debate over their conclusions.[6] Some of the arguments attributed to films may not have been formulated as precisely as they could or should have been, but this by no means establishes the fact that the films themselves are incapable of precise argumentation. For Wartenberg, the only thing that Russell establishes is the need to present interpretations that demonstrate clearly what specific philosophical arguments a certain film raises, rather than proving a general principle that film is incapable of screening philosophy.

The Propositional Theory of Literary Truth

Similar to Russell's claim that films lack explicitness is Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen's propositional theory of literary truth (Lamarque and Olsen 1994; see also, Davies 2008, 4–7). Lamarque and Olsen hold that most fictional works of literature are implicit, and that due to their implicit nature, any general thematic statements or philosophical content must be extracted from them.

The problem with these assumptions is that it is not fully apparent or obvious what is implicit and what is explicit; it is a matter of perspective. Taylor and Jefferson, for instance, discussing biology and artificial life,[7] state that a "simulation model" enables a more direct or explicit encoding

of behavior, which is favorable to the implicit representation of an organism within "equational models" (Taylor and Jefferson 1994; in Di Paolo et al. 2000). Thus, for Taylor and Jefferson, an equational model is implicit, while a simulation model (which is closer in spirit to a thought experiment) is explicit. If we apply this thinking to film and philosophy, we could, for example, argue that a given film can directly encode a given ethical behavior. It seems plausible that the direct encoding of an ethical behavior might be more explicit than the reflective or imaginative engagement with that behavior through traditional philosophy. I will go into this issue further in my chapter on cinesophia, but for now, I find it important to note that the boundary between what is explicit and what is implicit is not as obvious as one might think.

Cinema Cannot Be Paraphrased Verbally

Another challenge that is also related to the supposedly implicit nature of cinema is raised by Paisley Livingston, who brings up a seemingly insoluble dilemma regarding films bearing any philosophical weight (Livingston 2006).[8] Livingston stresses that if an exclusively cinematic philosophical insight cannot be paraphrased verbally, then it is reasonable to doubt its existence. If, on the contrary, one can verbally paraphrase a cinematic insight, then it is not purely cinematic. Thus, for Livingston, the philosophical function of cinematic devices remains dependent on verbal interpretation. Aaron Smuts even argues that Livingston's paraphrasing dilemma must be addressed by anyone claiming that film can do philosophy (Smuts 2009, 411–12).

Even David Davies, however, who is not a fan of films bearing any philosophical weight, challenges Livingston's dilemma as an unreasonable requirement (Davies 2008, 13–14). In the first half of his dilemma, Livingston obviously subscribes to the dogmatic assumption that the verbal medium possesses exclusive rights to all philosophical wisdom, since he claims that if a cinematic philosophical insight cannot be paraphrased verbally, then one can doubt its existence. I concur with Davies in challenging Livingston here, and note that Livingston's supposed dilemma points to a deeper problem within the field of film and philosophy—the problem of reducing one medium or method of inquiry to a different one. If the general goal is to realize the philosophical potential of the cinematic medium, then we must avoid judging one method of inquiry by the parameters of a different method.[9] As a parallel, imagine two different forms of transportation, such as an airplane

and a submarine. It would be strange to determine that since a submarine cannot fly, it is a very poor mode of transportation. Likewise, it is unhelpful to say that since an airplane cannot navigate underwater, it too is an inadequate mode of transportation. If we want to explore different transportation modes, then our goal should be to realize the different potential of each mode of transportation, rather than judge one mode by the parameters of another. And for the same reasons, to return to our own discussion here, we should beware of simply applying the parameters of one platform for philosophy to another platform.[10]

As we have seen, Livingston stresses that the "paraphrased" (or, as Livingston puts it, "linguistically mediated") problem presents a Catch-22, an insoluble dilemma (Stoehr 2011, 113). The second half of the dilemma lies in Livingston's claim that if a film makes a philosophical point that can just as easily be expressed in conceptual language, then the actual philosophical content presented via the film is not essentially cinematic.

But Livingston's apparent Catch-22 has a few confusing elements. Let us use the analogy of a New York City map that shows the location of Union Square. If I understand Livingston's Catch-22 correctly, if one is able to verbally paraphrase the map's visual information about the location of Union Square, then the geographical content of the map is not essentially visual since it can be paraphrased in verbal or written language. I consider Livingston's supposedly insoluble dilemma to be based on a dogmatic essentialism about the medium through which philosophy should be made. If we do not subscribe to this dogma, then the dilemma is not convincing.

Cinema Cannot Establish Philosophy's Quest for General Truths

Wartenberg identifies another general a priori objection that he calls the *generality objection* (2007, 20–25). In essence, this objection is based on the claim that the questions that characterize philosophical inquiry mainly explore general concerns, which are formulated, for the most part, as universal claims, with the purpose of providing general knowledge.[11] One can therefore say that a narrative-based medium, such as cinema, cannot establish philosophy's desire for general truths. Wartenberg traces this perception back to the birth of Western philosophy in the fifth century BCE, when abstract principles began to rival narratives as a way of understanding human beings and their place in

the universe. Magical stories of gods gave way to abstract accounts as a way of explaining the world. This perception can logically lead to the assumption that fictional films are the wrong path for embodying philosophical understanding. The medium of cinema and the philosophical discipline are essentially different, and the cinematic platform is therefore inadequate to the creation of philosophy.

But philosophical inquiry need not deal only with generalities. And David Hume and Nelson Goodman both question our ability to make valid generalizations. Hume argues, in essence, that there is no necessary causality in the connections that are observed by humans, but only proximity and conjunction (Hume 1740, 183). Causal relations are assumed not on the basis of reason, but on the basis of belief and habit. The human spirit will never grasp anything absolute; we will only know the world through sentiment and impressions. It is habit and custom that make us believe that the future will conform to the past (Hume 1748, 43–49). But there is neither an objective nor an absolute link between the past and the future; there is only the belief itself, which is a particular sentiment created by habit. This prevents us from grasping anything absolute, objective, or real, since any general concepts, laws of nature, or causal relations in which we believe are based on human sentimental assumptions, rather than a logical or rational certainty. This leads to a serious (and some might say, insoluble) problem in making valid generalizations.

Goodman also challenges the claim that we are able to make valid generalizations, taking Hume's point even further by showing that induction is as valid as deduction (Goodman 1983). The problem is not situated in the process of inductive inquiry itself, but in the generalizations with which we explain phenomena: "The problem of justifying induction has been displayed by the problem of defining conformation, and our work upon this has left us with the residual problem of distinguishing between confirmable and non-confirmable hypotheses" (81). The new riddle with which we are then faced asks whether the generalizations (or laws) by means of which we explain phenomena are accidental generalizations, or in fact, laws of nature.

Hume and Goodman both show us that there is an essential problem in making valid generalizations. Therefore, making generality an essential property of philosophical inquiry is problematic, which severely weakens the force of using the requirement of generality to rule out the philosophical potential of cinema.

Philosophy Is Created by the Philosopher Rather Than the Film

Another general a priori challenge identified by Wartenberg is the *imposition objection*, which suggests that it is the interpreter or researcher who is imposing a particular philosophical content on a specific film (25–31). In essence, this means that the philosophizing is done by the philosopher, rather than by the film.

Wartenberg describes a professor who might get his class to think about civil rights for robots by screening *I, Robot* (Proyas 2004), but who believes that it is he, rather than the film, who is actually raising the question (Wartenberg 2007, 25). From this perspective, the film is simply a tool to get the students more engaged in the questions of civil rights. Indeed, some philosophers see this as the only way to characterize the relationship between film and philosophy. They look at films as a useful tool for introducing philosophical discussions and issues and engaging the audience with them, but they do not believe that the films themselves contribute to philosophical knowledge.

Wartenberg notes that the imposition objection should not be taken as a general rule, but should, instead, be used to critique specific cases in which philosophical content has been imposed on films (94–116). He suggests dealing with this by issuing a general warning: "When making an interpretation of a film, take care not to impose an interpretation on a film that is inappropriate" (2007, 26). But I believe that this general warning leads Wartenberg into a problematic corner, because he then needs to explain what constitutes an inappropriate interpretation,[12] and his analysis of what is an inappropriate interpretation, centered on the vague principle of not attributing a meaning to a work of art that could not have been intended by the creator of the work, is not convincing. In fact, it is so unconvincing that toward the end of his book, Wartenberg has to reconsider whether the filmmaker needs to be acquainted with the specific philosophical reference that corresponds to the philosophical ideas in his film (138–40).[13]

The question of whether the filmmaker has to be familiar with the philosophical text in question or whether his intentions must parallel the text is one that I will deal with extensively throughout this book. But here, I just want to mention an anecdote that challenges the demand that the filmmaker's intentions must parallel the philosophical text. This anecdote comes from Catherine Elgin's notes on the Michelson-Morley experi-

ment (Elgin 1993, 19). The Michelson-Morley experiment, which was intended to measure motion through the supposed "ether," was a failure: probably one of the most important failures in the history of science. This is because, although the experiment failed to bear out Michelson and Morley's intentions, it nevertheless ended up proving the nonexistence of ether. Consequently, it showed that classical categories were not capable of accommodating electromagnetic phenomena. The Michelson-Morley experiment ended up having numerous important consequences for scientific research. This is an example of a creator's intentions being completely different from the results they produced.

The Audience Is Not in a Position to Assess What It Encounters

In another variation on the imposition objection, Davies argues that the philosophical value of film relies on what the audience brings to the encounter (2008, 17–18). But in most cases, the audience is not in a position to give a full accounting of what it has encountered. For Davies, the philosophical notions that a film might suggest depend on the inadequate and unarticulated cognitive resources of the audience. "But they [the audience] are in no better a position to justify their convictions by offering reasons than other readers who reach an opposite conclusion based on what we regard as inadequate unarticulated cognitive resources" (8).

And yet, there are many experiences that are dependent on what each individual brings to the encounter. For instance, let's say that while strolling next to the pyramids in Giza I find an interesting stone. Having only very limited archeological knowledge, I am in no position to judge whether the stone I am holding belongs to the pyramid of Giza or whether it is from a different era. But this takes nothing away from the archeological potential of the specific stone I am holding.

Noel Carroll admits that his own standards of philosophizing favor explicit argumentation but writes that, at the same time, he realizes that this is not the only way to do philosophy (2008, 22). He points out that some philosophers, such as Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, express their philosophical insights differently, leaving it to the reader to understand the point based on their own experiences. Therefore, Carroll writes, if philosophers are not bound to explicit argumentation, then filmmakers should not be bound to it either.

The Search for Evidence of Reality in Works of Fiction Is Flawed

Jerome Stolnitz suggests that the supposed evidence of reality that might be extracted from a work of art is flawed in three ways: first, works of art do not cite actual cases; second, a work of art relies on a single example; and third, general principles extracted from a work of art are unreliable, since works of art are carefully designed by their authors (Stolnitz 1992; see also, Davies 2008, 3).

With respect to Stolnitz's first point: even if one believes that art does not cite actual cases,[14] this does not devalue the cognitive potential of art. Mathematics does not generally cite actual cases from reality, either, but this does not diminish the cognitive potential of mathematics and its essential value to science and human knowledge. With respect to Stolnitz's third point, I will just point out that scientific experiments are also carefully designed by their creators, but that does not diminish the value we place on their results.

The No Evidence Argument

Davies argues that Noel Carroll's no evidence argument (2002) challenges the cognitive potential of art, as well as any claims that art or cinema can evoke philosophical insights. In essence, the no evidence argument states: "Even if there are truths, particular or general, contained in literary fiction, the fictions themselves provide us with no good reason to accept them as truths" (as cited in Davies 2008, 3).

In a different article, however, Noel Carroll mentions that some theoreticians might have misunderstood him (2008). In order to set the record straight, Carroll notes that he didn't intend to establish that fiction films lack evidential support for whatever knowledge claims they might be thought to prove. Rather, Carroll argues that fictions might point to empirical phenomena whose existence is to be confirmed on the basis of the audience's experience and reasoning.

By Cinematic Means Alone

I have already mentioned Aaron Smuts, another theoretician who is interested in film and philosophy, but at the same time, rejects the idea that film might have any significant potential for philosophy (2009). Smuts

rejects the proposals of philosophers such as Daniel Frampton and Gilles Deleuze, who believe that cinema possesses a unique capacity for philosophy; he also rejects the idea that some philosophical engagements are better expressed via the cinematic medium.

Smuts concentrates on how cinema can make an original contribution to philosophy through what he understands as means that are exclusive to cinema (410). For Smuts, the idea behind exploring means that are exclusive to cinema is to draw a distinction between films and movies, on the one hand, and video recordings of philosophical debates, discussions, or lectures, on the other. Jean-Luc Godard's film *Weekend* (1967), for instance, features a few actors reading Marxist texts. Richard Linklater's film *Waking Life* (2001), similarly, features the philosopher Robert Solomon discussing existentialism. Following Carroll, Smuts argues that although these films possess philosophical content, they are not doing philosophy, since the philosophy has simply been uploaded to the script (410).

Smuts argues (410–12) that if films are to make philosophical contributions, they need to satisfy two essential criteria raised by Livingston (2006) —namely, for innovation and for independence. The criterion of innovation is meant to distinguish mere illustration from actual innovative philosophical ideas. As Carroll puts it, philosophical contributions in films need (at least, in principle) to be original; otherwise, they would merely be an illustration for traditional philosophy (Carroll 2006; Smuts 2009, 411).[15] The criterion of independence, meanwhile, demands that the film's philosophical contribution should not be dependent on the theoretician's interpretation or textual sources. Here, Smuts is even more extreme than Livingston, as he calls the theoreticians' philosophical interpretations of films a "shameful interpretive dependence" (Smuts 2009, 411).

One of the oddities in Smuts's theory is that he ignores the difference between fictional films and fictional literature, arguing that the philosophical contributions found in fictional films are similar to those found in fictional literature (2009, 418).[16] This is very strange because, within this article, Smuts points to the need to examine the philosophical potential of the means that are exclusive to cinema. If there are, indeed, means that are exclusive to cinema, then by definition, these exclusive cinematic means must create something distinct from other media. Thus, if such means as montage, camera angles, and movement are exclusive to cinema (as Smuts notes), then it is logical to assume that they evoke a different type of philosophical possibility from that offered by fictional literature. And yet, here, Smuts (like many others) reduces the properties and potential of the

cinematic medium to the properties and potential of the written medium (in this case, fictional literature). This is much like arguing that although a submarine has exclusive or unique means of transportation, its engagement with the craft of transportation is similar to that of an airplane.

The question of whether fiction films can express explicit philosophical argumentation by cinematic means alone[17] is also raised in a very intriguing debate between Thomas Wartenberg, Bruce Russell, and Noel Carroll.[18] Kevin Stoehr, commenting on this debate, argues that if cinema is defined by its unique capacity to incorporate features from other disciplines, then cinema's interdisciplinary possibilities shouldn't be narrowed to the examination of cinematic means separately from other elements that compose a film (2011).[19]

An answer to Livingston's and Smuts's criterion of innovation can be found in Wartenberg's argument that philosophy journals are filled with essays that are clearly philosophical, but very few count as substantially advancing the discussion of the philosophical topic they address (Wartenberg 2007, 44). The fact is that most philosophers philosophize without making original contributions; the demand that films make innovative contributions to philosophy is therefore unreasonable.

As for the criterion of independence raised by Livingston and Smuts, there are many experiences in life for which one needs an expert's interpretation in order to better understand their depth and meaning. If, for instance, I find a stone next to the pyramid of Giza, I don't expect the stone to explain itself; nor do I expect an atom to explain itself. It is not "shameful" (as Smuts suggests) to receive an interpretation from an expert. I believe that Livingston's and Smuts's criterion of independence arises from a misunderstanding of the unique nature of the cinematic platform's potential for creating philosophy. This brings me to one of the main guiding ideas of my research, the argument that since the cinematic platform is completely different from traditional platforms of philosophy (in other words, the verbal and written platforms), then the philosophy that the cinematic platform creates must be radically different from anything we have known about philosophy so far.

That is the argument that I make in my chapter on cinesophia: that the philosophy that is created through the cinematic medium has the potential to create philosophical *experience,* rather than philosophical *reflection.* This makes cinematic philosophy very different from traditional philosophy, and the expectations or demands we place on each type of philosophy must, therefore, also be different. And because cinematic philosophy creates

something that is more like experience, Livingston's and Smuts's demand that films explain themselves loses its value, since we usually don't expect experiences (or atoms, or stones) to explain themselves. This is one of the main reasons why I argue that expecting cinematic philosophy to behave like written or oral philosophy misses the differences between the philosophical possibilities that are created through different platforms or mediums. This will be a key issue in this book, in particular, within the chapter on cinesophia.

Opposition to Films Being Considered Thought Experiments

The possible relationship between thought experiments and cinema is a very important subject within the discipline of film and philosophy, and it is addressed by many different theoreticians of film and philosophy. Furthermore, in the following chapters, I argue that the link between film and philosophy begins with thought experiments, which are important enough that I dedicate the entire next chapter (*Foundation III—Thought Experiments*) to an overview of them. But first, I want to look at a few challenges to the idea that films could be considered thought experiments, referring to Davies's article *Can Film Be A Philosophical Medium?* (2008), which presents a few such challenges.

Davies takes the perspective of the analytical tradition as the starting position for his inquiry into whether films can philosophize (2008, 2–3), arguing that that tradition is a hostile environment for the idea that films can serve as a medium for philosophy. He believes that art moves us not by reason, but by its seductive visual or verbal aspects, which possess, in his words, a "dubious epistemic reliability."

The Problematic Cognitive Status of Thought Experiments

One of Davies's main challenges is that although many theoreticians have attempted to show films to be thought experiments, many of these theoreticians have missed some of the key problems within the discipline of thought experiments. Davies states that "Identifying thought experiments with fictional narratives is seen not as deproblematizing the cognitive status of fictional narratives, but as problematizing the status of thought

experiments!" (2008, 16). He also refers to a few theoreticians, such as Pierre Duhem (1913) and Carl Hempel (1965), who rule out thought experiments as a source of scientific knowledge.

And yet, although Davies is right that there are a few researchers and scientists who question or devalue the use of thought experiments as a scientific or philosophical tool, there are also many researchers and scientists (including Ernst Mach, Thomas Kuhn, Robert J. Brown, Yiftach Fehige, Lawrence Souder, and Catherine Elgin) who advocate the key importance of thought experiments to scientific knowledge and progress—a point that Davies seems to ignore. Even more important is the fact that the list of scientists and philosophers who have used thought experiments in their theories is a long and illustrious one, including, but not limited to, Plato, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, René Descartes, John Locke, George Berkeley, Gottfried Leibniz, David Hume, Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Erwin Schrödinger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Hilary Putnam. Given this pedigree, one cannot simply dismiss the cognitive value and the contribution to philosophy and science of thought experiments. One might say that this subject, like many others in the history of science and philosophy, is a matter of ongoing dispute.

Cinematic Thought Experiments Include Too Many Distracting Details

John Norton argues that thought experiments can only have a cognitive value in science if they can be reconstructed as a standard deductive argument (Norton 1996; see also, Davies 2008, 16–17). He also stresses that the splendor of the narrative in thought experiments teaches us nothing. Davies adds that the greater detail of the artistic medium is a useless addition, since such details are irrelevant to the cognitive importance of thought experiments: "the plethora of detail makes the task of extracting the underlying argument extremely difficult" (2008, 17).

Lawrence Souder, by contrast, advocates the importance of those very narrative details in thought experiments, examining two different versions of the violinist thought experiment—one by Judith J. Thomson (1971) and the other by Frank Jackson (1992)—each of which includes different details (Souder 2003, 214–16). Souder shows that the difference between the narrative details in two versions of the same thought experiment leads to two different conclusions. Therefore, he is able to assert that those

narrative details are crucial to the philosophical implications of a thought experiment. Other advocates of the importance of narrative details in thought experiments include Hilary Putnam and Tamar Gendler.[20]

I must also challenge Norton's and Davies's assumption that the splendor of narrative is irrelevant and distracting. Let me use the analogy of a new telescope that is able to reveal many more details than its predecessor. Should we at any point claim that the new telescope is inadequate since it reveals much more detail than its predecessors? Although cinema is not a telescope, we must realize and appreciate that cinema, much like a new telescope, may offer us new possibilities. Instead of dismissing it because we are shackled to an old method, we must try to understand this new possibility and how it might entail a different and unique potential to create philosophy.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have explored some of the main challenges to the possibility of films bearing any philosophical weight. This is another crucial step in our comprehensive exposition of the main building blocks in the development of cinematic philosophy. The goal of these first two foundational chapters has been to expose the discipline's complex methodological roots for the purpose of showing the many unresolved issues that need to be addressed. In my view, the most pressing issue is to establish a clear understanding of how films can create philosophy. But having said this, I do believe that if we are to take this subject seriously (rather than confining it to a small niche), we will have to find an extremely convincing concept that can establish a firm relationship between film and philosophy. I believe that the subject of film and philosophy is of great importance, and my goal is, therefore, to uncover solid evidence of a necessary relationship between cinema and philosophy. If we can articulate such a necessity, that will be the key to a firm relationship between film and philosophy.

The obvious question that follows is where to begin searching for the firm evidence of an actual necessary relationship between cinema and philosophy. I believe that that place lies in the subject of thought experiments. We have to begin there, because what we need is a different perspective on what has been written on the relationship between thought experiments and cinema. Because of the importance of thought experiments as the building blocks of this field, I dedicate the next chapter (*Foundation III—Thought Experiments*) to an in-depth examination of thought experiments and their relations to cinema.

Notes

1. See Bernstein (1992, 1–4) and Wartenberg (2007, 15–16).
2. Although my position is diametrically opposed to that of Adorno and Horkheimer, their theory has nevertheless served as a great inspiration to me and is an essential building block for any theory that concerns the relationship between film and philosophy.
3. Wartenberg considers these three objections to be a priori objections since they do not refer to specific films, but make general claims about the ability of cinema to screen philosophy (2007, 16–27).
4. This critique could also be directed at Adorno and Horkheimer (1944).
5. For Granger, the philosophical argumentation must be an essential feature of the narrative for a film to be considered fully philosophical; the film *Le Feu Follet* could, therefore, be seen as a paradigmatic example of philosophizing through film.
6. One classic example mentioned by Wartenberg (2007, 20; see also, Henrich 1969) is the ongoing dispute over how to characterize the precise conclusion of Immanuel Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories.
7. Therefore, using somewhat different terms than we have been using up until now.
8. Here, Livingston is challenging the thesis that film can engage in creative philosophical thinking as well as form new philosophical concepts. Livingston does not dispute the idea that film can be a useful tool for philosophical purposes, but he claims that films cannot do more than that, stressing that in order to create philosophy, films would have to make independent, innovative, and significant contributions to philosophy by means that are unique to cinema.
9. Along these lines, Robert Sinnerbrink argues that films are able to engage with a cinematic type of thinking that resists philosophical interpretation or paraphrase (2011, 10) and that there are certain films that cannot be reduced or translated to philosophical theses or arguments. He holds that the power of films to make us see, rather than to argue, opens the possibility for new ways of thinking (141–42).
10. I am assuming here that philosophy can appear in different platforms or through different mediums. I will develop this assumption in later chapters, when I differentiate between written, oral, and cinematic philosophy.
11. Wartenberg notes that he accepts this claim only for the sake of argument.

12. In his desire to resolve this, Wartenberg borrows a distinction from literature, separating creator-oriented interpretations from audience-oriented interpretations (26). Creator-oriented interpretations have many constraints that audience-oriented interpretations do not. For example, a creator-oriented interpretation of a piece from the seventeenth-century should not involve the theory of relativity. This principle is supposed to help determine when an interpretation might illicitly impose a philosophical interpretation on a film and when such an attribute is legitimate. Thus, a proper philosophical interpretation of a film needs to posit a meaning that the filmmaker(s) could have intended.

13. An examination of the film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Michel Gondry 2004) leads Wartenberg to argue that a filmmaker does not have to be familiar with a specific philosophical text, but only with the issues and implications it raises (138–40). He asserts that filmmakers live on the border of the cultural and intellectual premises that are prominent in their society, which allows them to realize such issues without necessarily reading the specific philosophical references.

14. An obvious challenge to Stolnitz's claims would be the many historical films that cite historical events.

15. Smuts (412) tries to rule out Wartenberg's notion that illustrations could be considered to be doing philosophy. He bases his opposition on the idea that although illustrations can be valuable, they present no innovative contributions to philosophy.

16. Smuts notes that his theory is intimately tied to the question of whether narrative artworks can do philosophy, rather than whether film as a medium has some unique abilities unavailable to other media (2009, 410).

17. The focus on cinematic means alone is meant to avoid merely interpreting the dialogues or characters as philosophical and to shift the discussion toward the unique properties of the cinematic medium.

18. It is worth mentioning that the winter 2006 edition of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (JAAC) is devoted to the capacity of cinematic art to do philosophy and includes articles by Wartenberg, Russell, Carroll, Stephen Mulhall, Paisley Livingston, Murray Smith, Daniel Shaw, and Richard Allen.

19. Stoehr believes that film is an experience or an occasion of signification and meaning. The concept of the motion picture should not be reduced to its objective properties (such as production facts, material, subject matter), but should, rather, be understood as a type of "agora" that establishes a conversation between viewer and creator (2011, 121).

20. For Putnam, what we gain from works such as Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Journey to the End of Night* (1932) is the possibility of inhabiting a different point of view and a different human nature (Putnam 1976; see also Davies 2008, 7). This inhabiting essentially depends on the narrative details, showing that these details play an important part in the philosophical implications of thought experiments. For Gendler, the narrative details of thought experiments are a key feature of their explanatory potential (Gendler 1998; see also Davies 2008, 17). She argues that the details of thought experiments guide our intuition while connecting it to a possible experience in the world. For her, the cognitive value of thought experiments lies in the fact that there are certain things about the world that we could not grasp without them.

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Foundation III—Thought Experiments

FILMS AS THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS

In the previous two chapters of this book,[1] I explored some of the main
positions for and against the potential of cinema to evoke philosophical
wisdom. Those two chapters are intended, along with this one, as exposi-
tory chapters, whose goal is to reveal the discipline's complex method-
ological roots, and thereby, to show the many unresolved issues that need
to be addressed. The two previous chapters make it clear that the most
pressing issue is to establish a clear understanding of how films can cre-
ate philosophy. One of the ways to establish such an understanding is to
identify a way in which film and philosophy need each other. If we are
able to articulate such a need—for instance, that philosophy has always
needed cinema—then this need might supply the basis for a firm relation-
ship between film and philosophy, clearing the path to establishing how
cinema can create philosophy.

In the following chapters, I will lay out what I believe to be solid evi-
dence for philosophy's need of cinema, and I have already intimated that
the beginning point for this evidence lies in thought experiments. I call it
a beginning point because I believe that we need a different perspective
than what has been written so far on the relationship between thought
experiments and cinema, as best exemplified by Thomas Wartenberg's
writings, which present one of the most comprehensive and impressive
understandings of the relationship between thought experiments and cin-
ema. I want to explore some of Wartenberg's main arguments about the

relationship between thought experiments and cinema, followed by my own comments on those arguments.

My main objection to Wartenberg's argument is that a thought experiment that is manifested on a cinematic screen cannot be considered a traditional thought experiment. In fact, cinematic thought experiments constitute an entirely different genre, requiring us to formulate a different understanding of the relationship between thought experiments and cinema. Nor do Wartenberg's conclusions—that the association between film and philosophy could benefit both by giving film greater intellectual weight and by providing philosophy with a wider impact on society (Wartenberg 2007, 141–42)—supply sufficient motivation for seeking a cinematic manifestation of philosophy. Wartenberg's arguments also reveal a biased and dogmatic belief that philosophy is indispensable to film, but not vice versa—an asymmetrical position that privileges traditional formats of philosophy, both oral and written. I want to return to this belief, but first, let us take a look at Wartenberg's important elucidations of the relationship between thought experiments and cinema.

A Short Background to Thomas Wartenberg's Theory of Film as Philosophy

Thomas Wartenberg is one of the key theoreticians who articulate a firm relationship between film and philosophy by way of thought experiments. His comprehensive theory is essential to untangling the link between cinema and thought experiments. He sees in film the potential to provide vivid examples that clarify the philosophical stakes, rather than being confined to abstract philosophical debates. "These films provide philosophy with an empirical content that shows why philosophy is more than the mock combats Kant claimed many saw in traditional philosophical debates" (8).

While the use of film[2] as a vehicle for philosophical discussion is enjoying growing popularity, Wartenberg argues against dismissing that popularity as an attempt by the esoteric field of philosophy to gain popularity among students and other audiences who are unwilling or unable to read difficult philosophical texts and prefer to see the film instead (10). He debunks this dismissive view as a misconception that has nothing to do with articulating how cinema can present philosophy.

Wartenberg's essential position is that cinema can provide illustrations of philosophical notions and that these illustrations are very important to the discipline of philosophy (15–31). His main method is to show that

cinema can screen philosophical techniques (such as thought experiments and counterexamples) that have been used throughout the history of philosophy. He argues that when a film is able to develop a counterexample to a philosophical claim, or present a philosophical technique (such as thought experiments), then the film is philosophizing.

Philosophizing is an important term for Wartenberg, who distinguishes between the notion that films can do philosophy (or philosophize) and the notion that they are works of philosophy (12–13). He presents the assertion that a film is a work of philosophy as a much stronger claim than the assertion that a film can philosophize, positing that there might also be other works that could be considered to be philosophizing, without themselves counting as works of philosophy. Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), for example, contains a great deal of philosophy without itself being considered a work of philosophy.

METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FILM AND PHILOSOPHY

In establishing his methodology, Wartenberg begins by asserting that if one wants to understand how philosophy can be screened, it is important to articulate what philosophy is (26–31). But who decides what counts as philosophy? While there is broad agreement that the work of certain philosophers (such as Plato, René Descartes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and G. W. F. Hegel) counts as philosophy, a large portion of the work of other thinkers (such as Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and Jacques Derrida) is rejected, based on contemporary philosophical standards. There are versions of this argument both within and outside of academia.[3] Wartenberg suggests that what academic philosophers consider to be philosophy is much different from what many outside of the academic world would consider philosophy, but without actually proposing an answer to the question of what philosophy is, Wartenberg offers a way out of this tangle that, he suggests, provides enough clarity to proceed.

Wartenberg distinguishes three basic understandings of philosophy and is mainly interested in the third of these (29–31). He describes the first understanding of philosophy as having to do with eternal questions,[4] the second as having to do with questions about other disciplines,[5] and the third as rejecting any specific methodological structure for philosophy. This third understanding asserts that there are different kinds of discourse that can count as philosophical. Techniques such as thought experiments,

counterexamples, and argumentation could all count as philosophical discourses, since they have been employed by canonical philosophers whose work is universally accepted as philosophical. Wartenberg's main interest in these philosophical techniques is for the purpose of showing that films can employ them in a unique and sufficient way, thereby establishing that philosophy can be screened.

Wartenberg's main methodological path, then, involves articulating how specific philosophical techniques such as thought experiments, counterexamples, and argumentation are used in specific films (30–31). If cinema can screen philosophical techniques in specific films, then cinema can screen philosophy. Wartenberg concludes that while this does not resolve the question of what makes a work philosophical, it does show how philosophical techniques and questions can be screened, and thereby, exposes a plurality of connections between cinema and philosophy.[6]

WARTENBERG'S PERCEPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS AND FILMS

Wartenberg describes thought experiments in philosophy as forcing readers to consider specific possibilities that are different from the readers' established patterns of belief and argues that within the realm of thought experiments, films can embody a distinct advantage (270–83). As an example, he uses one of the most famous thought experiments in the history of philosophy: René Descartes's Evil Genius (Descartes 1637, 1641; Wartenberg 2005). The Evil Genius thought experiment, a crucial component of his philosophical argument, provides Descartes with the means to realize his goal of doubting every belief that lacks certainty. In Descartes's words:

> Thus I will suppose not a supremely good God, the source of truth, but rather an evil genius, as clever and deceitful as he is powerful, who has directed his entire effort to misleading me. I will regard the heavens, the air, the earth, colors, shapes, sounds, and all external things as nothing but the deceptive games of my dreams, with which he lays snares for my credulity. (1980, 22)

In order to show that films can embody thought experiments, Wartenberg asks us to consider the film *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis, 1999) in relation to Descartes's notions (Wartenberg 2007, 55–75). Wartenberg holds

that the film successfully screens Descartes's skeptical claims about our experiences of the external world without making the audience feel that that world is artificial and without the audience being able to tell the difference. Wartenberg calls this the deception hypothesis, correlated with the Evil Genius's deceptive endeavors. Because *The Matrix* depicts a fictional world in which the deception hypothesis is shown to be proven, it is, for Wartenberg, an update of Descartes's Evil Genius thought experiment. He points to parallels between Neo's (Keanu Reeves's) process of waking up from the simulated world to a real world and the way in which the audience reacts to the film's reality—a process that is analogous to Descartes's Evil Genius thought experiment. Wartenberg notes that for viewers of the film, it may even be stronger, since with Descartes, we can only imagine the possibility, whereas with the film, we actually experience it.

Wartenberg sees the film as putting great emphasis on its presentation of the deception hypothesis, showing that the world that we take to be real (the matrix) is a mere illusion. An example of a cinematic device that is used to show this is the scene in which Neo fights Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne), which is edited in such a way as to make us reject what we initially thought was real. As the crew of the Nebuchadnezzar watches Morpheus and Neo on its television screens, the intercutting between those screens and the fight itself allows the viewers to see themselves as analogous to the crew, who recognize the illusion of the matrix. This is a good example of the use of cinematic devices to realize a philosophical thought experiment. The audience shares Neo's experience, going through a process of waking up from a world that was understood to be a real world, but turned out to be a computer projection. The audience experiences the journey of understanding that the reality Neo had been living in was a fictional reality. For Wartenberg, this manifestation of the deception hypothesis leads the audience to accept this possibility and to wonder whether they might not be living in a similarly simulated world. Thus, *The Matrix* succeeds in screening philosophy.

Wartenberg identifies yet another correlation between Descartes's ideas and their manifestation in *The Matrix*. Descartes brings up the possibility that we could all be dreaming, creating doubts about our faith in an external world. In *The Matrix*, there is a sequence in which Neo is interrogated by agent Smith (Hugo Weaving), who injects a bug-like creature into Neo's belly. The sequence ends with Neo seemingly waking up from a dream, but a few scenes later, it is revealed that it was not a dream. Wartenberg points out that through the use of cinema's unique technical

devices, the film first makes the audience believe that the sequence was a dream, only to find out later that it wasn't.

Wartenberg asserts that the philosophical potential in cinema is much more than that of a subordinate illustration. He asks us to consider a film identical to *The Matrix,* but with one difference: that from the beginning of the film, the audience is aware that Neo is being deceived by a simulated reality. The crucial difference between the two is that in *The Matrix,* we share Neo's epistemological limitation, and are thus taken in by the projection of a world that we think is real, but that turns out to be a simulation. In the process of participating in Neo's epistemological journey, which reveals the deception of this fictional world, we are made to think and to doubt certain beliefs—a process that is similar to Socratic dialectics. The audience members are left with uncertainty about their own perceptual experience and whether they too might be trapped in a Matrix-like situation. This is more than mere illustration; the film is actually doing philosophy, and *The Matrix* can, therefore, be placed in the category of philosophy.

Another example of the creation of advanced thought experiments in cinema can be found in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) (Wartenberg 2007, 45–53). Wartenberg sees the film as a visualization, in a way that makes it more concrete and plausible, of Karl Marx's alienation theory (1992). Although Marx claims that workers' bodies become machines, he provides no detailed account of how this mechanization registers in the human body. But *Modern Times* easily provides exactly such an account. In the Electro Steel Factory assembly line scene, where Charlie can't stop his repetitive tightening action, we are presented with the mechanization of the human body. Wartenberg argues that reading Marx's written text does not really allow us to comprehend the mechanization of the human body, but that the film makes this concept plausible, clear, and concrete. Thus, the mechanization of the human body is another concept that neither a verbal description nor a still photograph can convey as successfully as the film does.

Wartenberg argues that thought experiments play an important role in the justification of philosophical concerns and that his analysis opens the door to the understanding of cinematic narratives as thought experiments. "Although films, especially popular narrative films, are generally regarded simply as vehicles of entertainment, [Wartenberg's] exploration of film as a philosophical medium demonstrates that films can be much more than a means for people's amusement and titillation" (2007, 140–41).

Wartenberg also asserts that although Descartes may, through his Evil Genius thought experiments, convince us that our perceptual beliefs are false, his attempts pale in comparison with *The Matrix*'s ability to make us experience the deceptiveness of the world (137). Wartenberg characterizes the immediacy of cinema, involving both visuals and audio, as exceeding any other art form in its potential to present and screen philosophy.[7] The uniqueness of film as a philosophical medium, its philosophical advantage, lies in the immediacy of its temporal images, confronting us with a counterfeit of our everyday experience.

Wartenberg admits that he did not initially believe that a film could philosophize when it was illustrating a philosophical argument (134–36). But the results of his study surprised him, as he began to discover the many overlapping connections between the two disciplines. Wartenberg began his research with the desire to show that films can philosophize in other, more significant ways than mere illustration, but he then became convinced that a philosophical illustration was a significant way of doing philosophy. Wartenberg argues that thought experiments in this sense were a fruitful research path: "If one could show that a thought experiment was an essential element in certain philosophical arguments, the path would be open to showing that films could also make philosophical arguments because their narratives contained thought experiments" (134). Once films were understood as a suitable medium for the presentation of thought experiments, a variety of different modes of philosophical investigation emerged.

Wartenberg concludes that examining the possibility that films can philosophize carries interesting implications for the field of philosophy (141–42). Many regard philosophy as an esoteric and remote subject, practiced by a small elite that is mostly out of touch with contemporary reality. Some philosophers even embrace this esotericism, explicitly defending philosophy from the threat of relevance. In Wartenberg's view, philosophy needs to be brought down from its own exiled mountain. It can, and should, be an important voice in our contemporary world, helping to inject sanity into a world that is increasingly spinning out of control. Philosophical reflection leads to a more fulfilling life and a more rational society, which will be achieved not when philosophers are kings, but when ordinary people are philosophers. The recognition that film, as an artistic medium, can be the carrier of significant philosophical ideas and arguments also brings hope that the promise of ordinary people becoming philosophers might be realized. This recognition benefits both philosophy

and cinema, bringing greater cultural and intellectual weight to film and greater impact on society to philosophy.

Wartenberg's greater vision is that philosophical truth is better attained by the mutual support of interlocking strands of reason than through a single line of argument (133–42). He does not desire to replace the written philosophical text with cinema, since he essentially believes that written philosophical texts are indispensable for understanding philosophy and that films could never replace the written text in curricula and in universities. Here, Wartenberg's position is asymmetrical: philosophy is indispensable to film, but not vice versa. And yet, he also holds that the lack of an adequate philosophical culture in the USA means that it would be a mistake to ignore the possibility of expressing philosophy in film. One possible avenue for enhancing the awareness of philosophy is to show how it is engaged with vital realms of popular culture, and the linking of film and philosophy is one of the ways to do so. Wartenberg concludes that the health of our culture, our society, and our world depends upon our acknowledgment of the importance of philosophy, of which one of the first signs is the growing acknowledgment that films can screen philosophy.

COMMENTS ON WARTENBERG'S PERCEPTION OF THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS AND FILM

Wartenberg's comprehensive theory, which begins to articulate and establish a clear link between film and philosophy via thought experiments, serves as an important inspiration for my work. It is a beginning, but I still find that much more needs to be said on the relationship between thought experiments and cinema. Here are some of the points on which a different perspective is needed.

WHY WOULD ANYONE SEEK TO EXPRESS PHILOSOPHY VIA THE CINEMATIC MEDIUM?

One of the key questions that is not sufficiently answered by Wartenberg is why anyone would seek to relate films to philosophy and vice versa. His conclusion that such a relationship grants greater intellectual weight to film and a broader impact on society to philosophy is not sufficient to explain why anyone would seek a cinematic manifestation of philosophy (141–42). Is that enough to account for the fact that, as Wartenberg and Angela Curran point out, "over the past two decades philosophers have

turned their attention to film in an unprecedented manner" (Wartenberg and Curran 2005, 1)? Does it account for the vast influx of philosophical books, articles, and writings on film; the journals devoted to film and philosophy; and the extensive use of film to present and explain philosophy in universities? Is all of this motivated simply by the desire to spice up the field of philosophy in order to reach a larger audience? Can we make sense of it while accepting Wartenberg's asymmetrical position that philosophy is indispensable to film, but not vice versa, and that the cinematic medium cannot create works of philosophy (Wartenberg 2007, 12–13, 141–42)?

I posit that the potential of film to reach a larger audience is not enough to explain why such an unprecedented number of scholars, students, and readers are engaging in this discipline. Nor does an understanding of the philosophical potential of film as consisting merely of being able to manifest traditional philosophical techniques satisfy the need (if there is such a need) to express philosophy via the cinematic platform.[8] The fact that the cinematic platform is able to manifest thought experiments does not mean that philosophy needs to be manifested via the cinematic platform. The enormous popularity of the subject of film and philosophy and the unprecedented interest in the field over the past few decades demands further investigation into the relationship between film and philosophy.

An Unjust Prioritization of the Written Text

Another important issue is that although most of the theoreticians of film and philosophy use films in order to explain philosophical theories and insights, many of them oppose the idea that the film (and the philosophy it evokes) can be equal in importance to the written philosophical text. Wartenberg's positions that film is merely able to philosophize rather than be a work of philosophy (2007, 12–13), and that philosophy is indispensable to film, but not vice versa (141) reveal an asymmetry that favors traditional philosophy. I deduce from all of this that, for Wartenberg, proper philosophy can only be created in its traditional platforms (the written text, lectures, and academic curricula).

This entails an interesting contradiction, since although Wartenberg himself notes that René Descartes's Evil Genius thought experiment pales in comparison to the way in which the film *The Matrix* makes us experience a deceptive world (Wartenberg 2007, 137), he is nevertheless unwilling to accept that proper works of philosophy could be made in the cinematic medium. This suggests that in spite of his undeniable contribution and

commitment to understanding the relationship between film and philosophy, Wartenberg is still immersed in the idea that philosophy should mainly be a written endeavor. It seems to me that this prioritization of the written text over the cinematic platform springs from a dogmatic belief that there is only one right and proper way to do philosophy. One of the main goals of this book is to prove that belief wrong.

CINEMATIC THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS

Wartenberg's perceptions about thought experiments are on the right track, but he does not push them far enough. When he claims that the cinematic thought experiment in the film *The Matrix* is stronger than Descartes's Evil Genius thought experiment (Wartenberg 2007, 137), he bases the claim on the idea that the audience participates in the journey that reveals the deception of the film's fictional world. But here, Wartenberg is still missing the main point of the relationship between films and thought experiments, because if a film makes us *experience* the journey rather than simply imagining it, then we cannot consider the film to be a traditional thought experiment. Placing the audience in an epistemological experience is a completely different undertaking than making readers imagine or reflect on ideas on epistemology.

By definition, a thought experiment is something we have to imagine in thought. When it is manifested on the cinematic platform, it is no longer a thought experiment. Once we have experienced it, once it has been manifested onscreen, we don't have to imagine it any longer, and thus, it is no longer a thought experiment in the traditional sense. I am not simply playing with words here. The traditional thought experiment is an imaginative phenomenon in our minds, usually evoked by reading a textbook or hearing a lecture. But when we watch a thought experiment onscreen, it is no longer confined to our mind or imagination, and is therefore, no longer a traditional thought experiment. Once the cinematic thought experiment has been manifested and actualized onscreen, it is transformed into a new and different possibility, a certain type of experiential possibility onscreen, rather than a possibility confined to our imagination. The cinematic manifestations of thought experiments cannot, therefore, be understood as a mere variation on traditional thought experiments. This new philosophical possibility via the cinematic platform requires further examination and exploration.[9]

Conclusion

These three foundational chapters have provided a comprehensive overview of the discipline of film and philosophy. In each chapter, I have explored some of the most significant building blocks of the discipline, revealing its complex methodological roots for the purpose of showing the many unresolved issues that still need to be addressed. The most pressing issue now is to establish a clear and firm understanding of how cinema can create philosophy.

In order to address this issue, I want to ask one of the most important and exciting questions in the discipline of film and philosophy, a question that has so far not been asked: why has philosophy always needed cinema? In the next chapter, *Why Philosophy Has Always Needed Cinema*, I suggest a different perspective on the establishment of a relationship between film and philosophy; the entire discipline of thought experiments points to a cinematic need that is located at the heart of philosophy. Therefore, instead of establishing the relationship between film and philosophy by searching for philosophical evidence in films, I turn the exploration on its head, and search for cinematic evidence in the history of philosophy. This provides an answer to the question of why philosophy has always needed cinema, and that answer, in turn, provides the basis for a firm relationship, based on mutual necessity, between film and philosophy, while also establishing the path to a new philosophy—namely, cinematic philosophy.

Notes

1. Chapter 3 (*Foundation I—The Evolution of Film and Philosophy*); Chap. 4 (*Foundation II—The Critique of Film and Philosophy*).
2. Wartenberg notes that his discussion is not restricted to celluloid, but includes other cinematic forms. If philosophy can be screened, it can be screened in a variety of moving audiovisual modes (2007, 14).
3. Wartenberg describes the argument within academia as a competition between contemporary schools of philosophy, such as the analytical, continental, and phenomenological schools, about which deserves to be recognized as the right or proper way to do philosophy (2007, 29).
4. These include such questions as: Can we perceive reality? What constitutes reality? What makes an action moral? The unique aspect of these questions is that no other discipline dares to deal with them. For example, although mathematicians are concerned with numbers, they never stop to ask about the existence of the entities that constitute the domain of their inquiry. Psychology concentrates on different types of knowledge, but does not take

into consideration whether the knowledge we possess can accurately characterize the world as it really is. The physicist seeks to establish the law of motion, but is less interested in the concepts behind such laws.

5. Philosophy, understood this way, is a kind of metascience, taking its knowledge from other disciplines and using them as its subject matter. In this understanding, philosophy does not have any questions that are its exclusive province, and each discipline possesses abstract questions that can only be addressed by a specific philosophical discipline (such as the philosophy of film, the philosophy of science, or the philosophy of history).

6. A side note: Wartenberg holds that it would be a mistake to use universal or a priori principles to claim that film is doing philosophy (28–31). His work establishes a variety of links that bond cinema and philosophy locally, rather than globally.

7. Damien Cox and Michael Levine (2012, 10–12) develop this notion to argue that there are specific cases in which films can present certain philosophical ideas better than can the standard philosophical genres (books and academic journals). They argue that in contrast to the abstract and context-free thought experiments presented in those standard genres, a cinematic thought experiment can be presented with greater richness, nuance, and perspective.

8. Wartenberg's main methodological tool is to show that cinema can manifest philosophical techniques, such as argumentation and counterexamples (2007, 26–31) and to assert that if cinema can manifest such philosophical techniques, then cinema can screen philosophy. He also connects cinema's potential to screen philosophy with the immediacy of both visuals and sounds in cinema, exceeding that in any other art form (137).

9. In the following chapters, I will suggest that the realization of a thought experiment in the cinematic medium creates a new philosophical possibility that leads to experiencing philosophy, rather than imagining or reflecting philosophy.

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Why Philosophy Has Always Needed Cinema

Thomas Wartenberg (2005, 2007) has made a crucial and essential contribution to the understanding of the relationship between film and philosophy with his remarkable analysis of thought experiments, an essential step in understanding the relationship between film and philosophy. However, he still subscribes to the preconceived idea that the written text is the only proper medium for philosophy, espousing an asymmetrical position: "I [Wartenberg] see philosophy as indispensable for film, but not vice-versa" (Wartenberg 2007, 141). This sounds to me like an unexamined dogma about the right and proper way to do philosophy.

In order to establish that film can do philosophy, I will show that philosophy and film possess an equal share in creating cinematic philosophy. A true relationship cannot be established if the cinematic medium is viewed as a degraded platform for philosophy. If we are unable to identify and establish a deeper connection or a mutual firm need between film and philosophy, then the conversation between the two will always be confined to a small and insignificant niche. In order to establish a deeper connection between the two, then, we must first address a different question. In the following pages, I will try to answer the ambitious and provocative question, "Why has philosophy always needed cinema?" If we ignore the question, we might still be able to find philosophical evidence in films, but we would not be able to say why this cinematic philosophical evidence was of any importance. Furthermore, the importance of any such cinematic philosophical

evidence might be misunderstood, seen as a degraded imitation of the original philosophical works. Thus, breaking the code to the relationship between film and philosophy is key if we are to take cinematic philosophy seriously and avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. Asking why philosophy has always needed cinema will help us break this code while establishing a firm relationship, based on necessity, between film and philosophy.

If we look at the methodologies that have been employed by most of the theoreticians of film and philosophy, we can identify the most common pattern, which is that the philosopher or theoretician identifies a few philosophical ideas in certain films. This endeavor is of crucial importance to the field of film and philosophy, as it identifies philosophical evidence in films and helps to affirm a connection between the two disciplines. However, the methodology of hunting for philosophical wisdom in films has yet to establish what it is about philosophy that has always demanded the cinematic manifestation of its ideas. The answer to our ambitious question of why philosophy has always needed cinema will have to come from examining philosophy itself.

In order to break the code of the relationship between film and philosophy, we must turn the exploration on its head. Thus, instead of searching for philosophy within cinema, we need to search for cinema within the history of philosophy. Because the actual technical apparatus of cinema is, of course, much younger than the discipline of philosophy, I want to go about this search by trying to identify a possible visual/narrative/cinematic need within the history of philosophy. The results of this unorthodox search will lead us to evidence of a cinematic need for philosophy.

Can Thought Experiments Serve as Evidence of a Cinematic Need Within Philosophy?

Can we look at thought experiments as evidence for an ongoing visual/cinematic/narrative need within philosophy? I think of thought experiments a little differently from Wartenberg (2005, 2007) and other theoreticians of film and philosophy who have followed him. Wartenberg establishes a link between film and philosophy and that certain films can be considered to be doing philosophy by showing that those films can be looked at as thought experiments. I propose a different methodological route with my suggestion that the entire tradition of thought experiments in the history of philosophy points to an ongoing essential need to

visualize (or cinematize) certain thoughts. One need only look at the list of philosophers and scientists who have employed thought experiments in their theories to observe an ongoing pattern that shows an essential need to make certain thoughts visual. In the following pages, I will argue that this pattern answers the question of why philosophy has always needed cinema and supplies the evidence for a firm connection between film and philosophy.

I want to note that although visual, cinematic, and narrative properties are different from each other, at this point, my goal, rather than exploring the differences between them, is to articulate properties that could be identified as either visual, narrative, or cinematic within philosophical explanations. However, although the idea of a visual or a narrative property is clear, the idea of a cinematic property might be confusing. As was mentioned earlier, I define a cinematic property as one that comes from the idea of motion or movement (using the origins of the word *cinema* in the Greek word *kinema*, or *kinesis*, meaning *motion* or *movement*). A cinematic property is not simply a visual property, since something that is visual could also be a still image without sound and without movement, and most thought experiments possess some sort of narrative or movement within them. Nor is it merely a narrative property, since a narrative property could be something one imagines when reading a book, rather than experience on a screen. Therefore, although thought experiments could be understood as being visual or narrative, I find that *cinematic* is the best description of them.

A Few Notes on How Plato, Newton, and Einstein Use Cinematic Ideas

To begin addressing the argument that thought experiments signify a need to visualize or cinematize philosophy, I want to look briefly at five examples of the use of thought experiments—namely, by Plato, Isaac Newton, Titus Lucretius, Erwin Schrödinger, and Albert Einstein. Can we really find evidence for a visual/cinematic need within philosophy in Plato, who denies the potential of art to confront reality? This would be an unexpected source, and yet, although Plato excludes the poets and artists from his republic, as a threat to his abstract philosophy, grounded in reason, there are notable cases where Plato chooses to use an artistic,

almost theatrical tool to articulate his metaphysics. One famous example of Plato's use of art as a tool is his allegory of the cave (*The Republic*).

I should note that the chained slaves in the allegory of the cave have been extensively compared, in recent years, with spectators at a movie. For the most part, this comparison has engaged with the remarkable notion that Plato was evoking the idea of movie-watching 2000 years before the technical manifestation of cinema.[1] As Constance Penley (1990, 61, as cited in Gilmore, 2005, 3) notes, for example, "The shackled prisoners fascinated by the shadows on the wall of Plato's cave are the first 'cinema' spectators; the only historical changes in the apparatus since then have been little more than technical modifications." Although these accounts do raise interesting notions, the possibility of connecting Plato's shackled prisoners to the spectators of cinema is not relevant to my research.

I do, however, believe that the key question to ask about the allegory of the cave is why Plato needs a vivid, visualized, cinematic allegory in order to explain his metaphysics. Would Plato, who was one of the greatest challengers to the potential of art to express truth, use an artistic device like this if he did not absolutely need it in order to explain or make sense of his metaphysical ideas? Could this visual/cinematic allegory, this thought experiment, be seen as a sign that Plato needs an artistic, visualized, or even cinematic instrument in order to express his philosophy? I argue that the answer to the second question is Yes: that in order to explain his philosophy, Plato needs to envision a cinematic type of thinking or perception 2000 years before the invention of cinema.[2] And in that case, could this also point to a larger essential visual/narrative/cinematic need within the discipline of philosophy?

Another famous example of the necessity for a visual/narrative/cinematic type of thinking can be found in Isaac Newton. In order to explain how the moon maintains its orbit, Newton (*A Treatise of the System of the World*, 1728; *Principia Mathematica*, 1687a, b) brings up the thought experiment of the cannonball. In this thought experiment, Newton describes a cannonball that is shot horizontally from a very powerful cannon, from the top of a mountain, at exactly the right speed so that the cannonball falls to earth at the same rate as the earth curves away from the path of its fall. As the earth continues to curve away and the cannonball continues to fall, the cannonball eventually falls all the way around the earth, arriving back at the same place from which it was fired; if it is not stopped, it will continue to orbit the earth this way indefinitely. Brown and Fehige (2010) also note the importance of Newton's cannonball thought experiment: "We could arrive at the same conclusion through calculation.

But Newton's thought experiment provides that elusive understanding. It's a wonderful example of the 'aha effect.'" (11). If we leave cannonballs aside, what is important here is the fact that Newton chooses to use a certain type of visual/narrative/cinematic articulation to better explain how the moon maintains its orbit.

In his attempt to illustrate that space is infinite, Titus Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura*; Brown and Fehige 2010, 3–4) asks us to imagine a spear that is thrown to the edge of the universe. If the spear goes through the assumed boundary of the universe, then this assumed boundary is not the edge of the universe after all. But on the contrary, if the spear bounces back from the assumed boundary of the universe, then there must be something beyond that boundary, and therefore, again, it is not the edge of the universe. This thought experiment shows us that, in both cases, there can be no edge or boundary to the universe, leading Lucretius to the conclusion that the universe is infinite.

Erwin Schrödinger's paradox of the cat (1935; Brown and Fehige 2010, 7–8) is a thought experiment that challenges several aspects of quantum theory. A cat is enclosed in a steel chamber, with a diabolical device that includes a Geiger counter and a tiny amount of radioactive substance. The radioactive substance is so small that in the course of one hour, there are two equal probabilities: the first probability is that one of the atoms will decay and the second probability is that none of the atoms will decay. The system is also set up so that if an atom decays, various other events follow, which result in the death of the cat. If we leave this entire system in place for an hour, we cannot know whether or not the cat has been killed, so according to quantum law, the cat is both dead and alive. This thought experiment intends to show that quantum theory (as interpreted by Niels Bohr) is in conflict with the powerful beliefs that we hold about macro-sized objects such as cats: namely, that they cannot be alive and dead at the same time. This suggests that the bizarreness of what is called the superposition of states in the atomic world is intolerable to us when it is applied at the everyday level.

Yet another famous example of this kind of thinking can be found in Albert Einstein's elevator thought experiment (*The Evolution of Physics*, 1966; *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory*, 1952; Brown and Fehige 2010, 11–12), which he uses to illustrate the equivalence between a gravitational field and acceleration. Think of an observer sealed off in an elevator, with no outside information to let him or her know whether the elevator is accelerating or whether the elevator is at rest within earth's

gravitational field. If the elevator is in deep space, accelerating at exactly the same rate at which objects fall in free fall within the earth's gravitational field, an object dropped within the accelerating elevator will behave the same as it would in an elevator at rest within the earth's gravitational field. In either case, the observer's experience of gravity inside the elevator will be the same. Here, again, we find a visual/narrative/cinematic articulation being used to help make an extremely complex idea easier to understand.

Why, then, would Plato use an artistic device with a visual/narrative/cinematic flavor in his republic? Why would Isaac Newton use cannonballs to explain the orbit of the moon? Why would Titus Lucretius explain infinite space with spears? Why would Erwin Schrödinger confront aspects of quantum theory with cats? Why would Albert Einstein use elevators to explain his equivalence principle? Why would any philosopher or scientist choose to use a visual/narrative/cinematic technique with an artistic flavor? When we begin to look into the use of such cinematic narratives in the history of philosophy and science, we end up with an overwhelming list of philosophers and scientists who have used these imagined scenarios to explain their complex theories. A very partial list already includes Socrates, Plato, Titus Lucretius, René Descartes, Galileo Galilei, David Hume, John Locke, George Berkeley, Gottfried Leibniz, Isaac Newton, Blaise Pascal, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ernst Mach, Thomas Kuhn, Erwin Schrödinger, and Hilary Putnam. To continue this exploration, we have to go further down the rabbit hole to explore the discipline of thought experiment itself in philosophy and science.

Enhancing the Exploration of Thought Experiments

In the following pages, I have two main goals: the first is to continue to establish that thought experiments indicate a cinematic need throughout the history of philosophy and science and the second is to show that cinematic thought experiments (experienced onscreen) are dramatically different from traditional thought experiments (experienced via our imagination). Unfolding these layers will reveal the essential and crucial role that thought experiments play in philosophy, as well as establishing the dramatic difference between cinematic and traditional thought experiments.

Thought experiments were, and are, of essential importance to many disciplines; they are used for a variety of purposes within economics, history, mathematics, philosophy, and science (Brown and Fehige 2010, 1). Their historical use as a cognitive practice can be traced starting in the

pre-Socratic era and extending into the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics (Brown and Fehige 2010, 13–15). Medieval science relied much more on thought experiments than it did on real-world experiments (King 1991). There are those who assert that neither quantum mechanics (Kuhn 1964; Popper 1959) nor the theory of relativity (Brown 1987) could have been arrived at without the essential function of thought experiments.

One of the main goals and essential functions of thought experiments is to provide a clear illustration of a theory, to simplify and/or clarify concepts and ideas: they represent a type of heuristic aid to simplify complex or abstract theories (Brown and Fehige 2010, 10–12). Thought experiments are also used when physical, technological, ethical, or financial constraints make it impossible to execute a real-world experiment (3–5). Most often, thought experiments are communicated via a written narrative or a diagram (1).

Brown and Fehige give the following definition of thought experiments: "Thought experiments are devices of the imagination used to investigate the nature of things. Thought experimenting often takes place when the method of variation is employed in entertaining imaginative suppositions" (1). The primary question surrounding the discipline of thought experiments is whether one can learn anything about reality just from thinking and without the use of new empirical data. Here, I must note that the traditional definition of thought experiments as devices of the imagination is a key difference between the imagined thought experiment and the thought experiment experienced onscreen; I will return to this point later.

There are those who consider thought experiments to be a subset of regular experiments (23–26). Ernst Mach (1897, 1905) claims that if we define experimentation in terms of its basic methods of variation and capacity to eliminate prejudice about nature, then the difference between real experiments and thought experiments is that thought experiments happen in our minds. But the fact that thought experiments happen in our minds does not devalue them or disqualify them from being considered valid experiments. For Mach (see Brown and Fehige 2010, 23–24), at the center of thought experimentation, there is a "*Gedankenerfahrung*," which is an experience in thought. This kind of experience is possible because in thought experimentation, we draw from the uncontrollable images of facts acquired in past experiences with the world. Mach even claims that there are specific cases in which a thought experiment is so convincing that the execution of a real experiment is unnecessary.

For Thomas Kuhn (see Di Paolo et al. 2000, para. 24–26), thought experiments play a historical role that is similar to that of empirical observations. Thought experiments say something novel about nature even if they present

no new empirical data. This is because some facts that are already known may have been pushed aside and thought of as less relevant, but a thought experiment may then bring those disregarded facts back to our attention, and thereby, reveal something new about a phenomenon. Kuhn (1964) advocates "conceptual constructivism":

> On his [Kuhn's] view a well-conceived thought experiment can bring on a crisis or at least create an anomaly in the reigning theory and so contribute to paradigm change. Thought experiments can teach us something new about the world, even though we have no new empirical data, by helping us to re-conceptualize the world in a new way. (Brown and Fehige 2010, 23)

Marco Buzzoni (2008, see Brown and Fehige 2010, 24–25) argues for a dialectical unity between real-world experiments and thought experiments, claiming that on a technological and operational level, thought experiments and real-world experiments are extremely similar. He argues that thought experiments can cause us to revise and reorient certain assumptions—a capacity that demonstrates their crucial importance to science.

I also want to mention Lawrence Souder (2003), who refers to a few more theoreticians who illuminate different properties of thought experiments. Souder (205–8) mentions James R. Brown (1991), who claims that "Thought experiments are performed in the laboratory of the mind. Beyond that metaphor it's hard to say just what they are" (1; cited in Souder 2003, 205). Roy Sorensen (1992) asserts, "A thought experiment is an experiment that purports to achieve its aim without the benefit of execution" (205; cited in Souder 2003, 205). For David Gooding (1992), thought experiments are a methodological hallmark in philosophy, in which visualization is essential. James R. Brown (1992) characterizes thought experiments as a narrative explanation; Steven Shapin (1984) describes Robert Boyle's reports of his experiments as being narrativized in order to allow the reader to witness the experiments without physically being there.

Opposition to the Credibility and Functions of Thought Experiments

In their comprehensive overview of the subject, Brown and Fehige argue that thought experiments have been cheerfully accepted (2010, 15–18). But there also continue to be theoreticians, including Pierre Duhem (1913), Soren Haggqvist (1996), and Kathleen Wilkes (1988), who challenge their

validity. One of the main concerns about thought experiments is that they are intuitively driven, and intuitions can be highly misleading and may lead to irrational jumps and fantasies. But Brown and Fehige counter this concern: "in order to dismiss thought experimenting as a useful philosophical tool one has to show that intuition cannot be a source of knowledge and that an epistemic tool should be useless because there is a serious chance it can fail" (2010, 18). Furthermore, in contrast to the opinions that devalue intuition as a credible source for philosophy and science, there are those who advocate for the epistemological power of intuition as a source of knowledge and understanding.[3]

Thought Experiments as a Visual/Narrative/ Cinematic Necessity within Philosophy

In the previous section, we saw that thought experiments play an essential role in both philosophy and science. The important questions that need to be addressed at this point are what it is that thought experiments signify and whether thought experiments could be considered to be a visual, a narrative, or a cinematic device or technique. As already noted, my goal is to establish that the ongoing pattern of using thought experiments represents an essential need for a cinematic type of thinking, a need to visualize/narrativize/ cinematize certain aspects of thinking, throughout the history of philosophy and science. Although thought experiments are sometimes looked at as a less-important entity, a device that is subordinate to the main theory, the fact that they have been used in so many instances leads me to argue that they signify the existence of an essential necessity that cannot be ignored.

Turning the Exploration on Its Head

To begin establishing the claim that thought experiments might evoke a cinematic or a visual need, I use some of Wartenberg's conclusions from the previous sections, although as I have mentioned, my main interest in his conclusions takes a different perspective from his: in other words, I want to turn his conclusions on their head. In the previous chapter (Foundation III—Thought Experiments), we saw that Wartenberg's remarkable analysis establishes a link between film and philosophy by showing that certain films can be considered thought experiments. The fact that he links film and philosophy in this way is extremely helpful to our endeavor. Although

Wartenberg does not explicitly argue for such an interpretation,[4] I want to claim that if we accept that certain films can be considered to be thought experiments, we may very well also accept the idea that certain thought experiments can be considered cinematic.

Catherine Z. Elgin (1993) can also help us to establish the idea that thought experiments signify an artistic, visual, and even a cinematic need. Elgin describes both art and science as serving to advance our understanding of our world, and she finds cases in which science uses fictional narratives much in the same way as art does (13–14). For Elgin, epistemological research in both science and philosophy cannot avoid accommodating the arts, as she believes that we need to open our view to include knowledge of different sorts. She argues that an understanding does not have to be couched in sentences and can appear in insightful questions or nonverbal symbols (20). There are properties in science that might not possess an exact verbal formulation, but what cannot be put into words can be captured in equations, harmonies, diagrams, or designs.

Elgin points out the extensive use in science of works of fiction known as thought experiments, and that these thought experiments have been proven to advance scientific understanding and knowledge (25–27). Elgin brings up a very important point that involves seeing this from the opposite direction, "Just as thought experiments are fictions in science, works of fiction are thought experiments in art" (25).

Related to this is Rudolf Arnheim's (1986) plea to understand the importance of and essential need for visual thinking. Although Arnheim is not specifically referring to thought experiments, his observations are intimately related to our research. Arnheim asserts that all productive thinking is based on perceptual imagery (143–46) and that perceptual thinking is visually based: that vision is the only sense modality that can represent spatial relations with sufficient precision and complexity. He argues that spatial relations offer the analogies by which one can visualize complex theoretical relations. He uses Sigmund Freud to show how the human mind solves abstract problems (139–41): in one of the few diagrams that accompany Freud's theories, there is a drawing of the id, the ego, the superego, the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious; Arnheim asserts that Freud's drawings or illustrations are not a mere teaching device, used to better explain his theory in a different medium, but that Freud is, instead, portraying his concepts in the medium in which he himself conceived and understood them. Arnheim further concludes that there is no break between the arts and the sciences, nor is there a

break between the uses of words and the uses of pictures (146–51). The ability to visualize the complex properties of three-dimensional objects in space is necessary for artistic, scientific, and technological tasks, and visual thinking is, therefore, unavoidable.

Extending Wartenberg's, Elgin's, and Arnheim's lines of thought, I posit that as much as certain films can be seen as thought experiments, the other side of the equation is that thought experiments can be seen as works of fiction with a cinematic flavor. In addition, Wartenberg's analysis (2007, 137) suggests that thought experiments can be presented via the cinematic platform on an advanced level: for instance, he considers that Descartes's evil genius thought experiment pales in the face of the film *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis 1999), which makes us experience a deceptive world. And if the traditional thought experiment pales in the face of the cinematic thought experiment, I conclude that it may just be the case that thought experiments are best expressed via the cinematic platform. The fact that the cinematic platform offers the possibility of such an advanced and powerful manifestation of thought experiments suggests that thought experiments have always needed the cinematic platform to manifest themselves in the optimum way. But because the technological ability was not available before 1895, thought experiments could only be manifested via the imagination or in simple diagrams or paintings.

The Smoking Gun—Why Philosophy Has Always Needed Cinema

One can observe that this discussion of thought experiments has not been directed merely toward thought experiments, but toward the need or necessity that they signify. Thought experiments are a structured device or technique that signals the existence of what I believe to be an essential need, in the heart of philosophy, for a visual/narrative/cinematic type of thinking, a need that is made evident by the extensive use of these thought experiments throughout the history of philosophy. Thought experiments are no sidekick to ideas, nor a degraded illustration used to spice up a theory. The visual/narrative/cinematic nature of the thinking embodied in thought experiments has served to emancipate and clarify some of the most complex ideas and theories in the history of both philosophy and science.

As I have mentioned, I take a different methodological route from that of most theoreticians of film and philosophy. Rather than showing that certain films can be looked at as thought experiments, I argue that thought

experiments signal the existence of a cinematic need within philosophy. By turning film and philosophy's usual method on its head—searching for cinematic evidence in philosophy, rather than searching for philosophical evidence in cinema—we can discover the cinematic evidence that we were looking for within philosophy and science. But what is important at this point is that we have discovered solid evidence for the need for a cinematic type of thinking located at the heart of philosophy. At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that if one wishes to establish a firm relationship between film and philosophy, one needs to discover why philosophy has always needed cinema. This look at thought experiments has answered that question, thus establishing an essential and firm relationship between film and philosophy.

It is not by chance that Plato chooses to use the allegory of the cave, which we can understand as a cinematic tale, to explain aspects of his metaphysics. It is not by chance that Titus Lucretius, René Descartes, Galileo Galilei, David Hume, John Locke, George Berkeley, Gottfried Leibniz, Isaac Newton, Blaise Pascal, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ernst Mach, Thomas Kuhn, Erwin Schrödinger, Hilary Putnam, and so many others have taken a similar path. Thought experiments make it clear that philosophy need to use a certain artistic device with a cinematic flavor to better confront their problems. It is fascinating and striking that so many philosophers and scientists have thought cinematically in order to solve some of their most complex problems. This is the evidence of the crucial importance of the relationship between film and philosophy, a relationship with huge potential that is just beginning to unfold. This perspective on the relationship between film and philosophy dramatically changes the traditional way of looking at this relationship, marking the beginning of a new possibility for philosophy.

Having established that the existence of thought experiments shows that there has been a need for cinema throughout the history of philosophy and science, we can now move on to the second goal of this chapter, which is to examine why the common methodology in film and philosophy—holding up certain films as traditional thought experiments—is problematic. My claim is that what is manifested as a thought experiment on the cinematic screen goes far beyond traditional thought experiments. I will show that cinema manifests thought experiments in an unprecedented way and that the only possible conclusion is that these onscreen manifestations cannot be viewed as traditional thought experiments, but are something much greater.

WHY CINEMATIC THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS ARE NOT MERELY TRADITIONAL THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS

In the following pages, I will argue that the technical possibility of manifesting thought experiments as onscreen experiences (rather than experiences in the mind or imagination) creates an upgraded version of thought experiments that can no longer be considered traditional thought experiments. This then leads me to reexamine and redefine the possibilities of onscreen thought experiments, because many properties that define traditional thought experiments are dramatically different from what we find in cinematic thought experiments. My goal is to understand the new philosophical possibility that is offered by thought experiments presented onscreen.

As was noted previously, Brown and Fehige give the following definition and description of thought experiments: "Thought experiments are devices of the imagination used to investigate the nature of things. Thought experimenting often takes place when the method of variation is employed in entertaining imaginative suppositions" (2010, 1). Given this definition, there is an essential challenge to any attempt to simply reduce cinematic thought experiments to traditional thought experiments. By definition, traditional thought experiments are experiments that happen in thought, as they are devices of the mind and imagination. Cinematic thought experiments, on the contrary, are not merely confined to the experience of the mind or imagination, but happen on a screen (the screen of a movie theater, television set, computer monitor, tablet, etc.). Although this might seem obvious, there is nothing more elusive than an obvious idea, and we should give it proper attention since it is a dramatic variable that has crucial implications.

Another challenge to cinematic thought experiments lies in the idea that traditional thought experiments do not use empirical data. If one of the main problems with traditional thought experiments is the question of how we can learn anything new about the world just from thinking and without the use of empirical data (Brown and Fehige 2010, 3–5), then even without drawing on definitions of *empirical data*, we can surely agree that cinema makes extensive use of what can and should be considered empirical data. Whether it is the recording of sound or of visuals, and whether or not it is manipulated or constructed, there is no doubt that cinema utilizes a certain type of empirical data from the empirical world.

Thomas Kuhn (1964, see Brown and Fehige 2010, 23) argues that although thought experiments provide no new empirical data, they still help us to conceptualize the world in a better way. The key sentence

I take from Kuhn is that thought experiments use no new empirical data. Kuhn's point is absolutely true if the thought experiment is evoked via a written book or discussed in a lecture, and must, therefore, be imagined in the minds of its recipients. However, if we identify cinema as being able to realize thought experiments, Kuhn's point must be reexamined: in the case of cinematic thought experiments, the assumption that thought experiments do not use empirical data is on much shakier ground.[5] As already noted, film uses a certain type of empirical data from the world, and this, by definition, makes cinematic thought experiments dramatically different from traditional thought experiments. Any theory, therefore, that relates thought experiments to films must take the use of empirical data in cinematic thought experiments under serious consideration.

Ernst Mach (1897, 1905) also emphasizes the idea that traditional thought experiments are devices of the mind or imagination; he considers thought experiments to be real experiments happening in our minds. This is made possible by the fact that thought experiments are composed from the uncontrollable images of facts that were acquired in past experiences (Brown and Fehige 2010, 23–24). I would like to comment that unlike Mach's articulation of the traditional thought experiment, the cinematic thought experiment is not confined to the laboratory of the mind, but physically happens onscreen. This makes the cinematic thought experiment dramatically different from the traditional perception of thought experiments.

Another important difference between traditional thought experiments and cinematic thought experiments concerns the amount of detail they use. Traditional thought experiments use very little detail, but cinematic thought experiments use a great deal. It will be crucial, therefore, if we are to understand cinematic thought experiments, to explore the implications of their narrative details. Lawrence Souder (2003) argues for the essential importance of the narrative details in traditional thought experiments, laying out the influence of the selection of details on the philosophical implications. He examines two different versions, with different details, of the same violinist thought experiment (214–16)—one by Judith Thomson (1971) and the other by M.W. Jackson (1992). Souder manages to show that the same thought experiment, using different narrative details, leads to two different conclusions, and in so doing, successfully shows that the narrative details play an essential role in composing the philosophical content of the thought experiment. This is an important point because there is such an extensive amount of detail in cinematic thought experiments. If each of these details influences the philosophical content, then we are at the beginning of a very complex possibility of philosophical composition.

Souder also points to another important general aspect of thought experiments, which is that they allow us a more intimate engagement with a philosophical issue (2003, 209–10). He stresses that the advantage of thought experiments is to allow a possible engagement with the world through someone else's eyes. Judith Thomson's (1971) version of the violinist thought experiment, for example, enables a man to imagine the constraints of pregnancy, creating a more intimate engagement with the idea than passive or distant analytical observation would allow. Thought experiments can place us in someone else's shoes, asking us to face the actions of the scene. With cinematic thought experiments, this possibility is elevated to an unprecedented level and may introduce a different kind of engagement with philosophy, based, not on reflection, but on experience.[6]

Presenting Thought Experiments on Different Platforms

It is becoming clearer that traditional thought experiments and cinematic thought experiments are substantially different. But before we can comprehend what happens to thought experiments when they move to the cinematic platform, we must explore what happens to thought experiments when they are presented outside the laboratory of the mind. A good place to begin such an examination is with thought experiments that are presented in diagrams, paintings, or pictorial illustrations, as well as in computer simulations.

As Brown and Fehige put it, "Most often thought experiments are communicated in narrative form, sometimes through media like a diagram" (2010, 1). Thomas Wartenberg has an interesting observation about how pictorial illustrations that accompany written texts construct and structure our imagination. Wartenberg (2007, 39–44) argues that John Tenniel's illustrations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll, 1865) are iconic representations of the book's central characters, that our imagining of Alice and the other characters is significantly influenced by these illustrations.[7] Wartenberg also mentions a domain in which pictorial illustrations are even more significant than the text they illustrate (Wartenberg 2007, 42–43): one of the main goals of birding books, such as Florence Merriam Bailey's (1902) handbook, is to assist in the process of recognizing specific species of birds. Bird watchers rely on these drawings, since they convey a great deal of information that cannot be attained from

the written text alone. To Wartenberg's point about the importance of pictorial illustrations, I would like to add the example of maps. There is no doubt that maps express the physical layout of a territory in a way that is superior to any written text, proving that pictorial or visual illustrations are extremely important, and, in some cases, superior to other possibilities.

THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS AS COMPUTER SIMULATIONS

In looking at what happens to a thought experiment when it is not confined to the laboratory of the mind, the next step after examining diagrams and other pictorial illustrations is to explore thought experiments as computer simulations. This is extremely important since it deals with thought experiments in movement, or in action, onscreen; this brings us closer in spirit to cinematic thought experiments. I want to start with a few ideas proposed by Di Paolo et al. (2000), whose perceptions illuminate important properties of computer simulations as thought experiments.

Di Paolo et al. note that although computer simulation models will never replace empirical data, they are nonetheless extremely important for organizing the consistency of a theoretical position (para. 1–8). Computer simulation models are not merely trivial additions to text, but offer a chance to reconsider and explore the theoretical commitments within an existing paradigm. One of the main advantages of computer simulation models is that they can achieve a complex structure that resembles a natural phenomenon.[8] The authors note that the great complexity of certain natural phenomena makes them very hard to model using older modeling techniques. Computer simulation models, on the contrary, can do a great job in modeling complex phenomena, as they are themselves highly complex. However, this advantage also points to a disadvantage: because computer simulations models are so complex, their internal workings are opaque; it is not immediately apparent what is going on within a simulation. Di Paolo et al. mention that the difficulty in achieving an adequate understanding of a simulation model threatens to cancel out the advantages offered by such a model (para. 30).

Di Paolo et al. also emphasize that although simulation techniques promise to provide theoreticians with new possible approaches, it is unclear precisely how such simulations can be used (para. 1–4). How can one determine the scientific value of a computer simulation that resembles a real-world phenomenon? One of the key methodological questions regarding the scientific use of simulations is what kind of knowledge can be gained from them (para. 23–31). This is a central issue, since the

information that is fed into a computer simulation is already known. This question mirrors a similar question concerning what kind of knowledge it is that can be acquired from thought experiments, leading Di Paolo et al. to examine how computer simulation models can function as thought experiments. However, they rightfully stress that in making any analogy between thought experiments and computer simulation modeling, the important differences between the two must be kept in mind.

Di Paolo et al. describe some of the important differences between thought experiments and computer simulation models (para. 30). A thought experiment has a conclusion that clearly and logically follows, and the relevant patterns of the thought experiment are defined. The behavior of a simulation, on the contrary, may not be immediately understood, and its results and implications require explanation. Furthermore, some of the patterns involved in the computer simulation that were not explicitly modeled may only be discovered after the computer simulation has been observed. Therefore, although a computer simulation may be more powerful and versatile, this comes at the price of explanatory clarity (para. 36–37).

Di Paolo et al. note that we can expect the difference between thought experiments and simulations to become more visible as the complexity of the phenomenon increases (para. 33). As complexity increases, the transparency of the "physical model" in a given simulation decreases. The lack of a priori certainty about what happens in a simulation is something we will have to accept if computer simulations are to be applied to the understanding of complex systems. However, the authors note that it is reasonable to use a computer simulation as a kind of thought experiment (para. 44–45) by examining the patterns within the simulation that can help explore the correspondence between a theory and a natural phenomenon. Simulations are an unusual type of thought experiment, and their explanatory opacity means that they must be observed and systematically explored before they are understood. Di Paolo et al. write that "The irony here is that, although we advocate an understanding of simulations as tools of theoretical enquiry, working with simulations in the way proposed above does have an 'empirical' flavor precisely because complex simulations are not obvious; hence the aptness of the phrase 'computer experiment'" (para. 44).

These authors bring up another difference: "An additional difference lies in the fact that it may indeed be possible to make a stronger case with simulations than with a 'naked' thought experiment since a simulation can also provide insights that could not be arrived at by thinking alone" (para. 45). The information that is fed into the computer may not be controversial, but after experiencing it as a computer simulation, the researcher may be forced

to focus on facts or processes that had initially seemed peripheral or arbitrary and to give them a newly important position within the theory.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF COMPARING COMPUTER SIMULATIONS TO THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS

Di Paolo et al. point to the important and different implications one needs to take under consideration when comparing traditional thought experiments to computer simulation models; these same considerations apply to comparisons between traditional thought experiments and films. As we have seen, thought experiments in the form of computer simulations possess a complex structure, with opaque internal workings. Some of their patterns may only be discovered after the simulation has been observed; their results and implications may not be obvious; and some of their insights could not be arrived at by thinking alone. These differences and more make thought experiments in the form of computer simulations a totally different entity from traditional thought experiments.

When we apply some of Di Paolo et al.'s ideas to cinematic thought experiments, we may discover interesting possibilities for philosophy. These authors argue that because computer simulation models are complex and their internal structure is opaque, they have an empirical flavor. The internal structure of films is also unclear, and films are also very complex. Thus, if computer simulation models have an empirical flavor, then we could certainly expect films, or cinematic thought experiments, to possess such an empirical flavor as well. A failure to explain the internal structure of films does not disqualify them from being able to create philosophy, since we are not trying to reduce films to a traditional philosophical or scientific tool, but aiming to establish a relationship between different disciplines and platforms in order to better confront the chaos. As Catherine Elgin (1993) puts it, the power found in thought experiments and examples should concentrate on what they manage to highlight and show, rather than what backs them up. Another interesting point is one that I already mentioned, from Di Paolo et al.—namely, that some of the patterns of a computer simulation model may only be discovered after the simulation model has been observed. This strengthens the idea that the filmmaker does not have to be familiar with the philosophical issues to which his or her film may point, as not all of the properties or consequences of a film can be predicted or expected. If scientists can live with this, theoreticians of film and philosophy should also be able to.

The main point of this short examination of thought experiments outside the arena of the mind is to show that the traditional thought experiment is a very different entity from the cinematic thought experiment. A different entity, with different properties and consequences, demands a different approach and understanding, and by all means, demands further examination.

Conclusions about the Relationship between Cinema and Thought Experiments

In this chapter, I have established two main points. The first is that thought experiments indicate the existence of a narrative/visual/cinematic need that can be found throughout the history of philosophy and science. The second is that a cinematic thought experiment cannot be considered to be a traditional thought experiment, since the two are dramatically different from each other.

The methodological route I have taken to show why philosophy has always needed cinema suggests that instead of trying to prove that certain films could be considered thought experiments, we can argue that philosophy has always essentially needed the visualization or cinematization of its abstract ideas, and that the ongoing need for that visual/narrative/cinematic type of thinking is evident in what is known as thought experiments. The use of thought experiments throughout the history of philosophy and science supplies the evidence for this visual/narrative/cinematic need. However, the concept of thought experiments as a phenomenon in the mind was conceived before the technological realization of cinema, thus making it a subordinate device, confined to the laboratory of the mind. Only in 1895, with the invention of the technological apparatus of cinema, did the possibility of realizing thought experiments outside the laboratory of the mind and onscreen become possible. But much more effort is still required in order to reveal the full potential of this possibility.

Looking at films merely as traditional thought experiments, as illustrations or representations of a philosophical theory, leads to a limited perception of their philosophical potential. Thought experiments were traditionally used as illustrations or devices to help understand a certain theory. Therefore, a thought experiment was always an accompaniment to a theory, with the clear purpose of helping to explain the theory.[9] But our exploration has shown that there is a gulf between traditional and cinematic thought experiments.

If we look at thought experiments in the form of computer simulations, it becomes clear that they offer a much more complex version of thought

experiments, in which more effort needs to be made in order to realize their conclusions. As Di Paolo et al. (2000) put it, simulation may be more vivid and versatile, but the price of that vividness and versatility is explanatory opacity.

As we think about cinematic thought experiments in the light of the above, I want to stress that unlike traditional thought experiments or computer simulation models, most of the films that have been identified as thought experiments were not created with the purpose of illustrating, or serving as a device to clarify, any philosophical theory. And here lies one of the main problems with simply connecting films and thought experiments. If we identify films with thought experiments, or even reduce films to thought experiments, that encourages us to believe that these films serve as a device to illustrate a philosophical notion. But if we avoid this assumption and say that thought experiments signify a type of thinking that philosophy and science have always needed, and that this type of thinking can be realized via the cinematic platform like never before, then we can begin to emancipate ourselves from the belief that these films simply serve as an auxiliary device to a philosophical theory.

When we avoid the reduction of films to thought experiments, we open up the possibility that these films can create philosophy, not by being an auxiliary device, but by offering a new philosophical platform. The beginning of this new platform for philosophy is the recognition that the cinematic platform is the best way to manifest a type of thinking that has always been needed within philosophy and science. I do not wish to imply that thought experiments are not important or that illustrations are arbitrary additions to a theory. I do, however, want to note that due to technological limitations before 1895, thought experiments were confined to the laboratory of the mind and were mostly subordinate to the theory. Now that thought experiments can be created and manifested using the cinematic platform, the new possibilities that are opened up are dramatically different from their predecessors.

This chapter has explored the question of why philosophy has always needed cinema, for the purpose of establishing a link between the cinematic medium and philosophy. This exploration of thought experiments has provided the answer we were looking for, but it is an answer that is oriented toward the cinematic medium itself, rather than toward specific films. And in fact, although my goal is to establish that the cinematic platform has an unprecedented potential to create philosophy, this does not entail that I believe that every film evokes philosophical wisdom. The

cinematic platform, like the written and oral platforms, possesses a certain potential to evoke philosophy, but not everything that is created via this platform is of a philosophical nature. In much the same way that not every book or oral lecture evokes philosophical wisdom, not every film evokes philosophical wisdom either.

Thought experiments, as a type of genealogical evidence of the visual/narrative/cinematic need within philosophy, and the cinematic experience, as a platform that provides the possibility of manifesting this need, have unleashed a genie that had been trapped as a sidekick within the province of philosophy and science. The possibility of manifesting a thought experiment as a cinematic experience will lead to the independence and emancipation of a new philosophical experience and possibility. What so many theoreticians of film and philosophy now consider to be cinematic thought experiments will turn out to be nothing less than the beginning of a new platform for philosophy. The evolution of thought experiments into cinematic entities offers an unprecedented possibility for philosophy, which I will explore further in the following chapters.

Notes

1. Or in Wartenberg's words (2007, 15–16), it has become common for philosophers of film to remark on the similarity between the shackled prisoners in Plato's allegory of the cave and the members of a film audience. Plato uses this allegory to provide the reader with a way of understanding his complex claims about the metaphysics of forms. (Wartenberg, however, does not see the contemporary fascination with the visualized allegory of the cave as stemming from a revived interest in Plato's metaphysics.) But what is striking is that two and a half millennia before its technical realization, Plato was able to envision the magical phenomenon of cinema that has been captivating its audience since 1895.

2. It is interesting to note that Plato's dialogues also include performative, theatrical, and artistic features. Richard Gilmore (2005) suggests that although Plato critiques the popular art of his time (mainly, poetry and theater), his philosophy is presented using the artistic form of dialogues: "Plato writes his philosophical criticism of art in an extremely artistic form, a form that is both poetic and dramatic" (2). Charles Griswold argues (2003, 39–40) that Plato's dialogues are a type of drama that includes formal features common both in tragedy and in comedy. Plato's use of authorial irony, myths, and humor; the importance of plot; the roles of individual characters; and the interplay among dramatic personae all reveal an understanding and

use of dramatic, comedic, and plot features. Socrates, meanwhile, in *The Republic* (376d9–10, 501e4–5), goes so far as to call himself a myth-teller (Griswold 2003, 39–40). For Henry Unger (1991, 35), the artistic option for philosophical thinking was exercised in many different ways. A famous example is the fact that I have already noted—namely, that Plato expressed his conceptual theories as dialogues.

3. Timothy Williamson (2004, 109–10), for example, has advocated for the importance of intuition in and for philosophy (Brown & Fehige 2010, 18).

4. For clarification, Wartenberg (2007, 36) argues that thought experiments such as Plato's allegory of the cave exemplify the presence of a narrative feature in philosophy. He does not, however, say that thought experiments exemplify the presence of a cinematic feature in philosophy.

5. This point might be more controversial with respect to animated films, but the scope of this study does not allow me to explore this specific example in more depth.

6. This idea is further developed in my chapter on cinesophia.

7. Wartenberg makes a similar claim about the pictorial illustrations in *Winnie the Pooh* (A.A. Milne, 1926) and in the *Harry Potter* books (J.K. Rowling, 1997–2007).

8. For example, imagine one has constructed a computer simulation in which the interaction of the many simple elements creates complex patters, that resembles for instance, real-world phenomenon such as a termite nest or the stock market.

9. Wartenberg (2007, 39), for instance, defines an illustration as something that illustrates something else or refers to something other than itself.

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Cinesophia

Toward the Experience of Philosophy

In this chapter, I will begin to examine what the new possibilities are that the cinematic medium offers to philosophy; the resulting revelations will lead me to argue that the cinematic medium has the unprecedented potential to evoke a new type of philosophy, which is independent of and runs parallel to traditional (i.e. oral and written) philosophy. This new type of philosophy tends to be experiential rather than reflective, a brand-new circumstance for philosophy.

The Inevitable Misunderstanding in Seeing Films as Thought Experiments

There is an essential misunderstanding in the discipline of film and philosophy that comes from the desire to connect certain films with thought experiments. Looking at particular films as thought experiments or as illustrations or representations of a philosophical theory inevitably leads to a misunderstanding of the potential for screening philosophy offered by the cinematic platform. Because by definition, the goal of traditional thought experiments is to clarify a philosophical or scientific theory, when we see cinematic thought experiments as traditional thought experiments, we are creating the conditions for believing that cinematic thought experiments, like their predecessors, serve as a device to illustrate a philosophical theory. No

matter how important thought experiments are, they are always sidekicks, dependent on the original theory and serving as instruments for it.

This is what leads to the inevitable misunderstanding involved in defining films as thought experiments. If we understand the relationship between film and philosophy as based on connecting films to thought experiments, then what we will search for, for any given film, is its connection to a "proper" philosophical theory. Most theoreticians of film and philosophy subscribe to the dogma that a "proper" philosophical theory can only be situated within the written philosophical text,[1] while the film can only be considered as an illustration or representation of that "proper" theory. This is why so many theoreticians of film and philosophy work so hard to connect films to specific philosophical theories from the written tradition, which inevitably leads to the unsolved puzzle of whether or not the filmmaker was familiar with the philosophical notions that his or her film evokes. And when movies are treated this way, it, in turn, reinforces the dogma that "proper" philosophy can only be created through the written text, that the written text is the pure or natural way to engage with philosophical thinking, and that any other medium (including the cinematic) is a degraded medium for philosophy.

Can We Understand a Philosophical Claim without the Aid of Traditional Philosophy?

To establish that philosophy can be created via different platforms, let me begin with a simple question: is it outrageous to think that a philosophical notion—for instance, a Nietzschean concept—could be evoked and understood by viewing a film, without reading Nietzsche's written text or relying on a theoretician to connect the film to a specific theory from the history of philosophy?

In the early 1990s, I was lucky enough to see *Groundhog Day* (Harold Ramis, 1993), which I enjoyed tremendously. A few years later, when I was studying philosophy, I encountered Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence (*The Gay Science*, 1882, para. 341) for the first time, which immediately brought to my mind *Groundhog Day*. To my surprise, I realized that I was already familiar with an idea that was similar to Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence, but not from any of Nietzsche's writings: I knew it from a film. Nor was I the only one who had grasped this Nietzschean concept without having read it or even knowing that it was Nietzschean. On a number of occasions, I have found myself engaged

in conversation with someone about an idea that was similar to Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. When I ask my interlocutors whether they are familiar with Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence, I get strange looks, but when I ask whether they have seen *Groundhog Day*, they immediately know what I am talking about and the conversation on eternal recurrence picks up. An engaging conversation about eternal recurrence with people who have not read Nietzsche: interesting, I think to myself.

Thus, the essence of the philosophical idea that is evoked by the film *Groundhog Day* can be understood without the help of a theoretician connecting it to its "proper" philosophical text. Such help from a theoretician is actually irrelevant to the philosophical idea evoked by the film, which is also independent of the knowledge that sometime around 1882, Nietzsche created a similar idea. I am not advocating against connecting *Groundhog Day* to Nietzsche's text. But I want to make the point that one can understand the essence of the philosophical problem with which the film engages, with or without referring to Nietzsche. Harold Ramis himself, the director of *Groundhog Day*, does not refer to Nietzsche in his commentary on the film. But this does not prevent him from conceptualizing and creating a cinematic experience that parallels an idea that was raised by Nietzsche. Hence, treating *Groundhog Day* as a mere illustration or representation of Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence is bound to lead to a confusing wild goose chase.

I hold that *Groundhog Day* is a cinematic confrontation with an old and unsolved philosophical problem. Although this unsolved problem has appeared throughout the history of philosophy, its expression is by no means confined to written texts or oral lectures. To address the initial question of this section, then, we can confidently claim that a philosophical idea can be evoked and understood through a film without any reference to the written text. And furthermore, if we can understand a philosophical concept without engaging with "proper" philosophical writings or lectures, then we can claim that there are alternative paths for engaging with philosophy. This confrontation with philosophical problems can take place independently in a variety of parallel platforms, mediums, disciplines, and methods.

The Unique Philosophical Potential of Cinema

I have argued that the cinematic platform can evoke a philosophical idea, independent of any reference to the history of written or oral philosophy. What, then, is the unique potential that the cinematic platform can

offer to the discipline of philosophy? In other words, why would anyone want to engage with philosophy via the cinematic platform? I propose that film's potential for creating philosophy lies in its ability to make the audience experience philosophy as an event in motion. This experiential philosophy—totally different from traditional philosophy, which is reflective in its essence—entails different properties, possibilities, and limitations that need to be addressed and articulated.

Don't Say It; Show It!

When I was a film student, one of the sentences I kept hearing from my professors was: "whatever you want to express in your films, don't say it: show it!"[2] A few years later, I realized that this admonition refers to one of the keys to unfolding the philosophical potential of cinema: instead of asking its audience to imagine an idea, cinema can make it see and experience the idea in action. Or as Gilles Deleuze puts it, "It is the camera, and not a dialogue, which explains why the hero of *Rear Window* [Alfred Hitchcock, 1954] has a broken leg (photos of the racing car, in his room, broken camera)" (1983, 201). A few more examples will clarify this point about showing rather than saying, and how it relates to cinematic philosophy.

Video-Recorded Lectures

Let us think about video-(and, of course, audio)-recorded lectures. For the sake of argument, let me begin with a video recording of a lecture by a philosopher explaining Descartes's evil genius thought experiment. There is no doubt that the content of the lecture is philosophical; nor is there any doubt that it is presented via the cinematic platform. But although the audience sees and hears the philosopher, it still has to imagine the entire action of the evil genius narrative, rather than seeing it. The audience has to imagine what the evil genius looks like, what kind of lab he has, what kind of accessories he uses, how he manages to confuse Descartes, and much more. These elements and details must be imagined because the only thing that we see and hear on the screen is the philosopher talking about the evil genius. Therefore, the recorded lecture is not much different from a lecture in the flesh; there is only the technical difference that it is presented via a videotape, television, DVD player, the Internet, on a mobile phone, or via any other screen.

Using Cinematic Titles to Display
the Philosophical Text

In another example, we can imagine the written text of Descartes's evil genius thought experiment simply copied and pasted into a film in the form of scrolling text.[3] Here—much as in the example of the video-recorded lecture—even though the content is philosophical and is presented via the cinematic platform, the audience must read and imagine the narrative of the evil genius in their minds. The scrolling text doesn't show what the evil genius looks like, how he executes his deeds, how he confuses poor Descartes, and so on. These elements are all left to the audience's subjective imagination, making this experience not much different from that of reading a written text. Such cases are still within the realm of the traditional thought experiment, which has to be imagined in the laboratory of the mind.

Restating the Philosophy Using Dialogues
and Voice-Over

Let's move on to a fascinating example, a direct cinematic illustration of Plato's allegory of the cave (*The Republic*). A few years ago, I came across a fantastic short film titled *The Cave*: *An Adaptation of Plato's Allegory in Clay* (Michael Ramsey, 2008), which directly manifests Plato's allegory onscreen. The film's engagement with the allegory requires much less imagining from the audience and provides much more to see, mainly because we can see the cave, the slaves, the shadows, and much more, composed into an experience of the allegory in motion. The film's manifestation of the narrative and details of the allegory in action successfully creates a vivid experience of the allegory, which is not merely confined to the imagination. At the same time, however, even though much of the narrative and its details are presented as a cinematic experience, the majority of the philosophical content and implications are still presented through voice-over. In this specific case, using voice-over to express the majority of the philosophical content means that the audience still imagines most of the philosophy rather than seeing or experiencing it. I am not claiming that a voice-over is not a cinematic device, but it is notable that in this case, using voice-over to express the philosophical content requires the audience to imagine the philosophical content, rather than experiencing it. Therefore, although the film is producing philosophy on the cinematic

screen, it is still not using the full potential of the cinematic platform to make us see philosophy rather than reflecting on it or imagining it.

Ramsey's short film of Plato's allegory of the cave is an example, then, of a cinematic engagement with philosophy that is very much dependent on the written text. This does not mean that the complexity of the philosophy in the film is degraded, only that the film is still tied to Plato's written text and can be viewed as a direct illustration or representation of it. Therefore, although the film produces an enhanced kind of thought experiment, one that can be experienced on a screen rather than imagined, it is still not an example of a new type of philosophical platform, using cinema.[4]

In most cases, when philosophical text is quoted or restated in scrolling text, voice-overs, or dialogue, the result is a literal presentation of philosophy that makes the audience imagine it, rather than experiencing it in action, as a cinematic event. Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece *The Godfather* (1972) is an example that shows the power of cinema to express a (not necessarily philosophical) idea or story through action and movement. After being gunned down, Don Corleone (Marlon Brando) is recovering in a small private hospital. When his son, Michael Corleone (Al Pacino), visits him, he is shocked to find that no one is guarding his father. Quickly realizing that his father is being set up to be assassinated, Michael moves him to a different room and guards the entrance, enlisting Enzo, a baker (Gabriele Torrei), who has come to pay his respects to the Don, to stand outside with him impersonating bodyguards to bluff the assassins as they drive by. A few stressful moments pass as Enzo tries to light a cigarette, but the stress gets to him and his hands start shaking so badly that he is unable to operate the lighter. Michael, who is still a "civilian" (i.e. not involved with the family's criminal activity) at this point, sees the trouble with the lighter and grabs Enzo's hands, calmly and easily getting the lighter to light. Anyone else, under such circumstances, would likely collapse under the pressure, but Michael is built to handle such stress, and Coppola expresses this idea by showing rather than telling. Instead of voice-overs, scrolling text, or dialogues, there is a beautiful and elegant scene showing us that Michael has what it takes to eventually become the godfather. In the spirit of Nouvelle Vague's song "In a Manner of Speaking," this scene shows us everything by saying nothing.

I want to reiterate that I am not advocating against voice-overs, scrolling text, restatements, or any other possible cinematic technique. No film-maker should have to create films with their hands tied behind their back;

every filmmaker should have the freedom to express their ideas through any means they find appropriate. I am simply trying to understand and map the unique advantages and limitations of the cinematic platform for creating philosophy.

The Potential for Creating Philosophy as an Experience in Motion

A brilliant film such as *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis, 1999) allows us to experience philosophy in action, rather than just imagining it. One of the central journeys of the film is the emancipation of Neo (Keanu Reeves) from the computer-simulated world and his entry into a different world. From a philosophical perspective, the way the film evokes the journey between the computer-simulated world and the other world points to an engagement with an epistemological gap.[5] I propose that to engage with such an epistemological gap is to engage with a philosophical idea—or to engage with philosophy. The film, however, unlike previous engagements (oral or written) with philosophical ideas that led their hearers or readers to reflect on or imagine those ideas, manages to show us the trajectory of an epistemological gap in action, leading the audience to see and experience the philosophical ideas. We do not have to imagine the epistemological gap between the computer-simulated world in which Neo lived at first and the world he lived in after his emancipation from that world: we can see it in action on the screen. There are no voice-overs, titles, or talking heads expressing problems of epistemology, but instead, there is a journey that allows us to see and experience the epistemological gap in action.

(It is interesting to compare the second and third movies of *The Matrix* trilogy with the first one.[6] In the two sequels, philosophical notions are mostly evoked through dialogue, such as Neo's discussion with the architect, played by Helmut Bakaitis. Of course, it is not wrong or even uncinematic to simply restate philosophical claims within dialogue. But the result of that practice is that the audience then only imagines the philosophy, rather than seeing or experiencing it. This is a way of engaging with philosophy that is closer to what we find with a lecture or a written text. Thus, unlike the first film, the second two *Matrix* movies do not use the full philosophical potential of the cinematic platform.)

The Matrix is an independent and parallel confrontation with an epistemological problem, rather than an illustration of, representation of, or sidekick

to traditional philosophy: we do not have to read dozens of philosophy books dealing with epistemology to understand the gap between the worlds in which Neo lives. Watching the film allows us to grasp certain aspects of an epistemological problem without even knowing that it is called epistemology, or who the other philosophers are who engage with this subject. Although knowledge of traditional philosophical theories will add more layers and depth, my main point is that understanding the essence of the epistemological idea in the film is not dependent on such theories. The fact that I could have a conversation on an epistemological gap with someone who has only seen *The Matrix* (and not read any philosophical texts) shows that we should be emancipated from the idea that philosophy can only be created via the written or oral media. *The Matrix* is a cinematic confrontation with an epistemological problem from a different perspective. It offers a new engagement with philosophy: the ability to see and experience an epistemological gap as an event in motion. It is a philosophical creation that exemplifies how the cinematic medium can create alternative circumstances for philosophy—the potential for philosophy to be seen and experienced.

Cinema as a New and Unique Type of Experience

We have seen that the cinematic medium offers the discipline of philosophy the possibility of making an audience see philosophy rather than just reflecting on it. But it is not just the idea of seeing philosophy in action, as an event in motion, that makes the cinematic platform so unique. What I am most interested in is actually the idea of experiencing philosophy through the unique possibility offered by the cinematic platform: cinema has the potential to create moving visuals and sounds, allowing the audience to experience situations (including philosophy) from a unique perspective. Although theater and painting (for example) also possess the potential to make us see and experience rather than imagine, in cinema, this possibility is elevated to a different level. To show this, I will use some of Gilles Deleuze and Daniel Frampton's intriguing ideas on the singular kind of experience that is offered by cinema.

Art Is a Creation—Gilles Deleuze

Gilles Deleuze presents some compelling ideas about the potential of art (cinema included) to create new worlds. For Deleuze, art is not a representation of the world, but the creation of a new world (Deleuze and Guattari

1994, 193); in fact, the term "representation" should be dismissed from art. No art and no sensations have ever been representational. "A work of art always entails the creation of new spaces and times … A work of art is a new syntax, one that is much more important than vocabulary and that excavates a foreign language in language" (Deleuze 2000, 370). He argues that art undoes the organization of perceptions and affections, replacing them with sensations that take the place of language: "Whether through words, colors, sounds, or stone, art is the language of sensations" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 176). A writer, for example, though using words, creates a syntax that transforms them into sensations that can make standard language tremble, vibrate, stammer, and sing.

Art is able to preserve blocs of sensations that are composed from affects and percepts, all of which are independent of their models, creators, and observers (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 163–65). The sensations contained in artwork wait to be perceived; they will continue to evoke sensations long after their models, creators, and observers have disappeared. "Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 164). Sensations, affects, and percepts are transformed into something that goes beyond those who create and experience them— a young man on a canvas, for example, will continue to smile as long as the canvas lasts; he will continue to smile long after the model has passed away, long after the creator has passed away, and long after the original audience has seen it and is gone. As long as the canvas is there, that bloc of sensations will be preserved. For Deleuze, this is how art (including cinema) is able to create a new world, rather than mere representations. The events of art, composed from that independent bloc of sensations, create a new syntax, a foreign language within language.

A New Kind of Thinking through Cinema—Daniel Frampton

Daniel Frampton's *Filmosophy* (2006) proposes some of the most exciting and inspiring notions I have seen about how film can evoke a new type of thinking. This is another important step in scrutinizing what is singular about the experiences evoked through cinema while articulating their potential for the discipline of philosophy.

For Frampton, film reveals reality by showing a distorted mirror of reality; in so doing, it also challenges our perception of reality (2006, 3–11). The cinematic window allows us to re-see reality from a different perspective while expanding our perception to a new kind of reality. Inspired by Deleuze, Frampton argues that cinema is not a representation or reproduction of reality, but creates its own world that completely reinterprets the objects it expresses into a new syntax.

Frampton points out that most of what has been written on film and philosophy so far has been led mainly by the analysis of plot and character, with very few discussions of the power and impact of images (8–11). Most of the theoreticians of film and philosophy have merely wanted to brighten up their lectures by showing a few scenes from a classic movie. "These philosophers are simply concerned with how some films contain stories and characterizations that helpfully illustrate well-known philosophical ideas." Most of the writing within film and philosophy also ignores cinematic devices. "It only takes one character to say 'man is not an island' for somebody to jump up and declare the film philosophical" (9). For Frampton, these writings rely much too heavily on philosophy, combining film and philosophy like water and oil, using film to teach philosophy, as an illustration of philosophy's classical arguments. In most of these writings, the discussion of the film is quickly left behind as the text elaborates on the philosophical problem. The notions of dried-up philosophy departments are forced onto the film, causing students to focus mainly on characters and plot.

As Frampton puts it, cinema is not a catalog of philosophical problems and offers much more than just the screening of philosophy through plot and dialogue (9–10). "Focusing, editing, camera movement, sound, framing—all 'think' a certain relation to the story being told" (10). Cinema contains a new possibility for thought, a new episteme that can add a new perspective to philosophy. Frampton stresses that the discourses of filmic thinking should not be reduced to the discourses of linguistic thinking (195): film is an event where our thought is brought face to face with its own limitation by being exposed to a different type of thinking. Film must not allow itself to become a translation of philosophy (212). It must avoid becoming the mere illustration of philosophical notions with no aesthetic meaning. Rather, it must seek its own philosophers who reveal a new kind of thinking, with the purpose of showing new perspectives on our world. For these reasons and more, Frampton believes that philosophy should make film a companion in concept creation (11).

Thinking Beyond Our Experience

To establish that film is a new kind of thinking, Frampton (61–70) builds on some of Deleuze's ideas,[7] stressing the fact that for Deleuze, images and sequences have the power to replace, obliterate, and recreate the object itself (Deleuze 1985, 12, 19; Frampton 2006, 64). Deleuze's approach recognizes the power of cinema to completely reinterpret the objects it represents and its ability to create a new way of seeing objects. Cinema resembles no language, but is composed of paralinguistic images and pre-signifying signs. In this sense, it stands in contrast to our language, for the images have their own logic of nonlinguistic communication. Deleuze describes the image as a panel of information as well as an overloaded brain absorbing information (1985, 267). At this point, cinema transforms into a sensory thought, an emotional intelligence, and an explanation of thought outside of human thought.

Frampton also draws on an essay by Antonin Artaud to describe cinema as possessing a mode of thinking beyond our experience (Artaud 1972; Frampton 2006, 67). Cinema is a succession of mechanical apparatuses that escape the structure of human thought, a type of seeing that leads to a kind of thinking about the world that did not exist before the invention of cinema. For instance, the cinematic medium—with its slow- and fast-motion shots, irrational cuts, false movement, and false continuity—has made problems of time in philosophy visible (Deleuze 1985, xi). The cinematic presentation of time produces a new experience of time, which replaces our regular engagement with the world. In this way, the cinematic image allows us to see what we cannot think. Frampton notes that for Artaud, "film shows the unthinkable, forcing us (the filmgoer) to face up to our limited thinking" (Frampton 2006, 70). And for Deleuze, if theater gives us presence, then cinema can alter the visible with a fundamental disturbance that contradicts our natural perception (Deleuze 1985, 201; Frampton 2006, 70). Cinema can produce the un-thought in thought; it is the birth of the visible that is still hidden from our linguistically structured perception.

As a result, Frampton argues, film can evoke a new kind of thinking, which is different from human thinking (2006, 73–102).[8] In order to conceptualize the thinking that is created by film, he uses terms such as "the filmind" and "film-thinking" as a metaphor to articulate the actions of film as well as to convey the idea that film-thinking is a new type of thinking. The filmind and film-thinking are always created by filmmakers, artists,

actors, writers, and technicians. However, since they are all subject to the structure and essential features of the medium, the actions that appear in the film have their own mindfulness, and it is the film that steers its own discourse. There is no external force or significant other, but it is the film itself that leads to new types of thinking. This does not mean that the film has a self or a reflective anthropomorphic personality, but simply, that film can present a new kind of thinking that is different from human thinking. Frampton's film-thinking is an umbrella term for a cinematic form of behavior, made possible by the choices to present an object using different framing, movements, editing ("shifts"), colors, sound, and so on (97–98). As viewers, we experience a world similar to our own, but through a perspective we could never have had without cinema.

Frampton's film-thinking can encounter truth without categories or language (2006, 194–95); in this context, Frampton refers to Ricciotto Canudo, who claims that cinema takes us back to the great, true, primordial synthetic visual language (Canudo 1923, 296; Frampton 2006, 194–95). Cinema produces a type of thinking that we may not be able to explain in words, but we can send our friends to experience it by watching the film themselves. Thus, Frampton believes that film might provide us the means to escape from the dead end of linguistic thought (200–201). With its own unique thought, film creates an intuitive image, concept of time, desire, justice, and fractured perspectives that communicate directly with our minds. In Frampton's brilliant articulation, film as non-philosophy becomes the Eros to philosophy's Logos.

Frampton goes on to claim that film disrupts the principles of reason and judgment, and so, becomes a different kind of truth (200–201). A film can provide direct thinking about abstract concepts such as being, knowing, substance, cause, or identity. This may lead to the emancipation of knowledge through film in ways that we never thought possible—some philosophical concepts may be better understood in cinema. This does not mean that the filmmaker has the means of questioning traditional (written or verbal) philosophy, but that the filmmaker creates an experience that becomes the bearer of something that cannot be mastered by traditional philosophy.

EXEMPLIFYING FILM-THINKING

I want to explore some of Frampton's examples (116–47), which might clarify why he believes that film can evoke a new type of thinking that exceeds human thinking or anything we have ever experienced. It is important to note that Frampton's aim is not to document every single type of

film-thinking, but rather, to indicate the paradigmatic ways in which film-thinking occurs and how seeing film as thinking expands meaning and possibilities. Frampton actually stands at the opposite pole from analytical approaches which, in his view, fragment the elements that compose a film. His method aims to understand the film as a holistic entity rather than just the fragments that compose it.

Perceptions of Time

Film-thinking creates new perceptions of time that could never take place without experiencing films (Frampton 2006, 124–25). *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962) opened our eyes to what we all take for granted—movement. The sped-up sequences in *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971) manifested a machine-like reality and perception. But it is the slowed-down images that predominate as the thoughtful dramatization of film-thinking. Here is where an increased amount of information is presented to us in a manner that we never experienced before the technical possibility of film. What we experience in these instances is a new kind of thinking about the world.

Shifts or Edits

Frampton considers all shifts (i.e. edits)[9] in images to be active thoughts driven by the imagistic reasoning of "film-thinking" (131–38). For example, the fade-out is a different type of thought than superimposition or fast cutting. For Sergei Eisenstein, the image of thought is constructed through the dialectic image and shifts, where film becomes the thinking of comparison, contrast, and causality (Frampton 2006, 134). For Deleuze, it is mainly montage that creates the thinking of cinema (1985, 158; see Frampton 2006, 134). Deleuze also argues that editing holds the key to understanding time, since it reveals time through various nonlinear relations that make time visible (1985, xi). For example, it is within irrational cuts that thinking about the pure relationality of time appears. This process relies on nothing but the instant collision of still or fast movements, making the coexistence of distant possibilities of times and spaces visible (Frampton 2006, 137–38).

Sound

Frampton argues that sound manifests thinking about musical or sound effects, where each choice is as powerful as additional pictures or frames that reconfigure the meaning (120–22). Silence is the darkness of sound

design and can also provoke powerful feeling and thoughts. It can make the audience hear their heartbeats; it can offer a moment of reflection or extend tension. A general analysis of sound in a film may concentrate on how certain sounds relate to a certain situation or a character. In *Blackmail* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1929), for instance, the film is thinking about the subjective state of mind of Alice White (Anny Ondra) as she hears only the word *knife* in the neighbor's gossip. In *Seven* (David Fincher, 1995), the horror is amplified through the use of low, but abrasive sounds that surround its characters.

Image

For Frampton, the basic image of a film is not basic at all (117). Initial decisions, choices such as wide-screen or television screen, black and white or color, grainy or sharp, or which filter to use, possess a huge and integral dramatic intention within the meaning of the whole film. Frampton also notes that the use of different depths of field, by means of which a film can direct our attention to a specific area within the frame, is another example of film-thinking (122–23). Sharpness becomes thoughtful where it stands in obvious contrast with the out-of-focus. This possibility does not mirror our human visual attention or perception; this is an example of a new kind of perception of the world through film-thinking, a perception that was not possible prior to the invention of film.

Colors

The use of colors enables some of the most thoughtful modes of film-thinking (Frampton 2006, 118–19). Much in the same way that music can reveal the presence of danger or evil, different colors may explain or present a personality within a certain character or a sequence. *Basic Instinct* (Paul Verhoeven, 1992), for instance, uses its steely grayness to present us with an amoral world. *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis, 1999) uses its greenish chrome to create a sick, brittle, simulated world, manifesting the cold, manipulative characters of the artificial intelligence that controls it. The proud, sharp, clean images in *Starship Troopers* (Paul Verhoeven, 1997), meanwhile, manifest the optimism and naïveté of its characters and the ideology for which they are being sacrificed.

Cinematic Games of Experience

The theories of Deleuze and Frampton push the limits of any exploration of cinema. These theories, taken together, lead me to see the experiences created via the cinematic platform as a new and singular type of experience that is still very far from being fully understood.

To return to my initial argument, the cinematic potential to create moving visuals and sounds involves the unique possibility of making us see and experience events, rather than imagining them. Inspired by the ideas of Deleuze and Frampton, I argue that although theater and painting also possess the potential to make us see rather than imagine, in cinema, this possibility is elevated to an experience beyond anything we have ever faced. Frampton, as we have seen, calls these cinematic events, experiences, or situations *film-thinking*; I, however, think that Frampton's semantic choices might be confusing, leading some readers to believe that he advocates understanding cinema as an anthropomorphic self-thinking entity (which, in fact, he rejects). But I completely agree with the essence of his idea: that cinema allows us a different type of experience (what Frampton calls thinking) of the world.

The idea of a different engagement with or experience of the world is very important. Let us take slow-motion shots as an example of a different kind of thinking about, engagement with, or experience of the world. Could thinking in terms of slow motion have even been possible before the invention of cinema, before the mechanical apparatus of cinema allowed such an experience and perception of the world? Although, to my knowledge, there has been no comprehensive study of whether there was any thinking about slow motion before cinema, I believe this to be a good example of how the potential of cinema has created a new experience of, thinking about, and perception of the world. It has introduced the possibility of experiencing the world from a perspective that did not exist beforehand and is different from our common human perspective, experience, and thinking.

We can see cinema, then, as a telescope that opens a new world of ideas to us, not because of the fact that it represents ideas, but in the way that it gives us access to a type of thinking that goes beyond our traditional perception. Cinema has an unprecedented potential that can push us toward new concepts, perceptions, and thoughts of the world and of our own thinking—one of the paths to understanding the potential and limitations

of human thinking is to step outside of it, and yet, it is obviously impossible to step out of human thinking, since it is our only possibility. For example, in a world that has only the color blue, we could not see or experience any blue; it is by experiencing different colors that we can start mapping out what is blue, what is red, what is green, and so on. By experiencing different types of thinking, perception, and experience, we can have a better understanding of human thinking, and this is a possibility that the cinematic platform holds out to us.

I also want to note an interesting experiential dance that is played out in cinema. Cinematic entities are neither completely artificial nor completely natural; they are something else that has yet to be defined or fully articulated. The cinematic experience takes certain types of empirical data from reality (in other words, the recorded visuals and sounds), and then, meshes them with artificial elements, in a strange and unique composition. This composition depends, not on one artist, but on many different artists and craftspeople—the director, the writer, the producer, the actors, the editor, the sound engineers, the grips, the gaffers, and so on—who shift the cinematic creation in different and unexpected directions. In addition, the creation of a film, unlike that of many other art forms, is dependent on a variety of different technological devices (such as cameras, microphones, editing systems, and computers) and involves an almost unlimited variety, unique to cinema, in its choices in such matters as colors, frame sizes, camera angles, acting, sounds, cutting, and animation, which are, nevertheless, in spite of the infinite possibilities, interdependent. One might say that the filmmakers can only try to orchestrate the chaos that will eventually appear onscreen, and that the film controls its creators as much as they control the film. No filmmaker can have absolute control over the cinematic entity or creation; nor, obviously, can any film be created without filmmakers. If filmmakers had absolute control over the entities of cinema, there would be no bad films. No one has been able to create a predictable formula for how to make a good film. There may be formulas for creating a financially successful film, but a formula for how to make a good film is a different story. Film is never predictable; it is a strange composition of things we do not know. The entities of cinema are mysterious and unpredictable; creating a film is like a voyage into a dark sea with almost no navigation tools. But it is by venturing into such uncharted waters that we discover and create new worlds and new thoughts that push the limits of human perception and experience.

Given the possibilities I have discussed here, I believe that there is much more to the experiences created in cinema than has generally been thought and agreed upon. Maybe the 1895 audience watching *The Arrival of a Train at the La Ciotat Station* (The Lumière Brothers, 1895) at the Grand Café realized the strangeness of the cinematic experience more clearly than we do today. According to the legend, they got up and ran out to escape from the train that they saw approaching onscreen. Maybe we still suffer from a generic trauma that many of us have decided to address by confining the cinematic experience within the safe borders of an artificial representation, overruling the strangeness and uniqueness of this experience by saying, "Don't worry, it's just a film." The fact is that there is much more to explore and learn about the magic of cinema; in the spirit of Stanley Cavell's note, we can say that films are strange and mysterious objects, unlike anything else on earth (2005a, 94).

Grounding Philosophy in a Contemporary Context

Another important aspect of cinematic philosophy lies in its bond with the contemporary context. Not only can cinematic philosophy cause us to experience philosophy, rather than merely imagining it, but it holds the potential to ground philosophical ideas within a contemporary context. As we saw in Chap. 3, Bernstein (2012) points out how deeply anchored movies are in their own time, more so than any other art form. The tremendous speed with which movies become dated puts a kind of weight on them that no art form before them ever had to carry. The very faithfully lifelike way in which movies connect with contemporary fashions and trends and speech and social realities means that any small discrepancy between our world and what we see onscreen can make the world that is presented onscreen appear not to be our world. In my view, this entails a huge potential for grounding abstract philosophical theories in current times, giving them contemporary, up-to-date relevance. A philosophical idea expressed in a film is no longer an abstract theory that was written in a book many years ago and might seem out of touch with today's world. It is here, now, in front of the audience as an up-to-date experience that we can relate to and that is relevant to our everyday life.

A significant portion of the bond between cinema and its contemporary context is situated in the emotional engagement or empathy the audience feels with the characters and the story. Although in traditional philosophy,

emotional engagement and empathy are undesirable, here, since we are aiming at a new realm for philosophy, we need to be open to new possibilities. The emotional engagement called forth from the audience by a specific film that is grounded in a philosophical idea is what evokes the consequences and stakes that clarify the relevance of the philosophical idea to the audience's everyday life.

Empathy is the experience of understanding another person's conditions by placing oneself in the other person's shoes. There are numerous books on how to achieve empathy within a screenplay or a story[10]; one of the main ways is for the writers or filmmakers to inflict conflicts and challenges on the protagonists. In the words of Robert Mckee (1997), a protagonist can only be as fascinating and appealing as the forces of conflict he or she faces. The more powerful the forces of antagonism, the more appealing the character and story become. This is an important point for cinematic philosophy, since it is a way to connect the audience with a film's characters, stories, and ideas. The film *After The Dark*[11] (John Huddles, 2013) can serve as an example to clarify the importance of empathy or emotional engagement to cinematic philosophy. This film is an illuminating case study, since it is specifically motivated by a desire to engage with philosophy through thought experiments within a film. The film's plot centers on a philosophy class on its last day of school, as the professor gives the class the assignment to engage with three different thought experiments about a worldwide apocalypse.

The remarkable thing about the film is that it highlights the difference between imagining philosophy and experiencing philosophy. It does this by moving back and forth between scenes in the classroom, where the students are (safely) conceptualizing ethical and moral questions about the apocalypse, and scenes in which the same students are *in* the apocalypse, facing the consequences of their moral and ethical choices.[12] Thus, the film manages to display and showcase the difference between imagining an apocalypse and experiencing one.

And yet, although the film, remarkably, shows us the difference between imagining and experiencing philosophy, this structure reduces the empathy the audience feels toward the characters. The returns from the apocalyptic scenes to the safe boundaries of the classroom scenes reduce our sense of danger and consequences for the characters within the film by giving them a certain immunity. For example, although the professor, Mr. Zimit (James D'Arcy), dies in the first apocalyptic sequence, he is

not really dead within the film, since a few scenes later, he is back in the classroom and he is also alive and present in other following sequences. As I have mentioned, in order for the audience to be emotionally invested in a film, story, or characters, the stakes have to be high. If, therefore, within the world of a film, the challenges are not particularly daunting and the protagonists can easily overcome them, it is hard to create the hook that will make the audience care or worry about how the protagonists will survive. Without high stakes or dangers for the characters, the audience is much more likely to remain emotionally distanced from the film, story, and characters.

Within *The Matrix*, Neo, Morpheus, and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) face extremely high stakes: they could die. In the film *Groundhog Day*, the stakes for Phil (Bill Murray) are likewise extremely high: he could get stuck for eternity in a never-ending recurrence. The dangers for these characters if they fail are what raises the emotional connection the audience feels with them. This is one of the main elements that creates empathy for a character and helps make the philosophical issues relevant to the audience. When we empathize with a character, we usually place ourselves in the character's situation, asking: How would I act? How would I overcome these challenges? Would I make the same choices they do? Empathy is key, since it has the potential to place the audience in the world of the film that is driven by a philosophical idea. When the audience faces the consequences of the film's ideas by placing themselves in that situation, that leads them to a deeper engagement with the issues raised by the film. When we are emotionally engaged and we empathize with a film that is guided by a philosophical idea, the philosophical idea becomes more plausible and relevant to our everyday lives; it is no longer an abstract idea written some 200 years ago, which, to some, might seem out of touch with our contemporary world, but it is right here, involving characters with whom we empathize and the consequences of whose actions we understand. When a philosophical idea is introduced within an empathetic relationship, that has the potential to anchor the philosophical idea in an experience that is relevant and plausible to the everyday life of the audience.

High stakes are what create emotional engagement and empathy, which produces the "hook"[13] that makes the audience see, feel, and, most important, care about the characters, story, and world that revolve around a philosophical idea. If written and oral philosophy are what gave philosophy a mind, it is cinematic philosophy that gives it a heart. Cinematic

philosophy grounds a philosophical idea in a contemporary experience, making an emotional connection possible, which makes the philosophy more relevant to our time and everyday life.

The Unique Advantage of Artistic Choices

As we saw in the previous chapter, the potential of cinema to create a new engagement with philosophy does not lie merely in the technical advances and innovations that make it possible to show philosophy on a screen. If all cinema had to offer was the technical possibility of making us see a thought experiment, for example, that would be no different from a computer simulation.[14] But what pushes cinema toward the creation of a new experience of the world, while elevating its potential for creating philosophy, lies in the artistic choices and possibilities in cinema and the fact that cinema does not serve as an illustration or representation of anything but itself. If we compare a computer simulation used as a thought experiment to a cinematic thought experiment, we can see that the computer simulation is without artistic choices (such as visuals, framing, colors, sound, cutting, images, suspense, empathy, emotional engagement, and so on) and must be loyal to the theory or natural phenomenon it represents. On the contrary, the variety of artistic choices that must be made when creating a film takes the cinematic event even further away from the naked representation or illustration of a theory, creating a unique experience, different from our everyday experience of the world, that can only be manifested via the cinematic medium.

The events that are evoked in cinema are much more than a naked illustration, a loyal "only the facts, ma'am" representation of Plato's allegory of the cave or Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. The events of cinema are a unique creation that surpasses anything we have ever faced, a step toward a new experience that was not possible before the creation of cinema.

Some Clarifications

I want to convey here that the cinematic experience is still far from being defined or understood. My goal, indeed, is not to define the cinematic experience, but to understand aspects of its potential to engage with philosophy. When I say that cinema allows a different type of experience, I mean that the events of cinema are not representations or illustrations of any events taken from reality; that they are not a manifestation of human perception or consciousness; and that they are not a realization of the human

unconscious. The events of cinema are the events of cinema. It will be a long time before we can fully understand and define the entities that are created in cinema. But what we can say now is that cinema possesses the potential to make us see and experience events and situations from a unique perspective that was not possible before the invention of cinema. And with respect to philosophy, cinema has the potential to make us experience philosophy, as well as an event or as a situation from a unique perspective.

Whether these cinematic entities are real, artificial, empirical, virtual, pseudo-empirical, or fictional, the experience of watching a film is not confined to the imagination the way that a traditional thought experiment is. Watching a film involves an experience seen on the screen as a cinematic and experiential event. To think of cinematic entities as representations or as illustrations is to severely limit our understanding of what they are. Furthermore, whether what we see on screen has been staged using actors and sets, shot in real time as a documentary, or produced using animation, cinema has the potential to evoke ideas, and, in our case, philosophy as a vivid experiential event or situation. Therefore, it makes no difference to this discussion how well cinema documents the world; what matters here is the potential of cinema to manifest events or situations as experiences on the screen. Whether the film involves live action, documentary, or animation, what matters is that one can experience the philosophy as a cinematic event onscreen.

I also want to address the possibility of a solipsistic challenge to the potential of cinema to manifest philosophy outside the laboratory of the mind. A solipsistic discourse would assert that every experience we undergo is inescapably confined to our own subjective mind. But such a discourse does not tell us anything about the experience of cinema in particular, since the solipsistic argument applies equally to every experience: it would not differentiate among watching a film, reading a book, driving a car, playing soccer, drinking beer, or brushing our teeth—all of which would count as an experience within the imprisoned mind. Whether the experience of watching a film is solipsistic or not, it is still experienced on some sort of screen, which is very different from the traditional thought experiment that must be imagined in the readers' laboratory of the mind.

Conclusion

To return to the discourse of film and philosophy: there is an essential misunderstanding about media or platforms that lies deep within the discipline of film and philosophy. This general misunderstanding arises from the expectation that in order for a film to evoke philosophy, it needs to

act as if it were a written text. Once the film fails to act like written text, the cinematic platform is quickly written off as a degraded format for philosophy.

We need look no further than Adorno and Horkheimer, whose writings influenced so much of the discourse on film and philosophy: Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) criticize film for its inability to allow reflection, its lack of contemplation that would allow thinking, the bombardment by visuals that block any serious thinking, its creation of mere amusement and entertainment that lack any possible negation, and so on. But all of the attributes to which they point are associated with the potential of the *written text* to evoke philosophy, not with the potential of the cinematic platform to evoke philosophy. Whether or not they are conscious of this point, most of the philosophers who follow in Adorno and Horkheimer's path believe that film must act as if it were a written text, while missing the crucial point that cinema is a different medium, with a different potential. With their dogmatic assumption, they bypass any serious examination of the potential of the cinematic platform to engage with philosophy, a potential that is dramatically different from that of the written text. Instead of expecting cinema to act as if it were the written text, we need to explore what is it that the cinematic platform can offer to philosophy that the written text (and other platforms) cannot.

In the previous section, we saw that cinema evokes situations and events that can be experienced onscreen, a very different potential from that of the written text, which tends to evoke properties of reflection, thinking, and imagination. Cinematic events and situations onscreen are sometimes so compelling that we forget ourselves and get sucked into the action, as if we were vividly experiencing those events and situations[15]. Thus, film evokes events and situations in a way that is much closer to playing soccer than to reading a book. While playing soccer, we don't stop to reflect whether we should pass or kick the ball; we just do it. When we undergo an experience made up of an influx of information coming across a variety of platforms, we have very little time to think or reflect about the experience. It is only after the experience is over that we can reflect on what happened.

I am, of course, not advocating against reflective thinking. My goal is to show how the cinematic platform can be an equal companion to other forms of philosophy and to point out that cinema has different properties and carries a different potential from those other forms, and that those

properties and that potential must be further understood and explored. What is already clear is that the potential of the cinematic platform is to evoke events and situations as unique experiences onscreen. The potential of cinema as far as philosophy is concerned, is to evoke philosophy in the form of situations and events that can be experienced onscreen. I am not attempting to define cinema here in one line, but merely, to begin pointing to cinema's unique potential in relation to philosophy.

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the philosophical experience onscreen can come in a variety of choices and formats, ranging from the recorded lecture, voice-over, or scrolling text (all of which would still make us imagine, rather than seeing or experiencing, philosophy) to the possibility of creating philosophy as a journey, event, or situation that draws its audience in, as if they themselves were experiencing it. *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis, 1999) provides us with the singular experience of the journey involved in becoming emancipated from an epistemological world, while *Groundhog Day* (Harold Ramis 1993) makes us experience what is it like to be trapped in an eternally recurring loop. These experiences are grounded in a contemporary context and allow an up-to-date engagement with the philosophical wisdom they express.

I conclude that if one of the main attributes of written philosophy is reflective thinking, then the core of cinematic philosophy is something dramatically different. Cinematic philosophy is driven by the possibility of creating philosophy as an event or situation that can be experienced on a screen. In *The Matrix*, Morpheus (Laurence John Fishburne) tells Neo (Keanu Reeves) that "There is a difference between knowing the path and walking the path." This is a beautiful metaphor for the difference between the potential of the written text and the potential of cinema to engage with philosophy. There is a difference between knowing, reflecting on, and thinking about philosophy, on the one hand, and experiencing philosophy, on the other. The possibility of experiencing philosophy is the core potential of cinematic philosophy, which leads to nothing less than a new possibility for philosophy.

If cinema were to be accepted as a new platform for philosophy, there would be a paradigm shift, a revolution in the discipline of philosophy. Think about the vast difference between mastering all the existing theoretical knowledge about Ludwig van Beethoven's ninth symphony and the simple ability to listen and experience the symphony. Although music is a somewhat different case from cinema and philosophy, the analogy points to what the philosophical potential of cinema just might be.

The potential to create philosophy in the form of events and situations that are experienced onscreen is a new possibility for philosophy. But this new possibility is driven by artistic creation, which is not cheerfully accepted in this day and age as a valid path for expressing truth, reality, or philosophy. Therefore, two key elements will have to be explored and established in the following chapters: first, the point that the written text is not inherently the purest or most natural path for creating valid philosophy, and second, the unmasking of the intimate relation between art and truth or reality.

Notes

1. Please see also Chaps. 4 (*Foundation II—The Critique of Film and Philosophy*) and 5 (*Foundation III—Thought Experiments*).
2. I am forever grateful to my mentors in film production at The New School: Rafael Parra and Vlad Nikolic.
3. Thomas Wartenberg (2007, 13) presents a fantastic example of this, arguing that there would be nothing cinematic about presenting philosophy as scrolling text, as in the beginning of *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977).
4. For an example of a film that is freed from the need to illustrate Plato's Allegory of the Cave, please refer to my analysis in Chap. 10, Cinematic Examples, of Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (1970) in relation to Plato's cave. In this analysis, I show that *The Conformist* creates the experience of a philosophical idea that parallels some of the ideas contained in the Allegory of the Cave, without serving as an illustration of the allegory.
5. For more on this epistemological gap in *The Matrix*, see Thomas Wartenberg's intriguing analysis (2005 & 2007).
6. *The Matrix Reloaded* (The Wachowskis, 2003a,) and *The Matrix Revolutions* (The Wachowskis, 2003b).
7. Frampton (49–70) also produces an impressive historical analysis of the philosophers who have articulated a new cinematic type of thinking.
8. Frampton clarifies that film does not show human thought, it is not a mirror of our minds, and it cannot objectify consciousness (92–93).
9. Frampton prefers the term *shifts* to *edits*, which he considers too rhetorical.
10. For example, *Story* (Robert McKee, 1997); *Save the Cat* (Blake Snyder, 2005); and *Screenplay* (Syd Field, 2005).
11. Also known as *The Philosophers*.
12. The consequences faced by the students include hunger, explosions, being locked in a bunker, and the killing of their friends.

13. High stakes are not the only device that creates the "hook" that produces empathy, but they certainly constitute one of the main ones.

14. For computer simulations as thought experiments, please see Chap. 6, *Why Philosophy Has Always Needed Cinema*.

15. It is important to note that literature (mainly fiction) can also cause its readers to lose themselves inside a text. Unlike with the cinematic experience, however, where we can see the action on a screen, with literature, we have to imagine everything (the characters, locations, costume and art design, sounds, music, etc.). The cinematic experience is much more immediate and vivid because it manifests a situation that the audience can see and hear. I should note as well that the cinematic experience also demands imagination from its audience, but more in the sense of a suspension of disbelief, while the imagination needed for the reader of a written text involves conjuring up the characters, setting, and situations.

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The Intimate Relationship Between Art and Truth

I ended the previous chapter, *Cinesophia*, with the notion that the cinematic platform holds the unprecedented potential to create philosophy in the form of events or situations that are experienced onscreen. However, if I am to establish the cinematic platform as a valid platform for philosophy, there are a few more steps that need to be taken. First and foremost, I need to show how the cinematic platform, which is driven by artistic creation, can have any valid relation to truth and reality. This is necessary because artistic creation is not readily accepted as a valid path for expressing truth and reality; our culture has largely distanced itself from the idea that art or aesthetics can serve as a viable means for perceiving and exploring reality or truth, and therefore, the idea that art can present truth or confront chaos requires a defense.

In order to continue to establish that the cinematic medium can create valid and serious philosophy, then, I need to show how artistic creation (including cinema) possesses the potential to express truth and reality or to confront chaos. To begin exploring the intimate relation between art and truth, I will use illuminating notions from Jay M. Bernstein, Martin Heidegger, John Dewey, Friedrich Nietzsche, Gilles Deleuze, Rudolf Arnheim, Nancy Bauer, Daniel Frampton, and Gregory Ulmer. Since my goal is to establish cinema as a different but equal platform for confronting chaos and expressing truth, it will not be enough to show that cinema, and art in general, can express some degraded version of truth or reality; instead, I will show that the version of reality that they express is indeed every bit as good as, and in some cases, even better than, other methods.

Furthermore, as a crucial step in preparing the foundation for this new platform for philosophy, I will show that the written word is not the inherently purest or most natural path for creating serious philosophy.

The Separation Between Art and Truth

In *The Fate of Art*, Jay M. Bernstein (1992) brings up some highly illuminating notions about the separation between art and truth. One of his main observations is that, although it is a fundamental element of modernity to segregate art and aesthetics from substantial discourses on truth, reason, or morality, if we allow "truth" and "goodness" to be alienated from art, then in fact, "truth" and "goodness" will be alienated from themselves, as we will see below.

The discourse of art and truth, as well as the separation between them, goes back to Plato's resistance to the hegemony of Homer, and with Plato's exclusion of the poets from the future republic that is to be grounded in reason (Bernstein 1992, 1–4). Bernstein observes that one of the fundamental elements of modernity is that art and aesthetics appear to be outside of any substantial discourses on truth, reason, and morality. And if art is conceived to be outside of truth and rationality, then when it speaks, it cannot possibly speak truthfully. To consider art as merely aesthetic, where aesthetic means noncognitive, leads to the alienation of art from truth and morality—what Nietzsche calls the "holy dread." This is the dread of modernity,[1] since for Nietzsche, art and aesthetics appear to be somehow more truthful than empirical truth, more rational than methodological reasoning, and more valuable than the principles of morality. Art is wrongly perceived if it is treated in opposition to truth, morality, and knowledge.

Bernstein sees the separation of art from truth as the result of a double isolation (1–5). The first of these is the distinction between fact and value that resulted from the growing importance of modern science. For example, although Newtonian mechanics are egalitarian, they are, at the same time, dismissive, since nothing is important unless it's an example of a general law (Bernstein 2012). And the second is the separation of artistic worth from moral worth, thus placing art within the confining domains of matters of aesthetic taste (Bernstein 1992, 1–5). For example, in the modern era, the experience of art has become the experience of art for art's sake. Up until the modern age, by contrast, history seems to have granted art a cognitive potential. In the medieval era, for example, Christian art

was one of the main ways of expressing and evoking the Christian religion and metaphysics. But the modern experience of art is the experience of art as being alienated from truth, silenced from whatever gives it significance. The experience of art as aesthetic is the experience of art having lost its power to speak the truth—whatever truth might mean when no longer defined in exclusive discourses. Bernstein (4–5) calls this "aesthetic alienation," the alienation of art from truth, which resulted in art becoming aesthetic, a situation that has become fundamental to modern societies: "if art is alienated from truth and goodness by being isolated into a separated sphere, then that entails that 'truth' and 'goodness' are alienated, separated from themselves" (5).

EXPOSING TRUTH THROUGH ART

Martin Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1977) has a few key revelations on the power of art to expose reality as well as an illuminating explanation of why our modern out-of-context experience of art devalues the power of art to engage with reality. In essence, Heidegger argues that art strikes us with a strange presence, where we can find a different relation to experience itself. This is one of the reasons why Heidegger strives to engage with truth, thought, and philosophy through art.

For Heidegger, art is essential and is a key player in revealing or exposing truth (175–82). The event of truth, for Heidegger, is an interplay between concealment and "unconcealment." He understands truth as the presentation, or the unconcealment, of the being of a thing. Unlike for René Descartes (1637 and 1641), truth, for Heidegger, is not established by the subject (as in Descartes's *cogito ergo sum*), nor is it a human doing. But at the same time, truth cannot come about without the process of being exposed to the sight of humans, nor does it have power by itself.

Heidegger's famous interpretation of Vincent Van Gogh's painting *A Pair of Peasant Shoes* (1886) exemplifies how an artwork reveals a dimension of existence and an unconcealed truth (Heidegger 1977, 158–62). The painting, for Heidegger, reveals the world of the peasant who walks in the shoes. She desperately relies on the equipment (the shoes) as she experiences the possibility of her mortality and death; only in its reliability can we realize what the equipment (the pair of shoes) truly is. But this truth is not uncovered by a description of the pair of shoes, nor by a report on how to make shoes, nor by an observation of the use of the shoes. The truth of the equipment (the shoes) is discovered by bringing ourselves before Van

Gogh's painting. The work of art is not there to help us visualize or to represent what shoes are, but truth happens within the work of art, where being emerges into unconcealment. The painting speaks: it takes us into the world of the peasant, giving us a unique window onto her dependency on the pair of shoes. This evokes a different type of experience, in which the being of the shoes emerges from its unconcealment to stand in the light of its being. Art is not the reproduction of some particular entity that happens to exist at a certain place and time. Instead, it is the reproduction of a thing's general essence. Van Gogh's painting discloses what the pair of shoes is in truth and exemplifies how art exposes truth while creating a unique relation to experience.

Heidegger also brings up intriguing perceptions of why our contemporary experience of art leads to a devaluation of art's potential to expose truth (165–68), arguing that such artworks as the Aegina sculptures in the Munich collection or the best critical edition of Sophocles's *Antigone* are works that have been torn from their native sphere. No matter how strong their power of impression or how good their state of preservation, placing them in a collection tears them from their own world, which has perished. The works are no longer the works of art they used to be, since they have been reduced to objects that don't constitute the being of the work.

The displacement of context is a key point for Heidegger, who argues that because it tears them out of their context, placing works of art in museums and collections liquidates their power to expose truth (65–68). Think, for example, of a Greek statue that has been placed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre, the British Museum, or any other museum. For the ancient citizen of Athens, that statue would have been nothing less than an authentic manifestation of his religion. There is an interesting cinematic example of this idea in the film *Troy* (Petersen 2004), where Achilles (Brad Pitt) cuts off the head of a statue of Apollo. Hector (Eric Bana), who is watching from a distance, is amazed that Apollo and the other gods do not strike back. Although it is a statue of Apollo, for Hector, this statue is not just a representation, but an authentic manifestation of his god or religion. The separation between art and reality was not as developed in that era as it is in ours. Heidegger articulates this beautifully: "It is not a portrait whose purpose is to make it easier to realize how the God looks; rather, it is a work that lets God himself be present and thus is the God himself" (1977, 168). Placing works of art in a collection reduces them to objects, and, eventually, devalues their power to engage with reality.

We could compare Heidegger's notions to John Dewey's observation that the relegation of art to museums leads to the separation of art from the experience of everyday life (Tom Leddy 2009, 23–24). The practices and artifacts of traditional cultures (such as dance, pantomime, music, and architecture) were, in their original context, enhancements of everyday life and religious rituals; they were not naturally associated with museums and theaters. For Dewey, the segregation of art from everyday life became more extreme with the rise of nationalism and imperialism (the Louvre museum, for example, began as a place to house Napoleon's loot). Furthermore, the rise of capitalism, with its valuation of rare and costly objects, also contributed to the development of the museum, as did the need to display good taste in an increasingly materialistic world.

Drawing on the insights of Bernstein, Heidegger, and Dewey, I believe I can say that our modern contemporary culture has been programmed to distrust art's capacity to provide a serious perspective on reality, placing it, instead, within the safe confines of matters of taste, "art for art's sake," and art in the form of costly objects.

Destabilizing Reality, Truth, Reason, Language, and Science

Any discussion of truth, reality, and art must include Friedrich Nietzsche, who articulates, in essence,[2] why different possibilities of engaging with reality are extremely crucial for understanding the world in which we live. He asserts that full knowledge of the world is not attainable, because language, while preventing an adequate perception of reality, stands in the way of everything we know. Truth is merely an illusion, the sum of human relations which, after ages of use, seems canonical and solid, but is, in fact, blinding. All we know about truth is what we ourselves bring to it. For Nietzsche, truth is not out there to be discovered or found, but is, instead, something that must be actively created. The realms of reason, language, and science must not be the only possibility for understanding the world.

To put all of us humans in perspective, Nietzsche famously places us on a star at a remote corner of the universe, where clever animals (i.e. humans) have invented knowledge (1873, para. 1–2). Although this moment may have been the high point of world history, it was nevertheless only a moment, as the planet then grew cold and the clever animals had to die. There were millennia in which human intellect did not exist, and once human intellect disappears again, nothing will happen, as human

intellect has no further mission beyond human life. It is the human—the sole owner and producer of the intellect—who gives it such significance.

Nietzsche stresses that the haughtiness associated with knowledge lays a blinding fog over man's eyes and senses (1873, para. 2–5). It deceives him about the value of existence by carrying in itself the most flattering evaluation of knowledge itself. But the universal outcome of knowledge is deception. What do humans really know about themselves? Doesn't nature keep most things from us, even knowledge about our own body? If we could communicate with a mosquito, we would learn from it that it floats through the air with the same self-importance as if mosquitoes were the center of the earth.

Nietzsche asserts that a full and essential knowledge of the world cannot be attained because language stands as a screen and prevents an adequate perception of reality (1973, para. 10; see also, Frampton 2006, 187). He criticizes other philosophers, who would rather die for a sure of a nothing, rather than rely on an uncertain something. What was thought to be known cannot be known, since language gets in the way of everything we know. Nietzsche considers the mere fact that there are so many different languages an indication that expression is never adequate (1873, para. 7). The genesis of language, the material of the man of truth (i.e. the scientist or the philosopher), if not derived from never-never land, is certainly not derived from the essence of things. The only things that actually exist are the relations of things to man, and in order to express them, we need to use metaphors. We may believe that we are speaking of the things themselves when we talk about trees, colors, snow, and flowers. But the fact is that we are evoking nothing but metaphors, metaphors that in no way correspond to the original entities. For Nietzsche, all words are tropes, all language is figurative, and any relation between word and object is indirect and metaphorical (1989, 250). There are no nonrhetorical aspects to language, as language itself is the result of pure rhetorical arts.[3]

This leads Nietzsche to argue that truth is merely an illusion or, at best, a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphism (1873, para. 9–10). It is the sum of human relations, which have been poetically heightened and transferred so that, as we saw, after ages of use, they seem canonical and solid, but are, in fact, blinding. Truth consists of illusions about what we have forgotten that they are: metaphors without sensuous power, like a coin that has lost its engraving and is now only a metal without the value we had imposed on it. In the moral sense, to be truthful means the obligation to lie via a fixed convention that is centuries old.

Nietzsche also directs his criticism toward the arbitrary abstractions of concepts, forms, and species (para. 8). He holds that every concept emerges from equating things that are unequal while overlooking what is individual and actual. For Nietzsche, no leaf ever equals another leaf, and therefore, the concept of *leaf* is formed through arbitrary abstractions. This gives rise to the (misleading) idea that in nature, there might be something beside leaves, which would be *the leaf*: the original form of the leaf based on which all leaves have been woven, marked, colored, and painted. But this was done by unskilled hands, so that no copy turned to be faithful to the original form. Nature, for Nietzsche, is very different from this human imposition of abstractions: it is acquainted with no forms, no concepts, and no species, but is, instead, made out of something that remains inaccessible to us.

Nietzsche moves from his critique of abstractions to a critique of science, asking what constitutes a law of nature (para. 10–11). We can never be acquainted with the law itself, but only with its effects, meaning the relations to other relations that are incomprehensible to us in their essence. All that we know about these laws is whatever we ourselves bring to them. Everything marvelous about the laws of nature, everything that astonishes us and demands explanation, is contained in our representation of time and space. The fact is that it is we who produce these representations from within ourselves, much like the spider spins its web. Just as the Romans and Etruscans cut up the heavens with rigid mathematical lines and confined God within each space they delimited, so did people mathematically divide the conceptual heavens above them. Man is much like a spider, building delicate conceptual materials that are manufactured out of himself. For this, man is to be admired, but not for his desire for and urge toward pure, natural, or objective truth or knowledge.

For Nietzsche, the realm of reason is not and should not be the only possibility for understanding the world (para. 10–11). Seeking truth in the realm of reason is much like hiding something behind a bush, and then, finding it there: reason defines a mammal, for instance, and after inspecting an animal (such as a camel), declares it to be a mammal in fact. This is nothing but anthropomorphic truth, which holds no truth apart from man and seeks to metamorphose the world into men. For Nietzsche, on the contrary, nature is a subjective creation in the highest degree, but in order to have safety and security, man needs to forget that he is an artistically creating subject surrounded by metaphors. It is the desire for

security and safety that leads humans to seek regularity in nature, but if each of us had a different perception (one perceiving as a bird, one as a worm, and one as a plant; or one seeing only blue and another only red), we would not speak of any regularity in nature.

Remarkably, Nietzsche is able to destabilize our blinding conventions and beliefs about truth, reality, language, and science. He concludes that it was originally language and now science that works toward the construction of concepts, which can only give us an illusion of objective truth. Much like the bee, which constructs cells and fills them with honey, so does science work on its beehive of concepts and arrange them in the empirical world, which is to say, the anthropomorphic world.

New Possibilities for Expressing and Creating Philosophy

For Gilles Deleuze, it is Nietzsche who began the search for new means of expressing philosophy in certain arts (Deleuze 1999b, 138–41). Deleuze argues that in the second half of the nineteenth century, philosophy strove not only to renew its content, but also, to conquer new forms of expression that would be able to create the philosophy of the future (1983, 233). In essence, Deleuze views philosophy, science, and art as different possibilities for confronting chaos (or discovering truth or reality). Thus, cinema is not an extension of philosophy, but a different way of creating philosophy by other means.

For Deleuze, "Philosophy has not at all undergone similar revolutions or experiments as those produced in science, painting, sculpture, music or literature. … [T]he search for modes of expression (both a new image of thought and new techniques) must be essential for philosophy" (2004, 140–41). There is a feeling that the old style of writing philosophy books can't go on, as they no longer interest the students or the authors who write them. Deleuze calls for a formal renewal in and of philosophy and a massive expansion of concepts: "You have to present concepts in philosophy as though you were writing a good detective novel: they must have the zone of presence, resolve a local situation, be in contact with the 'dramas,' and bring a certain cruelty with them" (141).

One of Deleuze's general perspectives is that thought is evoked through art, philosophy, and science, which are all different possibilities for confronting chaos. "What defines thought in its three great forms—art, science, and philosophy—is always confronting chaos, laying out a plane,

throwing a plane over chaos" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 197). Deleuze (1999a, 123) defines the true object of science as creating functions, the true object of art as creating sensation, and the true object of philosophy as creating concepts. "Thinking is thought through concepts, or functions, or sensations and no one of these thoughts is better than another, or more fully, completely, or systematically 'thought'" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 198).

Deleuze is as interested in filmmakers and artists as he is in philosophers (1999a, 2000). He sees cinema not as an extension of philosophy, but as a way to do philosophy by other means. Although the creation of art is different from the creation of science or philosophy, there are remarkable similarities between the disciplines, which can echo each other. There is an internal alliance between art (cinema included), philosophy, and science, which need to be understood as separate melodic lines in a constant interplay with each other. "Thus, philosophy, art and science come into relations of mutual resonance and exchange, but always for internal reasons" (1999a, 125).

It is important to mention that for Deleuze (2000, 367), the encounter between art, philosophy, and science is not what occurs when one discipline reflects or monitors the other. Rather, it occurs when one discipline realizes that it has to resolve a problem similar to one that another discipline also encounters, and each discipline solves the problem using its own different and unique capacities. Deleuze describes heterogeneous thought that is created or composed from philosophy, art, and science: "But the network has its culminating points, where sensation itself becomes sensation of concepts or functions, where the concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concepts" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 199). Deleuze admits that he turned to cinema because there were a few problems in philosophy that compelled him to look for the answers in the way cinema confronted these problems (2000, 366–67). Thus, he never tried to apply philosophy or philosophical theories to cinema, but instead, went straight from cinema to philosophy, and from philosophy to cinema.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL THINKING

Rudolf Arnheim proposes a line of thinking that holds that although language is a valuable aid to human thinking, it is neither indispensable nor the only medium in which thinking takes place (1986, 135–37). He argues against the belief that perception ends where thinking begins; he

also challenges the traditional view that perception deals with individual instances, whereas thinking deals with generalizations.

Arnheim claims that productive thinking must solve its problems perceptually, since there exists no other arena in which true thinking takes place (139–41). As was mentioned earlier, Arnheim uses Sigmund Freud to show the workings of the human mind in solving abstract problems. Freud drew very few diagrams to accompany his theories, but one of them shows the id, the ego, the superego, the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious. According to Arnheim, Freud's drawing is no mere teaching device used to facilitate the process of understanding something that he himself had conceived in a different medium. Rather, Freud is portraying his concepts in the very medium in which he conceived and understood them himself.

Arnheim holds that the process of perception includes the perceiving of qualities and that, since all qualities are generic, perception always refers to generic properties (142–43). Seeing a fire, then, is always seeing fieriness, and seeing a circle is always seeing roundness. He challenges the philosopher George Berkeley's claim that perception (including mental images) can refer only to individual instances, rather than general concepts, and as such, is unsuitable for abstract thinking (Arnheim 1986, 141). For Arnheim, the fact that diagrams are used everywhere as vehicles to help achieve abstract thinking shows that Berkeley's point is incorrect.

Arnheim asserts that perceptual thinking tends to be visual and that vision is the only sense modality in which spatial relations can be represented with sufficient precision and complexity (143). Spatial relations offer the analogies by which one can visualize theoretical relations, such as those investigated by Freud. Therefore, Arnheim argues, all productive thinking is necessarily based on perceptual imagery and all active perception involves aspects of thought (146). Arnheim's theory strengthens the relationship between visual perception and abstract thinking, and thereby, helps to establish my argument on the importance to philosophy of the narrative, visual and cinematic technique of thought experiments.

Why Mainstream Philosophy Devalues the Potential of Film

Nancy Bauer (2005) has a few intriguing ideas about why the relationship between the artistic crafts (including cinema) and the philosophical craft is not, for many thinkers and writers, a natural one. Bauer sees professional philosophy today as governed by the idea that the craft of philosophy is

not compatible with the craft of art (40). Many philosophers believe that the craft of philosophy involves proposing theses and creating theories while employing established methods of argumentation to support them, and this scientific understanding of philosophy is one of the reasons for rejecting cinema as a valuable platform for philosophy. However, Bauer stresses that for Stanley Cavell (as well as for Socrates), philosophy was born in the marketplace, where the main task of the philosopher was to attract people to a conversation about the assumptions that guide their lives.

Bauer mentions (39–40) that one of the main reasons we find an a priori devaluation of the possibility that film could serve as a proper philosophical medium is that professional philosophy these days is apt to follow Immanuel Kant's influential lead, identifying reason as whatever is left in the human mind after all the passions are excluded. If passion is what reason is not, then passion is irrational and outside the realm of philosophy. Therefore, we might find mainstream theoreticians of film and philosophy in favor of the usefulness of occasionally showing movies in a philosophy class (since movies can arouse students' passions and engage them more fully with the philosophical issues); once the movie is over, however, the philosophy teacher has the job of bringing the students back to the safe realm of reason, away from the passions.

Philosophy Escaping Its Literary Confines

Daniel Frampton continues Deleuze's line of thought while stressing that philosophy as a written enterprise has been trying to escape its literary confines and steering itself toward the imaging of its problems (Frampton 2006, 183). Frampton argues that one can trace a line from the reflective and poetic writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacques Derrida, through the meditative thinking of Martin Heidegger, to the imagistic thought of Gilles Deleuze, arriving at the conclusion that the future of philosophy lies in film.[4] This future is not necessarily a better one, but it is one that offers a different kind of philosophy. For Frampton, film can be an affective philosophical event (what he calls imagistic philosophy) that lies at the end of written philosophy: "That is, at the 'end' of philosophy lies film" (183). Furthermore, in contrast to most mainstream views, Frampton argues that the explosion of image culture in the past two to three decades is an evolution, rather than a disease that needs a cure (211). We have entered a new era of vision, since our culture is no longer oriented toward the written word.

This leads me to Gregory Ulmer's observation that the humanities today fail to communicate with the contemporary public, mainly because of the medium by which they are driven—namely, the printed word (2004, 8–9). He claims that in order to remain relevant, the academic humanities must realize and appreciate the current changes in medium while also establishing a cognitive jurisdiction for this change. He goes on to claim that if books are used as the main learning tools and paths for achieving critical reason, that state of affairs makes it more likely for the printed word to appear neutral, pure, objective, and as the natural way to achieve knowledge and wisdom (26). In addition, and especially, within the tradition of the sciences, there has historically been a general devaluation of the image world and of narrative. But our contemporary communication environment forces us to reassess this devaluation and to take the image world and narrative much more seriously.

Frampton's and Ulmer's observations bring me back to my own observations in the previous chapter, *Cinesophia*—namely, that most theoreticians of film and philosophy unconsciously subscribe to the dogma that the written text is the pure and natural platform for creating philosophy, thus degrading any other possibility for creating philosophy. I will challenge this position in the following chapter.

Conclusion

We have now looked at some of the most intriguing ideas that consider artistic, visual, narrative, and cinematic thinking to be as important as rational, scientific, and linguistic thinking. We have seen why art is a key player in revealing truth; we have also taken a look at some opinions that destabilize mainstream views about truth, reality, science, and language. These insights support my contention that science, philosophy, history, art, psychology, sociology, religion, and mathematics are all merely different methods for organizing and understanding reality from different perspectives. Each method or discipline brings its own advantages and disadvantages to the table, while creating the potential to confront chaos from unique perspectives. We cannot and must not allow one method to have hegemony over truth and reality. That would take us back to the dark days of the Middle Ages, when one method had absolute control of the truth. Unfortunately, in our times, the power of art (including cinema) to confront chaos has been degraded and neglected. We all have the responsibility to open our horizons to new possibilities, to confront chaos from many different disciplines and perspectives.

At the beginning of this chapter, I argued that if we are to establish the cinematic platform as a valid platform for philosophy, we must expose the intimate relation between art and truth. But this chapter has not merely served to show that the power of art to confront reality is as important as that of science, philosophy, and other disciplines. The crucial implication of this chapter for cinematic philosophy is that philosophy has been gradually trying to escape its literary confines and that the written text is not the inherently purest, most natural, or most objective platform for philosophy. This is a key point, because it begins to blur what was thought to be the clear and obvious boundary between philosophy and art—in our case, more specifically, between philosophy and cinema.

In the next chapter, I will redefine the boundaries between cinema and philosophy. Rather than a separation between disciplines (with cinema/film at one pole and philosophy at the other), I call for an articulation between different philosophical mediums: between oral philosophy, written philosophy, and cinematic philosophy. The starting point for this next ambitious step will be with Socrates, one of the fathers of Western philosophy, concentrating on what I call the Socratic mistake.

Notes

1. Bernstein (2012) notes Herbert Schiller's argument that the price of modernity has been the suppression of the sense drive. Modernity, in the form of Newtonian mechanics, machine technology, the dominance of exchange value, universal morality, and the bureaucratic liberal state is the triumph of formal reason over the sense drive.
2. In works including, but not limited to, *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense* (1873), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1973), and *On Rhetoric and Language* (1989).
3. Compare Richard Rorty, who asserts that philosophical language is not pure reasoning that reveals truth, but rather, the creation of the history of thinkers (Rorty 1991, 16; see Frampton 2006, 188). Frampton describes Rorty as claiming that there is no such thing as pure thought: "In the etymology of such abstract words as 'force' (from Latin *fortis*, strong), or 'matter' (material, timber), one will find the dredges of metaphorical mythology, leading us to realize that there may be no 'pure thought'" (Frampton 2006, 188). It seems that not just in writing, but even in thought, we cannot overcome the metaphorical origin of all philosophical inquiry, and that in some way, philosophy can be seen as the history of metaphors.
4. Frampton also refers to other theoreticians to help prove this point, including Yvette Biro (1982; see Frampton, 2006, 198), who argues that sensory

thinking is not degraded rational thinking, but the other side of the same coin. In creating affective images, sensory thinking can bypass the confines of logical structures and move toward imaging an idea. Frampton also mentions Gerard Fort Buckle (1926; see Frampton, 2006, 201), who argues that film has the capacity to bypass barriers imposed by translation. Buckle asserts that film's greatest asset is its ability to express thought that appeals to and could be understood by speakers of many different tongues.

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Cinematic Philosophy—A New Platform for Philosophy

The Dawn of a New Platform for Philosophy

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the intimate and essential relationship between art and truth—an essential step, because if I am to establish cinema as a valid platform for philosophy, I will have to show how it is that an artistic medium can have any significance for truth, for reality, for confronting chaos. But the previous chapter also implies that the written text is not the inherently purest, most natural, or most objective platform for philosophy. This point is important because in contemporary film and philosophy, the written text almost appears to be taken a priori as the natural platform for philosophy. This is the main reason for my challenge, in the following pages, to the hegemony of the written text over philosophy. With this challenge, I hope to clarify a few misunderstandings in the field and clear the path to establishing a new platform for philosophy.

The direction I take in this chapter will also lead me to challenge what has been assumed to be an obvious border between philosophy and cinema, a classical division that is, in fact, blurred by the use of different platforms and mediums. In addition, the path I take here will lead me toward the discipline of media and communication: I call for an alternative articulation of the discipline, based on the different medium of oral

philosophy, written philosophy, and cinematic philosophy.[1] This is yet another essential step in the establishment of a new platform for philosophy.

THE SOCRATIC MISTAKE

Looking back at the birth of Western philosophy, we find that philosophy was not always naturally affiliated with the written tradition; its original affiliation was, in fact, with the oral tradition. Long before writing took philosophy to unprecedented heights, there existed suspicion toward and a devaluation of the potential of the written text to engage with philosophical wisdom. One famous example of this devaluation can be found in the legacy of Socrates, the canonical philosopher.

Although our knowledge of Socrates has been transmitted via Plato's written dialogues, Socrates himself engaged in the oral tradition of philosophy, centering mainly on philosophical discussions and dialogues in the marketplace (the Agora) of Athens. Socrates was so suspicious of the technology of writing that in the dialogue *Phaedrus* (Plato 1997), he challenges and devalues the potential of the written text to engage with and create philosophy. In the second half of *Phaedrus*, Socrates uses the myth of Theuth and Thamus to criticize writing and argue that it is not the best vehicle for communicating truth (Griswold 2003, 32–40). Socrates's critique centers, in essence, on the idea that the written word cannot answer questions; all it can do is to repeat itself when it is read. It tends to replace the authority of the author with the reader's open-minded interpretation. It can also fall, indiscriminately, into the hands of people who cannot understand it and who misinterpret it. It lacks a speaker; it is without the possibility of change; and unlike speech, it cannot defend itself. For these reasons and more, Socrates came to the conclusion that writing is inferior to speech and is certainly not the best medium for achieving truth.

I propose that the Socratic mistake lies in his misjudgment of writing—the emerging technology of his era—and of the potential of the written text to engage with philosophy. Imagine a world in which Plato was a submissive student, listened to his teacher and mentor, and therefore, chose not to engage with written philosophy as he did. This would have been nothing less than a disaster for Western philosophy. Think of all the heights and depths of thought and wisdom, brought to humanity by the collaboration between philosophy and the written text, that one of the fathers of philosophy would have had us forego simply because he did not comprehend the technological possibility that was in front of him.

We, of course, have the luxury of centuries of hindsight on the successful marriage between philosophy and the written text; nevertheless, it is hard to comprehend that the great Socrates missed this potential. But my point is that if the great Socrates could make such a mistake in his time, then there is surely a good possibility that a few contemporary philosophers are making a similar type of mistake about the emerging technology of our time—namely, the potential of the cinematic platform to engage with philosophy.[2]

The main point I take from the anecdote about the Socratic mistake is that there is no one pure platform for creating philosophy. Philosophy was not born with writing and it is not naturally, objectively, or purely connected to writing. The Socratic mistake shows that one of the greatest philosophers ever to engage with philosophical thinking was used to a particular way of doing philosophy, and was therefore, blind to a new possibility for engaging with philosophical thinking. It is not carved on any mountain, and there is no general law that states that philosophy must be created via one particular platform or medium. Philosophy can, should, and must be created in a variety of platforms; my goal is to explore, establish, and understand the potential and limitations of the cinematic platform for creating philosophy.

The Misleading Separation between Film and Philosophy

I have already pointed out that, in most cases, the disciplinary dichotomy between film and philosophy is understood as an obvious given. This is extremely apparent in the semantics of the discipline of film and philosophy, where a clear border separates film from philosophy. I argue that this common semantic articulation is misleading, leading to a great deal of confusion.

This insistence on the separation between film and philosophy conceals an unconscious implication that there is a pure or natural platform for philosophy and that cinema is not that platform. Most theoreticians of film and philosophy find it necessary to use the word *and* between "philosophy" and "film" (i.e. "film and philosophy"). But this semantic articulation has no counterpart in the discourse of these same theoreticians about philosophy and the written text or philosophy and the oral lecture. (At any rate, I have not been able to find any theoreticians of film and philosophy who place a similar conjunction between the written

platform and philosophy or the oral platform and philosophy.) I can only conclude that for these theoreticians, these platforms are taken almost a priori as natural mediums for creating or evoking philosophy. I presume, therefore, that the use of *and* in "film and philosophy" is driven by the need to connect the philosophical content with what seems, at least in the minds of these thinkers, to be an unnatural platform for engaging with philosophy: the visual, artistic, cinematic platform. This formulation, in turn, only further reinforces the misperception that cinema is an unsuitable platform for philosophy.

In order to bypass this semantic problem, I suggest the formulation "cinematic philosophy" rather than "film and philosophy" or any other articulation that implies a disciplinary separation. By calling the discipline cinematic philosophy, I hope to begin bypassing the disciplinary border between film and philosophy and emphasizing that philosophy can be created in different mediums.

Calling the discipline cinematic philosophy has the further advantage of establishing an alternative disciplinary perspective within philosophy, which can be understood as being composed of oral philosophy, written philosophy, and cinematic philosophy: it establishes that philosophy can be created just as well in the cinematic platform as in the written or oral platform. I want to signify that philosophy is not confined to any one medium, platform, or practice and most certainly, not to the written text, oral lectures, or academic curricula. There is no one central, natural, pure platform for creating philosophy; it can be manifested in different platforms and media. Drawing on the spirit of Spinoza, we could describe these manifestations across various platforms as different attributes that manifest a similar essence through different expressions. And therefore, rather than overruling a specific platform as a degraded possibility, as many theoreticians of film and philosophy do, I argue that each platform provides a different and unique access to philosophy, leading to different and unique types of philosophical works.

Although it may seem like a small detail to call the field cinematic philosophy, it is, in fact, of great importance because it helps to clarify that we are dealing with the discipline of philosophy and its possibility for being created in the cinematic platform. This makes room for the possibility that cinema can create philosophy, instead of being a medium that is unconsciously separated from philosophy.

My goal here is not to establish a new hegemonic division among written, oral, and cinematic philosophy. Nor am I advocating for any type of

formalistic division for philosophy, as that would simply substitute one border for another. I am merely suggesting an alternative articulation that embraces the idea that philosophy can be created in a variety of platforms, including cinema. This perspective begins to clarify some misconceptions about where and how philosophy can be created.

Different Platforms, Different Possibilities

I have demonstrated that it is a misconception that film can only serve as an illustration to a philosophical theory. This misconception can mostly be traced to the notion that film and philosophy are two separate fields that have been artificially connected. Cinematic philosophy, on the contrary, acknowledges that they are not separate, and deals with the possibility of creating philosophy in different platforms and media.

While some theoreticians of film and philosophy believe that the relationship between film and philosophy is based on film, serving as an illustration for philosophy,[3] the relationship between oral philosophy and written philosophy is viewed differently. Rarely does anyone claim that written philosophy is an illustration of oral philosophy or that oral philosophy is an illustration of written philosophy. How many philosophers consider Plato to be nothing more than a typewriter, merely representing Socrates's dialogues via the written text? Needless to say, Plato is understood to be creating philosophy that is in no way a mere representation or illustration of Socrates and that stands on its own as a philosophical creation or work of philosophy. The relationship between platforms is not that of one platform serving as an illustration for another, but of a variety of platforms, each offering different perspectives on and engagements with philosophy. A relationship based on illustration, however, implies the existence of one pure, natural, or objective medium for creating philosophy, while all other media merely provide illustrations of the philosophy created in that medium.

Building on the Discipline of Media and Communication

The discipline of media and communication gives us something to build on in discussing the idea of different platforms for philosophy. Insights from this discipline will help us to unfold how the implications and possibilities of each platform or medium are bound to change the content

expressed via that platform or medium. A few essential and illuminating works, by Jack Goody, Walter Ong, Marshall McLuhan, Harold Innis, and Joshua Meyrowitz, will serve as a basis for understanding the essential importance, implications, and potential of any new medium or platform.

The introduction of and shift to a new platform or medium has crucial consequences for the development of knowledge. Jack Goody (1977, see Ulmer 18–20) gives a famous example of this, identifying the correlation between the development of the alphabet and the development of analytical thinking. Goody argues that the presence of grammar and the alphabet in literate societies had significant cognitive effects, which were missing in oral societies. For example, the common use in literate societies of decontextualized sentences and questions such as *Who are we?*, *What are they?*, *Who are they?*, and so on eventually led to more general and abstract thinking along the lines of *What am I?*, *What is an object?*, and eventually, the famous *I think, therefore I am*. Thus, the technology of the alphabet led literate societies to experience a completely different world from that of oral societies.

Walter Ong argues that writing transformed human consciousness and that without writing, the literate mind could not think as it does (1982, 78–81). Ong points out that writing established context-free experience, which is detached from the author: this could not have happened in an oral society. Writing separated the knower from the known, thereby setting the tone for the condition of objectivity. A famous example of this can be found in Plato's writing, which notoriously separates ideas from things (1982, 24–26).

Marshall McLuhan places great importance on the medium and on the introduction of new technology, because he considers the medium to *be* the message (2006a, 107–8). McLuhan argues that the message of any medium or technology is situated in the change of scale, pace, or pattern that it introduces to human affairs. The railroad, for example, did not introduce transportation and movement into human life, but it did enlarge the scale of human possibility. The railroad is not content, but rather, a medium or platform made possible by new technology. This is one of the reasons why McLuhan argues that it is not the content, but the medium that controls human action and associations (and that the content actually blinds us from the character of the medium). He points out, among other things, that it was only once IBM realized that it was not in the business of making office machines, but rather, in the business of processing information that it began to navigate with a clear vision.

Harold Innis (1951) describes the crucial importance of the specific medium of communication for how knowledge is disseminated within a

specific culture or society: political and social power are dependent on the ability to control media and communication, and that dependence has crucial implications for the cultural setting and for the rise and decline of cultural traits. For instance, Innis differentiates between a medium of knowledge that persists over time (such as stone, monuments, statues, or architecture), which makes it possible to maintain a regime over time and promotes a bias toward religion, and a medium of knowledge that persists across space (such as papyrus, paper, or print), which allows a pervasive control over space and promotes a bias toward administration, law, and bureaucracy. Innis offers a few breathtaking examples showing how the media of communication have affected our political, social, and cultural life; one of them, for instance, is the introduction of papyrus to ancient Egypt, replacing stone as a means of communication, which allowed the empire to spread and to gain more control over space and over other nations.

Joshua Meyrowitz (1994) details the crucial effects of a medium on everyday social life, describing how the introduction of a new medium into a culture reconstructs the social world in the same way that removing or building walls can separate or unite people. He argues that the spread of print, for example, supported the separation, fragmentation, and specification of social life as a gap arose between those who could read and those who could not. Meyrowitz points out that the different information systems that arose in the print era had enormous effects on everyday social life, dividing people into multiple different layers and ranks.

This has been a mere glance at the discourse of media and communication, but the main point that I wish to emphasize is that for any field, the medium, or platform, has crucial implications that cannot be ignored. And my research is intimately connected with the field of media and communication because I firmly believe that when we talk about cinematic philosophy, we are talking about different platforms (oral, written, and cinematic philosophy), rather than separate fields (film on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other).

Different philosophical platforms, then, deal with the same subject from different perspectives. Each platform has its possibilities and limitations, giving that platform its own different and unique access to philosophy. Rather than dismissing a specific platform as degraded, we ought to be exploring the potential of each platform for engaging with philosophy. Looking at film as nothing more than illustration is misleading because it regards one platform as a mere tool for better explaining another platform. What I am proposing, instead, is that each platform allows a different and

unique access to philosophy, which leads to the creation of different types of philosophical works and engagements. By their nature, these philosophical creations are bound to be different from one another. But the fact of being different from one another does not entail a hierarchy between them.

EXAMPLES OF MISUNDERSTANDING A NEW PLATFORM, TECHNOLOGY, OR MEDIUM

Film and philosophy did not, of course, invent the move of misunderstanding the potential of a new platform, technology, or medium: this kind of misunderstanding is a pervasive phenomenon that can be seen throughout history and across a variety of disciplines. Such misunderstandings are, indeed, almost inevitable with the introduction of any new medium or technological possibility. In the following section, I give a few examples of such misunderstandings (not all of them necessarily within the scope of film and philosophy). The main point of these examples is to make it clear that we cannot reduce one platform to another or expect one platform to act like the other. Each platform or medium must be understood, appreciated, and used for its advantages and limitations, rather than being judged by the parameters of a different platform.

ORAL LECTURES

Within academia, no one expects an oral lecture to replace a written text, or vice versa; the two platforms work together to better realize and evoke a specific subject of study. But we all have been to lectures where the presenter was merely reading his or her written notes without engaging at all with the audience. Such presentations miss the main point of an oral lecture, which, by its nature, allows a different engagement than does a written text. The oral lecture has the potential to evoke vivid passion and enthusiasm and allows for clarifications, questions, and exchanges with the audience. If a lecturer ignores these advantages and uses the time to simply read a text out loud, we might as well go read the book instead.[4]

WEBSITES

Looking back at websites from the 1990s, we can observe a fascinating example of the imposition of an old mindset onto a new platform or possibility. One obvious point is that most of these websites were very similar

in spirit to printed text on paper. Such features as their fonts, styles, layout, type sizes, and colors, as well as the amount of information given, were all based on how printed text is presented. A few years of progress were needed before the information in websites began to be expressed using different approaches and designs that were more suitable to that medium. Information expressed via websites, then, evoked a new and different type of practice, which in turn, demands a different type of engagement than does information expressed via printed text.

STEAMBOATS

The history of steamboats gives us a couple of interesting examples of the challenges of combining a new technology with a traditional concept. The French inventor Denis Papin was one of the first people to propose applying a steam pump to the operation of a paddlewheel boat. Although Papin[5] had a clear concept for a steamboat, it took many failures, many years, and, finally, a different entrepreneur to actually carry it out. It was not enough to simply place a steam engine on a boat; making it work demanded a different approach. For instance, in 1787, John Fitch built the first successful steamboat in the United States (Flexner 1978; Harris 1995), but a picture of the steamboat (below) reveals that although it worked, it was constructed using an old mindset: it was propelled by a bank of oars on each side of the boat. It took a few more years to come up with a more efficient steamboat, freed from the traditional mindset of boats and rowing (Fig. 7.1).
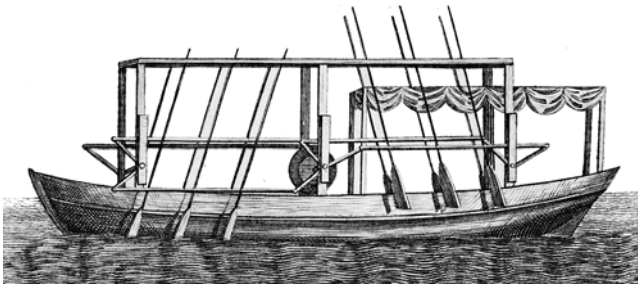
Fig. 7.1.   Plan of Mr. Fitch's steamboat (Trenchard 1786)

World War I

In some cases, misunderstanding a new platform can be downright dangerous. World War I, from 1914 to 1918, was, without a doubt, one of the most terrifying and traumatic wars in human history. One interesting view of the war is that it represented a clash between new, twentieth-century technology and "traditional," nineteenth-century war tactics (Mosier 2001; Hartcup 1988; Raudzens 1990): a collision between a new possibility and a traditional mindset. The technological advance in weapons at that time had created a game changer, which was, however, not clearly recognized or understood at the beginning of the war, and that lack of recognition was one of the unfortunate reasons for the catastrophic number of military personnel (approximately ten million) killed in action on both fronts.

Reduction in Science

These examples also remind me of Paul Feyerabend's (1962) famous challenge to the idea of reduction in science, focusing on the impossibility of preserving the meaning of theoretical ideas, observational terms, and concepts when moving from one scientific theory to another. And if the meaning of scientific concepts and theoretical ideas cannot be preserved when moving from one theory to another,[6] then there is a good chance that concepts and theoretical ideas cannot be preserved when moving from one philosophical platform to another, either. The engagement with a different philosophical platform demands a different set of parameters, and cinematic philosophy entails a different composition of theoretical ideas, observational terms, and concepts. The way that epistemology, for example, is expressed, used, and understood via the cinematic medium might be very different from the way in which it is expressed, used, and understood via the written or oral platform. If these cinematic expressions are then reduced to and judged by the parameters of traditional philosophy, it is no surprise that so many theoreticians of film and philosophy hold that cinema can only serve as an illustration, rather than being a work of philosophy itself.

This brings me back to a metaphor that I have used in previous chapters, the metaphor of different forms of transportation. I argued that it would be strange to insist that because a submarine cannot fly and is no good as an airplane, it is a very poor mode of transportation. The reason

why this would be strange is that it is clear that a submarine and an airplane are two different forms of transportation, with different possibilities and limitations. If we care about transportation, then our goal should be to realize the different potential and limitations of each form of transportation, rather than judging one form by the parameters of another. Thus, to return to cinematic philosophy, we should also avoid judging one philosophical platform by the parameters of a different platform.

Cinema will never be as good as the written text or the oral lecture; nor will the written text or the oral lecture ever be as good as cinema. We must be suspicious of anyone judging and overruling a platform by using the properties of a different platform. Feyerabend (1981) advocates a pluralism of theories: "Whereas unanimity of opinion may be fitting for a church, or for the willing followers of a tyrant, or some kind of 'great man', variety of opinion is a methodological necessity for the sciences and, a fortiori, for philosophy" (76). To apply the spirit of this admonition to the situation of philosophy and its different platforms, we should avoid constructing a hierarchy among oral philosophy, written philosophy, and cinematic philosophy; instead, we should call for them to coexist so that philosophy can be better created and understood from different perspectives and possibilities. Misunderstandings are very common when a new medium is introduced. But although the process of understanding and fully utilizing a new platform demands time, progress, and the setting aside of prejudice, it will, if we embrace it, lead us to a new and unprecedented potential for philosophy.

A New Philosophy for Philosophy

What started (and thrived) mainly as an oral tradition, in the Milesian school of philosophy and the Greek marketplace (the Agora), then abandoned its origins to move to the seclusion of the academic ivory tower. The practices of writing, and later, of printing significantly influenced philosophy, taking it to magnificent terrains and heights. This endeavor became so successful that, ages later, it seemed that the written text and the academic curriculum were the only proper platforms for philosophy. The price for this displacement, however, was a slow process of alienation from everyday life, everyday language, and everyday people—philosophy's alienation from its origins in the marketplace.

Philosophy, the love of wisdom, is not dependent on a specific medium or solely situated within the written or printed word. There is no one a

priori natural or pure platform for philosophy; it can, should, and must be created in other platforms. Note that none of what I am saying here is an attack on the potential of written (or oral) philosophy. In fact, to state the obvious, the philosophical ideas created in this paper are manifested via the written text. But what I am arguing against here is the hegemony and domination of the written text over what is known as philosophy or philosophical wisdom.

If philosophy is alienated from its cinematic manifestation, then philosophy is alienated from itself, or from whatever philosophy is when it is not defined by the written or oral platform.[7] Although I find Frampton's remark (2006, 183) that the end of philosophy lies in film to be inspiring and provocative, my own belief is that the future lies in a mutually profitable companionship among oral, written, and cinematic philosophy. Only time will tell whether cinematic philosophy will have a significant influence on philosophy. But as the Socratic mistake shows us, the written platform and philosophy also had a rough start together before they finally hit it off. Just as the written platform then took philosophical thinking to magnificent heights, so too may the cinematic platform present an unprecedented opportunity for philosophical wisdom. The future of cinematic philosophy is bound to present us with new thoughts, new concepts, and a new philosophy for philosophy.

NOTES

1. Although my disciplinary perspective is different from theirs, it is influenced by the arguments of media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis, who (broadly speaking) propose three phases of civilization that match three major forms of communication: traditional oral societies, modern print societies, and global electronic culture (Meyrowitz 1994, 53).
2. Walter Ong compares Plato's critique of writing to a similar type of critique that was made about computers when they were introduced (Ong 1982, 79–80). In addition, Ong notes that a similar type of critique was also made when print was first introduced.
3. On films as philosophical illustrations, see Chap. 4, *The Critique of Film and Philosophy*, and Chap. 5, *Thought Experiments*.
4. Walter Ong (1982) has an interesting analysis of the difference between oral and written cultures and societies, which is related to this point about lectures and written texts. Ong argues that oral communication unites people while writing-based communication separates people (because reading and writing are activities that one does within one's own psyche) (69). Ong gives

the example of a class in which the teacher feels the unity that arises from the exchange of ideas, but once the reading begins, the communal aspect of the class disappears and everybody enters their own private world.

5. Papin collaborated with the philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz to conceptualize and create a steam engine in about the 1690s, with the idea of applying it to naval and industrial use. They were never able to produce their invention, however, and there is a theory that the British Royal Society thwarted its development and buried the idea for political reasons (Philip Valenti 1979).

6. I do not want to be sidetracked by having to prove this point, so I do not insist on its necessity here, but simply cite it as an inspiration.

7. I have gratefully adapted this phrasing from Jay Bernstein's insights on art and truth (1992, p. 5).

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Cinematic Examples

SOME METHODOLOGICAL NOTES ON APPLYING CINEMATIC PHILOSOPHY

One of my main arguments throughout this book has been that the mere analysis of philosophical references within films is not enough to establish cinema as a new medium for philosophy. Although the analysis of films is an important endeavor, it can only strengthen an already existing connection between film and philosophy; it cannot prove that it exists. After all, how many philosophical references within films would it take to prove that the cinematic platform has the potential to create philosophy? 5? 50? 500? 5000? different analyses identifying philosophical references within films? How can the question of cinema's ability to create philosophy be addressed by just counting philosophical references within movies? What is the magic number at which we could suddenly say: oh yes, there are this many philosophical references in movies, so cinema can create philosophy? And what about the quality of those references? Would that make a difference?

I have opted for a dramatically different methodological orientation, turning the usual methodology of film and philosophy—which establishes the relationship between film and philosophy by searching for philosophical evidence in films—on its head by searching for cinematic evidence in the history of philosophy instead. This "upside-down" approach has provided an answer to the question of why philosophy has always needed cinema, and this relationship, based on necessity, has established a firm bond

between film and philosophy. Case studies and the analysis of specific films are, therefore, not that crucial to our project.

It is nevertheless important to look at how one might apply cinematic philosophy to specific films or include specific films within the realm of cinematic philosophy. In this chapter, I will give examples of how to include specific films within the realm of cinematic philosophy and articulate the main methodological route for doing so. I do want to make it clear that the main goal of the following case studies is to suggest a method of analysis. They are not intended to bear the weight of establishing cinema as a new medium for philosophy; instead, they are meant to strengthen the already existing bond, established in the previous chapters, between film and philosophy.

A Few Words on My Analysis and Interpretations of Film

Throughout this book, I have argued for the idea that the cinematic medium offers a new medium for philosophy. And since it is a new medium for philosophy, the philosophy that should emerge from this new possibility must be radically different from, and independent of, traditional philosophy. Cinematic philosophy allows us to *experience* philosophical ideas; therefore, because experience per se does not tend to explain itself, we should explore it in a way that is closer to the way we explore empirical phenomena. Empirical phenomena are not asked to explain themselves or expected to be explicit. Expecting the films to do the philosophizing is almost like demanding the particles of the atom, the ruins of the pyramids in Egypt, or the elements of hydrogen to explain themselves and to be explicit.

While the atom, the stone, and the film remain themselves, they can be put into context in a way that gives us a better understanding of them. Whether or not a physicist analyzes an atom and places it in the context of a theory, the atom stays the same atom. Whether or not an archeologist analyzes a stone and places it in the context of an archeological theory, the stone stays the same stone. And whether or not a cinematic philosopher analyzes a film and places it in the context of a philosophical theory, the film stays the same film. However, placing them in the relevant theoretical contexts unfolds layers of knowledge that can help orient us and help us to understand the world in which we live. For instance, I can stroll in the old city of Jerusalem without being aware of the historical and archeological stories that lie beneath the stones on which I walk. It is the role of the

historian and the archeologist to insert the experience—strolling in the old city of Jerusalem—into a historical and archeological context: that is, if I am interested in seeking a fuller account of my strolling experience. To echo the spirit of Carl Hempel and Paul Oppenheim, the main function of theories is to establish a systematic connection between the data of our experience (1948).

A similar principle applies when a film is placed within the context of cinematic philosophy. In Chap. 7, *Cinesophia*, I argued that the audience of *Groundhog Day* (Ramis 1993) might or might not be aware that the film confronts a philosophical question that parallels Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence. It is the role of the cinematic philosopher to connect the experience of the film to the context of philosophy (for the sake of anyone who might be interested in receiving a fuller account of what he or she experienced). This does not, however, change the fact that one can understand the essence of the philosophical concept of the film *Groundhog Day* without knowing that the film raises a philosophical concept per se, and that in around 1882, Nietzsche formulated a similar idea (in *The Gay Science*). The film and its wisdom stay the same; the only question is whether the cinematic philosopher and the audience are able to extract and comprehend more layers of the film's ideas and meanings.

By placing the film *Groundhog Day* (or any other film) in the context of cinematic philosophy, I am not illustrating Nietzsche's point, but rather, connecting two parallel confrontations with a similar problem that use different methods. The relationship between the two methods is like each one in turn standing on the other's shoulders, so that they can confront reality from different perspectives and using different methods and possibilities.

The Structure of the Following Pages

I have divided my analysis, in the following pages, into three main groups of films. In my analysis of the seven films in the first group, I place the films within the context of cinematic philosophy by connecting them to specific written theories or philosophers from the history of philosophy. The five films in the second group raise philosophical issues that are not connected to any specific theories or philosophers from the history of philosophy. In my analysis of the films in the third group, I clarify two key concepts of cinematic philosophy: first, the difference between imagining and experiencing, and second, the idea that cinema is a companion to philosophy,

rather than an illustration of it. I use a variety of styles in examining the films in these three groups, in the hope that this variety of styles will serve as a model for how to include specific films[1] within the context of cinematic philosophy. My main goal is to show how the films themselves evoke philosophical ideas, and specifically, how particular films cause the audience to experience a philosophical idea at the same time as they give that idea more contemporary relevance.[2]

GROUP 1: CONNECTING SPECIFIC FILMS TO WRITTEN PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES

Blow Up *and the Imposition of Fictions*

In the following, I will argue that the film *Blow Up* (Antonioni 1966) is a work of philosophy. The film engages with our inability to grasp reality while also exposing the process of imposing fictions on reality. My key point here is that instead of lecturing or writing, the film stages these philosophical problems as a fictional cinematic journey or experience. In a masterful way, the fictional cinematic journey of the film *Blow Up* makes us believe that there was a murder, even though one can substantially question that. In this way, the film gives us the experience of being unable to grasp reality while, at the same time, making us vividly experience how we impose fictions on reality.

In order to provide further evidence that the film is a work of philosophy, I will compare some of the film's philosophical insights with David Hume's philosophical concepts about our inability to perceive objective reality. Please note that I could just as easily have chosen a different philosopher with parallel ideas on our inability to perceive objective reality, which means that we cannot argue that the film specifically illustrates David Hume's theory. The reason for placing the film in the context of some of Hume's ideas is to show that the film creates an experience that parallels previous engagements within the discipline of philosophy through different means: not because the film illustrates or teaches Hume's theory, but because it engages its audience with a contemporary experience that is situated within the context of philosophy. The difference is that the film evokes these ideas by creating an experience, which is different from previous philosophical engagements that use the oral or written format. By showing that the film creates an experience that can be compared with some of David Hume's philosophical ideas, I reinforce the notion that the film should be placed within the context of philosophy.

Let me begin with a few remarkable insights from David Hume. Hume (*A Treatise of Human Nature* 1740; *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* 1748) argues that we will never possess the capacity to grasp full reality and that all we can grasp are aspects of reality. For Hume (1740, 67–68), nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, and anything beyond perceptions is empty of any cognitive content. Hume (famously) liquidates reason as a basis for causality and states that our engagement with empirical experience cannot determine or serve as a basis for an absolute truth or expose objective causal relations.

Hume argues (183) that there is no necessity in the causality or connections that are observed by humans. The human spirit will never grasp anything absolute; we can only know the world through sentiments and impressions, rather than through any logical or rational certainty. For Hume (1748, 43), it is habit and custom that make us believe that the future will conform to the past, but this is a misconception because there is no objective nor absolute link between the past and the future—only a belief. For Hume (49), a belief is a sentiment that is caused by habit, which is closer to the sensitive than to the cognitive aspect of our nature (1740, 183). This demolishes any possibility of validating an objective, real, or absolute causal relation, which is one of the building blocks of scientific inquiry; it leaves us, therefore, with assumptions rather than certainty.

One of Hume's simplest, most beautiful, and most precise unsolvable challenges to philosophy, science, and knowledge is this: the possibility that the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less an intelligible proposition than the idea that the sun will rise tomorrow (1748). No matter how we try to prove that the sun will rise tomorrow, using complex scientific methods or any other method, this projection is essentially based on the fact that we saw the sun rise yesterday, the day before, two days before, and so on. Thus, the projection that the sun will rise tomorrow is based on nothing but a belief that the future will conform to the past. But there is nothing that guarantees that the future will conform to the past. And let me add another vivid example, provided by my philosophy professor, Dr. Amihud Gilead, who added a dramatic spice to Bertrand Russell's chicken example from *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), changing Russell's chicken into a turkey. We are like the turkey that is overjoyed every time it sees the farmer, who gives it seeds to eat at exactly six o'clock every morning. This event happens every day until one day, a day apparently like every other day, when the turkey runs to the farmer in the joyful belief that the farmer will give it the seeds, the farmer, instead, cuts the turkey's throat for Thanksgiving dinner. We may be a little cleverer than turkeys, but our situation is not much different, since there is

really no objective or absolute certainty that the sun will rise tomorrow, only the belief that because it has always done so far, it will rise again.

The film *Blow Up*, paralleling Hume's ideas, engages with our inability to grasp reality and makes us experience the process of imposing fictions on reality. I want to concentrate on how the film, using a variety of cinematic techniques, gives us a modern experience (especially so for the 1966 audience) of the imposition of fictions on reality. The main philosophical weight of the film rests on this idea of imposing fictions on reality, so I want to look more closely at how the film makes us believe there was a murder, even though there was none.

In a masterful way, using a variety of cinematic techniques, the film warns us not to expect a predictable structure and implies that we will never get the full picture. But the film does not explicitly tell us this; instead, it makes us experience it. As early as the title sequences, for instance, we only get a narrow perspective of the action, seen through the opening titles. Throughout the film we continue to observe many frame compositions that include objects that cut the frame. Furthermore, the rhythm of the film is intentionally asymmetrical, changing abruptly and unpredictably from loud to soft, fast to slow, and intense to calm. We are never told that the structure will be unpredictable; we simply experience it.

The film also warns us to be suspicious of anything we see onscreen. One of the ways this is done is through what seem to be unrelated sub-plots that play on our expectations, including expectations of meaning and context. These sequences stand as a warning not to rush to quick assumptions, as any such assumptions will then be intentionally played upon. For example, a play of context and meaning is found in the antique shop sequence, where the owner turns out not to be the likely old man (Harry Hutchinson), but rather, a beautiful young woman (Susan Brodrick), or in the sudden importance of the propeller, which seems to have become the most important object in the world until, a few sequences later, the main protagonist, Thomas (David Hemmings), wants to get rid of it and cannot recall why he bought it. The propeller is the same propeller, but it has lost whatever meaning Thomas had imposed on it earlier. Then, it is a broken guitar that is suddenly transformed into what seems to be the most important object on earth, as the audience almost lynches Thomas, who has somehow grabbed pieces of it. After his miraculous escape, Thomas finds himself in the street with a broken guitar and throws it into the trash. The guitar is the same guitar, but out of context, it becomes meaningless. What made that object significant was the meaning that Thomas and the concert audience gave to it at a certain time and place; removed from

that time and place, it is just a broken guitar. This and other subplots are there to make the audience experience how easily we impose fictions and assumptions on reality.

The main question of the film, enclosing both the structure and story, is: was there a murder? Or is this just yet another fictionalized imposition of context and meaning? Addressing this question will reveal the brilliance of the film in giving us a unique experience of imposing fiction on reality and show how it is an example of the potential of experiencing philosophy via the cinematic platform. My analysis will show that whatever made us suspect that a murder occurred was, in fact, created in Thomas's imagination in the darkroom. However, there is one sequence in the film in which Thomas finds a body lying in the park. In order to show that there was no murder, I will argue that the body Thomas found in the park was a result of his imagination, and that Thomas has an extremely unreliable point of view, with a tendency to fictionalized reality, especially without his camera.

Thomas is a photographer; the camera is the source of his strength and power. Like any professional photographer, he takes his camera everywhere and anywhere. After he has come to believe that he has uncovered a murder (by blowing up the photographs he had shot earlier in the park), Thomas goes back to the park and finds the body of the man. But Thomas is alone in the dark and fails to collect any evidence, since for some strange reason, for once, he is without his camera. It is only Thomas, along with the audience of the film, who sees the body, but for the audience, the body is seen through Thomas's point of view, which is questionable without a camera. The camera essentially defines Thomas; he is so dependent on the camera and it is so central to him that even his sexual intercourse with Veruschka (Veruschka Von Lehndorff) is mediated by a camera.[3] We see how essential the camera is to Thomas when even his good friend and publisher Ron (Peter Bowles) refuses to take Thomas's murder story seriously without photographs or any other evidence. Therefore, neither should *we* take Thomas's murder story seriously without his camera.

After failing to collect evidence the first time, Thomas then returns to the park with his camera to take pictures of the dead body. But for some strange reason, when Thomas arrives with his camera, the body is no longer there. And yet, if there had been a murder, why would the killers have left a dead body in the middle of a park, and then, waited an entire day to dispose of it? This chain of events seems odd, leading us to question the reliability of the sequences in which Thomas sees the body in the park and to believe that the body was a product of Thomas's imagination.

The only thing that happened was a fictional murder, constructed in the darkroom within the blow-up sequence. In that sequence, the objects in the photographs become larger, but at the same time, their connection to the contextual environment becomes weaker. The film makes the audience experience how the process of blowing up the photographs transforms them into a deformed image, becoming pixelated, grainy, and abstract, like the abstract paintings that Bill (John Castle) paints. Bill paints without knowing what he wants to paint; it is only after the painting is complete that (like a detective) he discovers the meaning of the painting. And just as Bill gives meaning to his paintings after they are complete, so does Thomas impose a meaning that constructs a murder plot from what is finally nothing more than a few abstract and out-of-context blown-up photographs.

Keep in mind that Thomas photographed nothing but a man and a woman in the park. Besides that, what does Thomas have that can prove a murder? There is a stressed woman named Jane (Vanessa Redgrave), who wants the pictures for a reason she is not willing to specify, but strange as her desire might seem, it does not mean that she has taken part in a murder. Thomas has blown-up photographs of a body and a gun, which are as abstract as Bill's paintings. There is a break-in, and Thomas's photographs are stolen, but that could be a coincidence: they could have been stolen for profit. And finally, there is a dead body in the middle of the park, which has supposedly been lying there all day and is seen only by Thomas; the existence of the body is, however, questionable since there is no evidence to back it up and Thomas's point of view is extremely unreliable without his camera.

Therefore, the evidence for any substantial causal relation, based on these scattered elements proving that there was a murder, is weak and is most likely to have been created in Thomas's vivid imagination, in the darkroom. Thomas has imposed a fictionalized plot on what happened in the park, creating a very convincing fictional murder story.

The definitive resolution of the murder mystery, however, does not present itself until the final sequence. Any first-year film student could tell us that the opening and closing sequences of a film are tremendously important to the entire film. Therefore, the pantomime groups in the opening sequence, and even more so, in the closing sequence, are telling us something that is crucially significant. The height of the panto-mimed tennis match occurs when the invisible tennis ball lands next to Thomas. There is a sense of anticipation: what will Thomas choose to do? After a slight hesitation, he decides to cooperate with the fictionalized,

pantomimed game, throwing the invisible tennis ball back to the players so that the game can continue.

This brilliant scene reveals the main concept of the film, which is the imposition of fictions on reality. When Thomas decides to return the invisible ball and participate in the pantomimed tennis game, what the audience faces is Thomas's acceptance of and participation in an imposition of fiction onto reality. I want to point out that much as he participates in the fictional tennis game, he also participated in a fictional murder investigation. We can only assume that if Thomas were alone, without his camera and without bystanders, we would probably see him picking up a real tennis ball, just as we saw the body in the park. But this time, Thomas has his camera with him, and there are numerous bystanders witnessing the scene; therefore, we do not see the tennis ball or Thomas's latest imposition of fictions onto reality.

The most ingenious aspect of the film *Blow Up* is that we the audience, in parallel with Thomas, also experience an authentic belief in a murder that has been fictionalized, just like the pantomimed tennis game. A viewer who continues to believe that there was a murder has fallen into the trap of imposing a misunderstood causal relation on what we have seen in the film. The film offers us a unique experience of how we naturally and unintentionally impose fictions on reality in order to make a coherent story from nothing more than out-of-context objects. It shows us how we connect scattered and fragmented dots into a coherent murder story that was never there. Instead of giving us a lecture on the impossibility of fully grasping reality, or explicitly telling us that our empirical experience cannot expose absolute causal relations, the film actually takes us on a cinematic journey, making us believe in an imposed fictional story composed from nothing more than a few scattered and fragmented pieces of evidence. It puts us in the position of the turkey that imposes a fictional story, nothing more than a belief imposed on reality.

The main point is that the film stages a fictional journey, making us believe in something unclear and vague and leading us to assume a fictional murder. Through Thomas's fictional murder mystery, which seems authentic but is misleading, the film makes us experience the impossibility of fully grasping reality and demonstrates how easily we impose and believe fictions. Therefore, I can claim in confidence that the film *Blow Up* can be placed in the context of cinematic philosophy and is a work of philosophy, one that gives its audience the experience of imposing a fictional story on reality as well as the impossibility of grasping objective truth.

Blade Runner *and the Artificiality of Human and Machine*

Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, [1982] 2007) is a complex film with many layers of insight and concepts.[4] In the following analysis, I will concentrate on pointing out how the film evokes questions on the border between humanity and machine: What is it that makes us humans? Is there a clear border between human and machine? Can machines dream, love, be curious about the world, have the desire to live and survive, possess reflection and consciousness, and share emotions with each other? After showing how the film makes the audience experience and face these issues, I will compare some of the film's concepts with Wolfgang Schirmacher's ideas on artificiality. In the process, I will look at some notions from Jean Baudrillard as well as the films *Shakespeare in Love* (Madden 1998) and *F for Fake* (Welles 1973). My main goal in the following analysis is to give examples of the potential for enriching the philosophical discourse on artificiality and reality by using different philosophical engagements.

In *Blade Runner*, Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) is a cold-blooded, cynical, highly skilled blade runner, whose job is to identify, hunt down, and terminate "replicants." Replicants are sophisticated androids, virtually identical to humans, both in appearance and behavior, but for Deckard, replicants are nothing more than machines that need to be terminated. As the film progresses, the audience, along with Deckard, begins to see the replicants as much more than mere machines, possessing as they do sophisticated emotions, fear, an appreciation of beauty, the desire to live and survive, relationships, friendships, consciousness, a capacity for reflection, morals, ethics, and even poetry. The audience's experience of all of this is carefully constructed using a variety of elements, including plot, atmosphere, tone, lights, acting, camera gestures, editing, and special effects. The film, then, does not tell us, but shows us how the replicants are indistinguishable from humans, by showing us their relationships, their desire to live, their morals, and so on. The film makes us experience the replicants as much more than dumb, binary machines and causes us to feel that treating them in the way that society does is wrong. This process creates a complex level of empathy for the replicants as well as for the main protagonist of the film, Deckard.

At the beginning of the film, Deckard's attitude toward the replicants is condescending, cynical, and ruthless: the line between replicants and humans is very clear to him. But as the film progresses, Deckard discovers that this line is, in fact, vague. This is what makes our empathy for

Deckard and the replicants so important: it creates the hook that makes the audience care about them and their journey. When we care about the characters and their journey, we understand the main concept of the film, the erasure of the dividing line between human and machine, on a deeper level. The thin dividing line between human and machine is no longer an abstract idea: it is a cinematic situation, right in front of us, involving characters we care about. Like Deckard, the audience enters the film thinking that there is a clear division between human and machine, but as the journey progresses, we face challenges to this perception.

The most remarkable challenge to the strict line dividing human from machine, however, comes in a dramatic twist that is only revealed years after the film's original release. This illuminating layer of depth is emphasized in the 2007 release of the film known as "The Final Cut." The human whose humanity we never doubted; the one who drew the clearest line between human and machine; the one who was cynical and condescending toward replicants and kept bragging about his expertise at identifying them; the human the audience trusted to be human above all—was a machine. The end of the 2007 version implies that Deckard is a highly advanced Nexus-6 replicant who was unaware he was a replicant. The evidence for this can be found in the unicorn dream sequence, a dream Deckard never shares with anyone. At the end of the film, just as Deckard is escaping with Rachael (Sean Young), he finds that Gaff (Edward James Olmos) has left him a small origami unicorn, a reference to Deckard's dream. But how could Gaff possibly know this intimate information about Deckard's dream unless the unicorn dream had been planted in Deckard's mind, much like Rachael's dreams and memories have been?[5] Harrison Ford's remarkable performance as Deckard, along with the climactic music, tone, lighting, editing, and camera gestures, reveal the dramatic twist: the biggest expert on identifying and terminating machines realizes that he himself is a machine.

This is a huge revelation: throughout the film, the audience has been convinced that Deckard is human. The film makes us experience a situation in which we cannot tell the difference between humans and machines, shattering what we initially thought was an obvious and impermeable dividing line. The film gives us the opportunity to walk in the shoes of a replicant (Deckard), who is unaware that he is a machine, placing us in a situation in which neither he nor we can tell the difference. This might provoke us to ask ourselves whether we too may be a type of sophisticated machine with implanted memories and dreams. But the main point is that

the film shows us a complex philosophical idea in the form of a contemporary cinematic experience—a journey—to which we relate and that we care about. It grounds a philosophical issue in a contemporary context, making it relevant to the audience's everyday life.

Here, I would like to introduce into the discourse on the dividing line between human and machine an intriguing written text by Wolfgang Schirmacher on the pervasive artificial world in which we humans exist. For Schirmacher (1994, 1999, 2005, 2011), the archaic distinction putting natural and artificial life at opposite poles has been dissolved. He argues that every aspect of our life was, and is, artificial and that we cannot separate the artificial from the non-artificial. As humans, we generate the conditions for every aspect of human life using our artificial human techniques. Any social, scientific, artistic, or other human activity, whether theoretical or practical, depends on artificial techniques that create the conditions for human existence—techniques that include every human activity, ranging from breathing through walking, talking, eating, praying, smiling, reading, and thinking to watching a film. These are all techniques that are generated by artificial human existence, leading Schirmacher to conclude that every aspect of human activity and experience in the world is artificial.

For Schirmacher, the intensive technological evolution that took place in the twentieth century exposed the essential role of technology in creating the conditions of human life, making it apparent that every aspect of human activity and experience is artificial. He calls on us to avoid the condescending view that sees the human as the natural master creating artificial tools, and to accept, instead, the fact that there is no other authority besides the artificial authority of humans. Concepts such as metaphysics, God, causality, and substance are all man-made inversions, driven by the artificiality of what we generate as humans. These grand narratives are human-generated, and are, therefore, as artificial as brushing teeth or smoking a cigar.

Notably, Schirmacher challenges mainstream assumptions about reality and the loss of reality. Recall Jean Baudrillard's (2006) cry about the liquidation of reality and the precession of simulacra:

> It is the generation by models of the real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—that engenders the territory. (453)

When we confront Baudrillard's ideas with Schirmacher's, however, it becomes clear that there was never a reality to be lost in the first place. Everything we experience originates from a human activity that is artificial (this includes language, communication, and thinking). Thus, the old metaphysical authority of truth or reality is a human invention, with no outside or natural reality, and there is, therefore, no outside or natural reality to be lost: reality and truth never existed before they were invented by the artificiality of humans.

I want to introduce two challenges to Baudrillard's ideas on the loss of reality and origin. These challenges are not in the form of written articles or books from the history of philosophy; these are films. These two cinematic references, placed in the context of cinematic philosophy, provide a challenge to Baudrillard's ideas.

When placed in conjunction with Baudrillard, the film *Shakespeare in Love* (Madden 1998) evokes intriguing ideas. Instead of looking at the historical details of William Shakespeare, the man, and examining how they might correlate with his plays and writings, the film goes the other way: it takes some of Shakespeare's plays and connects them together to create a fictional plot for Shakespeare's life. This might seem to be a strange direction at first, but if we think about it, the bottom line is that Shakespeare the writer is much more important than Shakespeare the man. And the key to understanding Shakespeare is not, then, his personal life, but rather, his plays and writings. Thus, Shakespeare's plays and writings become the origin and essence of a fictional film on Shakespeare's life: the film gives us an experience in which fiction precedes how we explore reality and is more important than the origin, whatever that might be.

If we put *Shakespeare in Love* in the context of cinematic philosophy, we can see that the discourse of the film shows us that the dividing line between reality and fiction is fragile and vague. The film offers us a cinematic experience that exposes artistic events and fictions as implemented and immanent with reality. (Most of us, for example, think of Richard the Third as having had a deformed and unfinished physique, a hunchback with a shriveled arm that was cheated of a feature. But this is nothing more than mere fiction imposed by Shakespeare himself; recent discoveries[6] and studies show that Richard the Third did not have those traits.) Although the plot of *Shakespeare in Love* involves William Shakespeare the man, the film bypasses any pure or objective desire to represent Shakespeare's actual biography. The film centers on the important thing, Shakespeare's plays and writings, and thereby, emphasizes the fact that fiction precedes reality

or, in Shakespeare's words: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII).

The second cinematic reference I would like to use to challenge Baudrillard's ideas is Orson Welles's *F for Fake* (1973). The film is a breathtaking cinematic project, several narratives intertwined into a unique documentary (or mockumentary) film about trickery, fraud, and lies. But instead of *telling* us that the search for reality or origins is useless, the film makes us experience that uselessness. Not only is the film about charlatans,[7] it also embraces the essence of charlatanry itself, continuously tricking the audience: on a number of occasions, the film leads the audience to believe something that is revealed a few scenes later to have been a lie or a trick. For example, in one of the most exciting and provocative directorial maneuvers ever performed in the history of cinema, Welles confesses toward the end of the film that he has been manipulating us. He reminds the audience that he had promised to tell the truth for an hour, but points out that that hour ended 17 minutes ago, and he has been lying his head off ever since. Welles acts like an honest magician, luring the audience into believing that his magic tricks are real, only to reveal a few seconds later that they are fake. In this way, the audience is made to feel the impossibility of reaching authenticity or reality per se and that we are constantly manipulated by charlatans, first and foremost, by Welles himself. The experience leads us to question and lose trust in any story we might hear, whether it comes from an expert or not. What places the film within the realm of cinematic philosophy is the way in which it makes the audience experience the desire for truth, reality, and authenticity as a hopeless quest.

Both *Shakespeare in Love* and *F for Fake* exemplify the potential to confront discourses on truth and fiction from a variety of perspectives. Once brought into the context of a given discussion, the experience these films evoke can either strengthen or challenge a particular philosophical claim; the same is also true in the other direction, in that a philosophical claim can strengthen or challenge these films. The potential of oral, written, and cinematic philosophy to work in concert allows multiple perspectives on any given philosophical subject matter, taking it to new heights.

There is obviously much more to discuss with regard to the vague border between reality and artificiality, and between humans and machines, but the scope of this book requires that I concentrate on the potential of a mutual companionship between cinematic and written philosophy. This companionship is not in the form of an illustration, but in the form

of different engagements via different philosophical media, a companionship that enriches and expands the philosophical discourse while offering innovative and exciting possibilities through multiple media that confront philosophical questions from different perspectives and possibilities.

The Draughtsman's Contract *and the Critique of Newtonian Science*

The Draughtsman's Contract (Greenaway 1982) is a work of philosophy that offers a critique of Newtonian science and enlightenment society, with interesting parallels to Ludwig Wittgenstein's critique of Newtonian science. Instead of lecturing or writing about philosophical issues, the film stages them as fictional cinematic events, making us experience the critique it produces. (To repeat: when I compare the film with some of Ludwig Wittgenstein's ideas, it is to show not that the film illustrates or teaches Wittgenstein's theories, but that the ideas within the film parallel some of Wittgenstein's ideas and to strengthen my claim that cinematic philosophy, including this film, offers a different kind of access to philosophy.)

The film uses the art and costume design in its first sequence to introduce us to what seems to be a decadent and rotten enlightenment society. Although the film is set in 1694, at the end of the seventeenth century, the art and costume design show no intention of presenting an accurate description of that era; instead, they serve as a critique. The extravagant makeup and grotesque, oversized wigs shown in the movie are very different from the actual clothing of that era, as we can see if we look, for example, at the paintings of William Hogarth (1697–1764). Through its artistic and costume design, the film gives us the sense of a deformed and even monstrous society. In addition, in the first sequence, when the camera floats through the conversations of English aristocrats, it looks as though these conversations ought to be of great importance. This sense is created through the aristocrats' manner of speech and dress and the gestures of the camera. But in fact, the content of these conversations is grotesque, centering on vicious gossip. They sound as though they could have been taken from the Jacobean theater, known for its grotesqueries, cannibalism, evil, and pomposity. Therefore, I would characterize both the first sequence and the art and costume design of the entire movie as setting a tone that critiques enlightenment society, not by telling us about it or lecturing us, but by showing us and making us feel that something is wrong with this culture and its people. What looks from a distance like a

rational and even elegant culture is nothing but an outer shell, covering a decadent, grotesque, hypocritical, gossipy, and immoral society.

But this is all merely the establishment of an atmosphere for a specific critique of one of the highlights of the enlightenment era: the Newtonian science. From the very beginning of the film, there are many strong connections between the draughtsman Neville (Anthony Higgins) and the historical figure of Isaac Newton (1642–1727). Neville is a draughtsman seeking to achieve a perfect mathematical portrayal of objective reality; compare this with Newton's ambition to explain objective reality through mathematics and science. The painting that Neville tries to interpret within the film is entitled *Allegory of Newton's Service to Optics* (Zick 1785). There is even a similarity between their names (Neville and Newton), and Neville is presented in the film in a way that conforms to the general spirit of how Isaac Newton is historically perceived.

The main idea of the film is that Neville's scientific approach blinds him to what is really happening on the estate. Throughout the film, Neville aspires to achieve pure perfection in his drawings, using what appears to be a scientific or mathematical method. He is so occupied with achieving a perfect execution of his drawings that he believes he can master the environment by, for example, empting the landscape with a strict curriculum that keeps it clear from any living creature. But his scientific approach is, in fact, very far from understanding or controlling reality. His seemingly exact methods, using fancy, precise tools, are, in fact, arbitrary and accidental, and the only reality that he comprehends is that imposed by his scientific, materialistic, mathematical approach, which conforms to human perception—a far cry from an objective perception of reality.

I call Neville's method and tools arbitrary and accidental, based on Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous critique of Newtonian science in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922). Wittgenstein argues that Newtonian science imposes a unified but arbitrary form of description on the world (para. 6.341). Imagine, for instance, a white surface that has irregular black spots on it. Using a sufficiently fine square mesh and describing each square as black or white, we can always approximate the description of the surface as closely as we wish. But this form is optional; we could have achieved the same result using a triangular or hexagonal mesh. Wittgenstein points out that the ability to explain a picture in this way tells us nothing about the picture. "So too the fact that it [the world] can be described by Newtonian mechanics asserts nothing about the world; but this asserts something, namely, that it can be described in that particular

way in which as a matter of fact it is described" (para 6.342). The net itself is arbitrary and tells us nothing about the world except that it can be described by these arbitrary means.

We can easily draw a parallel between Wittgenstein's accidental net and Neville's precise method and tools. But the more interesting correlation lies in the idea that Neville's method does not expose reality, and that, like Newtonian science as critiqued by Wittgenstein, it imposes human perception on what seems to be objective reality. Neville's condescending attitude and methods reveal that his real ambition is not to understand reality, but to control it and subjugate it to his unified method. Unfortunately for Neville, however, as I have mentioned, he is so preoccupied with his precise method and fancy tools that he is blind to what is really happening in the world and, what is more important, on the estate. There is a murder for which he will be framed, which will eventually cost him his eyes, and then, his life. Neville's condescending behavior throughout the film is intended to show the general spirit of the enlightenment era, which believed that science is the answer to everything.

The Draughtsman's Contract is a work of philosophy, which should be placed in the context of cinematic philosophy. The film uses Neville's journey to make us experience the desire to impose a precise, unified, mathematical type of explanation on the world and then exposes the failure of such a desire. His arrogant attitude and desire to control reality result in the opposite, exposing the world as much more than what can be reduced to scientific or mathematical order. It causes us to experience a very complex critique of Newtonian science and of the enlightenment era via a contemporary cinematic manifestation. Therefore, we argue that the film should be placed within the context of similar critiques on the Newtonian science, as a parallel confrontation to a similar problem from a different philosophical perspective.[8]

Sherlock Holmes *and the Power of Prediction*

It might, at first, seem odd to pair Guy Ritchie's film *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) with Carl Hempel and Paul Oppenheim's (1948) canonical deductive-nomological model. But the essence of the Hempel and Oppenheim theory is that the power to explain a phenomenon is mainly situated in the power to predict the phenomenon. And *Sherlock Holmes* has a very interesting quality of incorporating the power of prediction into its cinematic structure. Thus, placing *Sherlock Holmes* in the context of

cinematic philosophy allows a very interesting experience of the essence of the deductive-nomological explanation.

At this writing, Hempel and Oppenheim's deductive-nomological model is probably the most accepted model for scientific explanation.[9] It is always astonishing to realize that although scientific explanations have existed since the pre-Socratic era, it not until the middle of the twentieth century, when the deductive-nomological model appeared, that the subject of scientific explanation itself received its proper attention in philosophy and science. The deductive-nomological model places the explanatory process within an array of logical arguments whose outcome is necessarily predictable (Hempel and Oppenheim 1948, 1–3). The model includes a complex articulation of how to construct the explanatory process,[10] but the key point is that explanatory power is mainly located in the ability to predict a phenomenon. "It may be said, therefore, that an explanation is not fully adequate unless its explanans … could have served as a basis for predicting the phenomenon under consideration" (3). According to Hempel and Oppenheim (4), earlier explanations lacked the most essential explanatory trait, which is the ability to predict. Thus, the power to scientifically explain a phenomenon is located in the power to predict the phenomenon.

In the film *Sherlock Holmes*, especially in the fighting scenes featuring Holmes (Robert Downey, Jr.), we discover that the power of prediction is essentially rooted and that it is expressed in a very illuminating way. On more than a few occasions in those fighting scenes, Holmes is able to separate himself from everyday life and enter into a different mental zone, within which he can isolate and assess relevant details, make deductions, and accurately predict how he can defeat his adversaries. Cinematically[11] these sequences are presented in extreme slow motion, which is taken to a higher level by Holmes's verbal descriptions, giving the audience the ability to experience his analysis and deductions for each prediction about a fight. When the prediction is complete, Holmes moves to the actual fighting, which is presented with faster cutting and action. Cinematically, the distinction between the prediction and the actual fight is made very clear. This unique use of the cinematic possibilities allows the audience to see and realize that Holmes's main advantage over his opponents lies in his ability to accurately assess, deduce, and predict how to overcome them.

What the film does so well is to incorporate the power of prediction into its structure through Holmes's ability to assess the relevant details and predict the fighting sequences. In so doing, the film gives us an astonishing

cinematic experience of an essential element of science, the power of prediction. Because Holmes is a detective who is essentially driven by scientific inquiry, this is highly relevant. Holmes specifically requires only the facts; he is against any mystical explanation; and he holds an essentially empirical position, believing that misunderstandings originate when theories try to produce facts, rather than being produced by facts. Although Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character, some consider him to be the first to use science and deduction in order to solve crimes. The documentary film *How Sherlock Changed the World* (Bernays 2013) describes Sherlock Holmes as being a hundred years ahead of his time and as being the inspiration, in a way, for modern-day forensic science and crime scene investigation.[12] Therefore, it should come as no surprise that in the right hands, when there is a deep understanding of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's character, the connection between Sherlock Holmes and scientific principles will be emphasized. Guy Ritchie's 2009 film takes this to the next level, using its science-driven detective to show, not tell, an up-to-the-minute cinematic experience that reveals the importance to science of the power of prediction.

Ritchie's film is not trying to illustrate, compete with, or represent the deductive-nomological explanation. However, it touches on a similar and essential point from a different perspective and gives us a unique contemporary experience of the power of prediction. By cinematically manifesting an idea parallel to the essence of the deductive-nomological explanation, the film shows the importance of prediction within scientific inquiry; for this reason, the film should be placed in the realm of cinematic philosophy.

The Conformist *and Plato's Cave*

Because I touched on Plato's Allegory of the Cave (*The Republic*) in relation to *The Cave: An Adaptation of Plato's Allegory in Clay* (Ramsey 2008) earlier,[13] I would like, before wrapping up this first group of films, to discuss Plato's cave in relation to Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (1970). I will show that unlike Ramsey's short film, which was a direct illustration of Plato's cave, *The Conformist* emphasizes the potential of cinema to manifest a complex philosophical idea as an experience, emancipated from the necessity to serve as an illustration of written philosophy. The film offers a contemporary philosophical engagement with the Allegory of the Cave by giving its audience the unprecedented opportunity to see and experience the philosophy, rather than just imagine it. And yet, although the film is inspired by the Allegory of the Cave, rather than

trying to illustrate the allegory, it offers, instead, a unique perspective that parallels some of the ideas within the allegory.

The film takes the audience on a journey with a protagonist who is wise enough to understand the problems and price of conformism but, nevertheless, knowingly chooses to become a conformist—to stay in the cave. The protagonist, Marcello Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant), is very conscious of the problems that go along with conforming to society—a fact that is apparent in his condescending and cynical attitude toward his future wife, Giulia (Stefania Sandrelli), whom he treats as a petty bourgeoisie, a mediocre person filled with petty ideas, dreams, and ambitions; in his overall comments on the mediocrity associated with the desire to be normal and conform to society; and in the sophisticated philosophical argument he carries on with his former professor, Luca Quadri (Enzo Tarascio). These all make it apparent that Marcello is highly intelligent and knowledgeable about his choices, but nevertheless, consciously chooses to conform to society.

A conformist will conform to whatever the powers of society dictate at a given time and place, whether it is joining the Fascist party, marrying someone he doesn't love, or participating in a plot to assassinate his former mentor. The biggest threats to conformism are those who think differently, who have left the cave or their culture or society and dare to critique it. The price Marcello has to pay in order to be accepted by society is to help assassinate such critics—in this case, his former professor Luca Quadri. A steep price to pay, but nonetheless, Marcello is willing to do it.

Visually, the film is driven by the idea of the cave; the cinematography, lighting, and set design used in its construction are masterful. One example is the scene in the professor's study where Marcello and Professor Quadri find themselves in a discussion about the Allegory of the Cave. We find ourselves in a cave-like atmosphere that emphasizes the lights that enter the study as the scene progresses. This scene also marks the turning point and the difference between the film's two locations, Italy and France. Visually, the section set in Fascist Italy is lit using harsh contrasts, emphasizing the difference between darkness and light (in most cases, this harsh lighting comes from the outside, accentuating the sense that the characters are in a cave-like setting). On top of that, most of the shots in Italy are in enclosed spaces, or spaces showing Fascist architecture: mainly, huge buildings, usually marble, with an abundance of empty space, making people feel small in comparison to the buildings and claustrophobic in the enclosed spaces. Contrasting with that is the section set in France, filled with open spaces, lit much more gently and evenly, and using cinematography that balances the

space and the people inhabiting that space. The scene in Professor Quadri's study marks the emergence from the cave-like atmosphere we experience in Fascist Italy to the openness we feel in France.

The Conformist has freed itself from any "need" to accurately or literally illustrate the Allegory of the Cave. The film is inspired by Plato's cave, not in the sense of illustrating the allegory, but instead, using the allegory as a metaidea that directs the film's concepts, story, visuals, set design, characters, and so on. The film was not created to help teach or explain Plato's Allegory of the Cave, but it stands on the shoulders of Plato's cave, offering a new variation on it or interpretation of it. The film makes its audience experience an idea that echoes the allegory from an unexpected perspective, the point of view of someone who knowingly chooses to stay in the cave and destroy those who attempt to leave it. It creates a complex relation of empathy with its protagonist, making us care about him, the other characters, and their journey. There are no voice-overs, talking heads, or titles telling us the story of the cave or the price of conforming to society, trying to make the audience imagine its ideas in the hope that they will find a connection between Plato's ideas and their everyday life. Instead, there is the cinematic experience of a journey, with a story and characters we can see and relate to, making us experience a philosophical idea rooted in the story of Plato's cave.

The Conformist, with some of its main ideas paralleling the ideas of Plato's cave, makes the cave present to its audience by placing it in a setting and time that is relevant to the audience's everyday life, so that it is no longer an abstract idea written in a book that might seem out of reach to the audience. Instead, it is right here in front of the audience, who sees and experiences the philosophy as a current situation that they can relate to and understand on a deeper level. It allows a different variation on or interpretation of the philosophical idea that originated in the cave, giving it a cinematic life, a face, and creating the unprecedented possibility of experiencing philosophy as a contemporary cinematic event.

Group 2: Placing Specific Films within Cinematic Philosophy without Connecting Them to any Specific Philosopher

We can place individual films within philosophical context without drawing parallels to specific philosophers. We can also connect the analysis of a specific film to particular subdisciplines, issues, or questions within philosophy.

Because space in this book is limited and I want to talk about the potential of the cinematic medium to create philosophy, it is essential to concentrate on how the films themselves manage to engage and evoke philosophical questions and ideas, rather than spending valuable time on rephrasing specific philosophers or theories from the history of philosophy. From this point forward, therefore, I will focus on how specific films evoke philosophical insights (having to do with such things as ethics, morality, time, fiction, or reality) without connecting them to particular philosophers.

The Life of David Gale *and the Death Sentence*

The Life of David Gale (Parker 2003) is an excellent example of a cinematic thought experiment or what-if situation, manifesting a philosophical ethical issue as a contemporary cinematic experience. The film is saturated with illuminating philosophical ideas about the ethical and moral implications of the death penalty. My goal in the following analysis is to place the film within the context of philosophy by examining how the film engages its audience with these complex ethical issues, using the vehicle of a contemporary entertaining thriller. I will focus here on the importance of empathy and how it causes the audience to experience that philosophical idea on a deeper level.

The protagonist, David Gale (Kevin Spacey), appears only sixteen and a half minutes into the film. This gives the filmmakers enough time to establish their exposition and to build Gale up as a ruthless rapist and murderer. When we first see Gale, we are so pumped up and biased from the media newscasts and conversations about Gale's deeds that we have seen and heard that we view him as a monster. In addition, the scene in which we first see Gale is constructed in such a way as to refer directly to the introduction of one of the most vicious villains in the history of cinema, Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins).[14] The film puts us in a familiar position: this is also what happens to us when we watch the news about similar cases in the real world, which are framed and presented to us in such a way that we rarely see a person. Instead, we see a crime and a criminal who deserves to die. And this exact point is one of the first things that Gale tells Bitsey Bloom (Kate Winslet): "No one who looks through that glass sees a person. They see a crime. I am not David Gale. I am a murderer and a rapist … four days shy of his execution."

From that moment on, there is a major twist in the film's attitude toward Gale; it begins to create empathy for him through plot and form,

as it shows him being admired by his students; as smart, brilliant, and honest; as a loving father, a family man, and loyal to his friends and co-workers; and as a strong advocate against the death penalty; in addition, the complimentary camera angles, lighting, sounds, and music all reconstruct Gale as a good and honest human being, rather than the monster that we initially took him for. This empathy for Gale is key because it makes the audience care about him and about the journey of the film, which focuses on challenging the morality and ethics of the death penalty. This empathy allows us to face the consequences of the film's ideas by placing ourselves inside that specific journey, leading to a deeper engagement with the ideas raised by the film.

And yet, although there we have empathy for Gale, the film is constructed as a detective story, and the question of Gale's guilt is left open until the climax. This intensifies the experience, leaving us conflicted about someone we care about while, at the same time, we are unsure whether he has committed a horrific crime. When the definitive answer on Gale's guilt presents itself, it is already too late. There is a parallel with Socrates, choosing to drink the poison and dying for his ideals, as the audience realizes that Gale, along with his close friends, has constructed a situation in which the state legislative authority has executed an innocent man.

The main concept of the film, then, is to question the ethical and moral justification for the death penalty. But the film does not engage with this philosophical issue via written texts or an oral lecture. Instead, it creates a vivid journey that the audience experiences and can relate to, with characters with whom we empathize and that we understand. The film does not just tell us that there is something wrong with the death penalty; it shows us the problematic nature of the death sentence. Through its careful composition, including the story, acting, cinematography, editing, sounds, and music, as well as the conflict of empathy in its characters and story, the vivid journey constructed in the film allows us to place ourselves in a world that is oriented by a philosophical idea. This idea is no longer an abstract idea that must be imagined and is distant from our everyday life; instead, it is right in front of us as we get sucked into the experience, facing its conflicts as though we ourselves were in that situation. The film makes the audience care about the characters and story, leading us into a deeper engagement with the philosophical idea that is engaged in the film. In so doing, the film grounds a philosophical ethical issue in a visible and tangible contemporary experience that is plausible and relevant to the audience's everyday life.

The Paradox of Predestination

Predestination (Michael and Peter Spierig 2014) is an intriguing film that exemplifies the potential to push philosophy into new realms that were unattainable before the existence of cinema. *Predestination* manifests an extremely difficult-to-comprehend paradox as a cinematic experience. Although the film is based on the short story *All You Zombies* (Heinlein 1959), it is extremely challenging to explain the paradox in words; as a film, however, it is much more plausible. The paradox centers on the possibility of a person giving birth to himself in a predestined time loop. If it sounds complicated, that is because it is; I will do my best to lay out the paradox in words, but I would suggest watching the film instead. What seems convoluted here, when realized in the written medium, is much more plausible in the cinematic medium. This strengthens my argument that some philosophical insights and paradoxes are better manifested via cinematic philosophy than through written or oral philosophy. Describing the plot will help unfold the heart of this complex paradox.

The film opens with a mysterious agent trying to capture a famous terrorist known as the "fizzle bomber," but without revealing the agent's face. Although the agent succeeds in defusing a bomb planted by the fizzle bomber, the agent is severely injured. The fizzle bomber then escapes; the mysterious agent manages to operate a device that transports him to a different time (1992). When the agent (Ethan Hawke) awakens, he finds out that he has undergone a complete facial reconstruction, which has dramatically changed his appearance. It is also revealed that the agent is part of a mysterious organization known as the Temporal Bureau, responsible for sending temporal agents through time to prevent major crimes before they happen.

Accepting his final mission before he is decommissioned, the temporal agent travels back to 1978 and works as a bartender in New York, awaiting the arrival of a specific customer. When the customer arrives, a man who is referred to as the Unmarried Mother/John[15] (Sarah Snook), the agent starts chatting with him. The Unmarried Mother/John wagers a bottle of liquor that his life story will be the most shocking story the bartender has ever heard. The bartender agrees to the wager; the Unmarried Mother/ John then begins his story, explaining that he was born a girl; that on September 13, 1945, he was left on the doorstep of an orphanage; and that he was called Jane by the orphanage workers. Jane grew up in the orphanage and was gifted in all the scientific fields as well as being physically very strong.

On April 3, 1963 in Cleveland, Jane stumbles into a stranger on her way home. They begin talking, start a relationship, and Jane gets pregnant. Jane believes that this stranger is the only person who has ever really cared for her, but eventually, the stranger leaves Jane, never to return. Jane eventually gives birth to a healthy baby girl, but suffers complications in childbirth, and her uterus and ovaries are removed. The doctors tell her that during the operation they discovered that Jane has an intersex condition: she/he has two sets of organs, one female and one male. Since the doctors found intact male organs, they then surgically reconstructed Jane into a man. Then, while Jane is recovering from the operation, an unknown man kidnaps her baby. As time moves on, Jane completes all the medical operations and is fully reconstructed into a man (known as the Unmarried Mother/John).

After finishing the story, the Unmarried Mother/John asks the bartender whether he has earned the bottle of liquor, but the bartender/temporal agent reveals that he knows even many more details about the Unmarried Mother/John's life. The bartender/temporal agent offers the Unmarried Mother/John a chance to kill the man who ruined his life, as long as he agrees to be recruited to the Temporal Bureau afterwards. The Unmarried Mother/John agrees, and they travel back in time and place to April 3, 1963, in Cleveland, Ohio. The bartender/temporal agent gives the Unmarried Mother/John a gun, telling him exactly where to find the man who seduced, impregnated, and abandoned Jane. When the Unmarried Mother/John gets to that location, he accidentally runs into Jane, his own younger female self.

Meanwhile, the bartender/temporal agent jumps forward to March 1964, where he kidnaps Jane's baby girl from the hospital, and then, back to 1945, leaving the baby at the same orphanage in which Jane grew up. The bartender/temporal agent then jumps back to 1963, where he meets the Unmarried Mother/John again and reveals his real mission, explaining that he (the bartender/temporal agent), John, and Jane are all the same person, existing through a predestined time paradox. The bartender/temporal agent claims that his actions have been necessary in order to maintain their shared existence, and that if John does not now leave Jane, and if he (the bartender/temporal agent) had not kidnapped Jane's baby girl from the hospital and jumped back with the baby to 1945 to leave baby Jane at the orphanage, none of them would exist. Heartbroken at the fact that he has to leave Jane, but realizing that it is essential, the Unmarried Mother/John follows the bartender/temporal agent, who then takes the Unmarried Mother/John

(his younger self) to 1985 to enlist in the temporal bureau. Ready to be decommissioned from the temporal bureau, the bartender/temporal agent then returns to his own timeline, in 1975. He follows a lead and finds the fizzle bomber, but is shocked to discover that the fizzle bomber is actually his own future self. Horrified by this discovery, the bartender/temporal agent shoots and kills the fizzle bomber, his own future self.

It is true that this is all very complicated. That is why, in some cases, it is better to go watch the film, rather than try to describe it in writing. With its composition of acting, cinematography, editing, plot, lighting, colors, mood, music, sounds, and special effects, the film makes us see the paradox, rather than simply imagining it. There is no confusion in trying to imagine who the Unmarried Mother, John, Jane, the bartender, and the temporal agent are: it is right there, in front of us. There is no need to wonder whether it is 1945, 1963, 1964, 1975, 1978, 1985, or 1992: the colors, set design, costume design, and mood make these distinctions very clear. There is much less second-guessing, since most of the elements that must be imagined when we read or think about this idea are clearer when we see it and experience it on the cinematic screen.

Predestination brings to life the paradox of a person who is above and beyond time, who came from nowhere and goes nowhere, who is stuck in a constant time limbo. It elevates the question of the precedence of the chicken or the egg to a complex level, showing us how the same person gives birth to him-/herself in a predestined time loop. It is a paradox in the spirit of Zeno, but the fact that something of this complexity could even be thinkable is made possible and elevated via the cinematic medium. It exemplifies how cinematic philosophy can open a new realm of thinking, making the impossible possible. This film serves as another example of the advantages of the oral, written, and cinematic media working together to allow new philosophical thinking to emerge.

The Clock—*Constructing Time through Cinema*

The Clock (Marclay 2011) is a film installation that should also be placed in the context of cinematic philosophy. My analysis here concentrates on the idea that *The Clock* gives us a unique experience of time via cinema. This engagement is not based on a representation, illustration, or reflection of time, but instead, gives us an alternative possibility for experiencing time that involves an interesting collision between memory, reality, authenticity, and fiction.

The Clock is a film installation composed of scenes from the history of cinema that either show a clock or signify a specific time. It is designed as a working clock that shows the actual time: the time on the audience's wristwatches or mobile phones is the same as the time that appears on the screen. Brilliantly edited, and with a superb sound design, *The Clock* flies from one sequence to the next in a natural and holistic way, allowing the audience to experience a genuine working clock composed from cinema.

The cinematic moments that compose *The Clock* consist of different sequences from the history of cinema. These sequences are already part of our past memory and experience, but within a different context. Recomposed together here as a mechanism that reveals time, they evoke an intriguing and almost magical connection between fiction, memory, and reality. It felt as though I was watching past experiences from my own life becoming part of a mechanism that exposes reality, a clock. I had had a relationship to most of these cinematic sequences, but in a different context, age, and time. Suddenly now, watching these cinematic sequences meshed together, it was almost like watching a live sporting event, in which every minute of this phenomenon happening right at that moment was composed from my own past experiences and memories of these films. In a strange way, *The Clock* brought up some of the places, perspectives, and memories that I associated with each of these films that I had first watched at different times and in different places. Henry Unger (1991, 210–12) argues that after watching a film, a new coordination or new route is created within the audience's emotional biography. While watching *The Clock*, I faced my own intimate relationship with the coordination that had been created years earlier with each of these different films. But the intriguing aspect of it was that these varied coordination were now together composing a clock, a phenomenon happening in the here and now.

Another interesting aspect of *The Clock* is that cinematic time has been taken out of the equation. What we get instead is a 24-hour mechanism that anchors cinematic moments in real time. It is this presentation of real time that allows *The Clock* to have a clear and authentic connection to "outside reality," and yet, this real time is composed of what we had thought to be fictional cinema. This gives rise to an unexpected wave of authenticity that washes over our personal past experience with these films, which have now been recontextualized into a mechanism that presents a phenomenon here and now, in the present.

The Clock's engagement with time is not created through any traditional philosophical discussion; there is no explicit philosophical dialogue in the film. There is no philosopher explaining or reflecting on the concept of time or any other philosophical concept. Instead, *The Clock* offers us a different possibility, magically showing us cinema as an experience of time that is composed from our past engagements with and memories of films. It expands the potential for engaging with issues of time while evoking a unique collision between time, memory, reality, authenticity, and fiction.

X-Men: Days of Future Past: *A Unique Perspective on Time and Motion*

X-Men: Days of Future Past (Singer 2014) is not only a very entertaining superhero blockbuster, it also evokes a unique perspective on time and motion. I would like to concentrate here on one specific scene that makes the audience see and experience different realms of time through motion.

The scene takes place when Quicksilver (Evan Peters), Charles Xavier (James McAvoy), and Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) rescue Erik Lehnsherr (Michael Fassbender) from a high-security prison beneath the Pentagon. In the midst of their escape, they run into armed guards, who fire at them. At that moment, the film switches to super-slow motion, placing us in the point of view of Quicksilver, who possesses special powers that allow him to move and perceive the world in hyper speed. In previous scenes, we saw flashes of Quicksilver's hyperspeed capabilities, but this is the first time in the film that the audience is actually placed in Quicksilver's point of view, from which everything else moves extremely slowly. Bullets, pans, knives, plates, food, liquids, and water drops all freeze in midair, allowing Quicksilver to put on his windglasses and earphones, run around the room, stop and taste soup from a falling pan, put on a hat, disarm all the guards, shift the bullets away, and help his friends escape. This unique point of view is made possible through a combination of directing, cinematography, editing, sound, and music,[16] but mainly through the special effects that show us time and motion behaving differently from what we are used to, including the extremely slow movements of the guards' faces, Wolverine's claws, the bullets, the water drops, the food, the newspapers, the pans, the knives, and other objects that in any other situation would get to their destination in a split second, but here, seem to be arrested in midair. All of these are juxtaposed with Quicksilver, who operates in a different realm of motion and time and can easily move nonchalantly from

one object to another; only the wind blowing up his face reminds us how fast he really moves in comparison to everyone else.

The unique aspect of this scene is that it simultaneously shows us two different realms of time, emphasizing the difference between them. There is no need for us to imagine the different realms of time through motion: they are right there in front of us. This scene offers a unique view of the world that was not possible before the appearance of cinema; the filmmakers have combined fiction and technical innovation to create a unique experience, simultaneously showing two realms of time. This perspective on motion and time, which is unachievable through regular perception, is made vividly visible to us here, pushing the borders of our thought, imagination, and perception to new grounds and giving us a new experience of the world. And all of this is achieved in a very successful and popular summer block-buster film that is seen by, talks to, and is relevant to millions of people.

Shutter Island: *An Epistemological Gap and the Importance of Fictional Experiences*

Martin Scorsese's film *Shutter Island* (2010), a brilliant homage to *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Wiene 1920), practices cinematic philosophy in two different ways: first, the film makes us experience emancipation from an epistemological gap, and second, it gives examples of the importance of fictional experiences when confronting reality.

I have talked about how *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis 1999) gives us the experience of an epistemological gap, but it is not alone in this respect: the film *Shutter Island* also takes us on a very interesting epistemological journey. We enter the film through the point of view of Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio), which also dictates the main perspective through most of the film. At the beginning, Teddy's point of view is something that we accept as a likely description of what is happening in the film. However, as the film progresses, we begin to realize that there are many inconsistencies, which damage Teddy's credibility with us. The film then offers us a unique window onto Teddy's waking-up process from his fictional world. Because it places us within the confines of Teddy's point of view, making us perceive the world as he does, then as Teddy slowly comes out of his psychosis we too are waking up from the confines of his misperceived point of view on the situation. At the end of the film, we realize that Teddy's point of view was a fictional imposition, out of tune with reality. The way the film is constructed gives the audience the experience of an

epistemological gap between what we thought the world was like and what it really is like, taking us through the process of realizing how completely different the two are. The empathy with Teddy that the film evokes from us allows us to place ourselves in Teddy's situation, which leads to a deeper engagement with the film's journey, centered on an epistemological idea. This epistemological idea, then, is no longer an abstract idea in a book or a lecture, which would be out of reach to most of the audience; it is vividly in front of us, happening to characters with whom we empathize as we face the consequences of their actions as if we were in their shoes. The experience hooks the audience into a journey that is centered on a philosophical idea, and in so doing, it grounds the philosophical idea in a contemporary experience that is plausible and relevant to the audience's everyday life.

The second way in which the film *Shutter Island* should be considered cinematic philosophy is that it deals with the implications of a fictional role-play, which is not merely confined to the imagination, but actually manifested onscreen.[17] An actual manifestation of a fictional role-play is very similar in principle to the manifestation of a thought experiment—something that cinema is very good at, as I have argued in previous chapters.[18] The film shows us that it is only through this fully participatory fictional role-play that Teddy can be emancipated from his psychological situation. Explaining the situation to him or making him imagine the journey is not enough: he needs to participate in a certain type of experience (whether real or fictional) to comprehend the situation. For Teddy, this fictional role-play is an important and authentic experience that helps him realize the situation he is in.[19]

The fictional role-play within *Shutter Island* creates an analogy between what Teddy is going through and what we experience when we watch a film that is oriented by a philosophical idea. Much as the characters in *Shutter Island* are staging an experience for Teddy, so too does cinema create situations as events onscreen that are experienced by the audience. When watching a film, we undergo a certain experiential journey, which can illuminate things that we cannot fully grasp through the imagination or reflection via books or lectures. In this way, the film *Shutter Island* can point to the importance of cinema (which is a type of onscreen fictional role-play) in our everyday life, as well as revealing the potential of cinema for the discipline of philosophy. This analysis strengthens my point that imagining or reflecting philosophy is very different from experiencing it. The film *Shutter Island* shows us the important potential of staging and

experiencing a fictional event. But rather than telling us about it or making us imagine it, the film makes us experience the importance of staging and experiencing a fictional event. Thus, the film helps convey the important potential of a thought experiment manifested via the cinematic platform.

GROUP 3: CLARIFYING TWO KEY CONCEPTS

There are two key concepts in cinematic philosophy that I think need to be clarified here. The first is the difference between imagining and experiencing philosophical ideas. The second is my claim that cinema is a companion to philosophy, rather than an illustration of it.

The Difference between Imagining and Experiencing

A few cinematic examples will help to clarify the difference between a film that evokes reflection or imagination and a film that evokes something that is closer to experience. I see *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (Fiennes 2006), for instance, as a reflective explanatory project within the context of cinematic philosophy. The film is constructed around a philosopher (Slavoj Žižek) who identifies and analyzes specific physiological and philosophical references within certain films. The film does not try to do philosophy as an experiential event, but gives us a straightforward and intriguing reflection on other films that have done so. The structure of the film is like an advanced oral lecture manifested in the cinematic medium. In most cases, the audience must imagine the philosophy, rather than experience it. Although the film is within the realm of cinematic philosophy, it could be classified as an advanced oral lecture. This by no means implies that the film is degraded in comparison to other films within the realm of cinematic philosophy, just that it chooses to engage with philosophy in a more traditional, explicit, oral way. *Philosophy: A Guide to Happiness* (De Botton 2000), *Derrida* (Dick and Ziering 2002), *Return to the Source—Philosophy and the Matrix* (Oreck 2004), and *What the Bleep!?: Down the Rabbit Hole*[20] (Arntz et al. 2006), *Examined Life* (Taylor 2008), *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (Fiennes 2013) are a few other examples of this genre within cinematic philosophy.

Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991) clarifies some key points on the potential of cinema to make us see or experience, rather than merely imagine. One of the main cinematic choices of the film is the use of fast cutting that incorporates stock footage using a variety of sizes, colors, and visual for-

mats. In the audio commentary on the film, Stone argues that these blips of consciousness (as he calls this technique) make the historical footage come alive. They make us see the layers of life, rather than imagining them. For example, when the characters speak about a storm, we see the storm through a fast cut that strikes us like lighting. This takes us to the storm and manifests it right in front of our eyes. This is one example of the unique possibilities available in the cinematic medium, because no other art form can make us see such layers with such fluidity. I am not just talking about fast cutting; the main point is the possibility of showing the idea (or whatever the filmmaker wants to show us) as an event in motion, rather than making the audience imagine it. Because it can incorporate such a variety of different possibilities (including images, sound, cutting, animation, and stills, to name a few), cinema holds an unlimited potential to make the audience see and experience ideas and concepts in a variety of ways.

Cinema as a Companion Rather than an Illustration

This project would not be complete if I only talked about cinematic philosophy without trying to engage with it practically. At the same time, I do not believe that filmmakers are the best candidates to analyze their own films. In many ways, filmmakers are like explorers sailing into uncharted waters, driven mostly by their gut feelings and a few technical devices. Think of Christopher Columbus, setting his sails for the East Indies, and then, discovering a new world instead. It takes so much just to prepare for and survive the journey, and any filmmaker who finishes a film is so immersed in it, that the filmmaker is bound to lose perspective on the full meaning and consequences of the project. This is one of the reasons why they say that artists are blind to their work. In some cases, however, and after a significant amount of time has passed, there can be a possibility of gaining more perspective on the meaning and consequences of one's own films.

The *Desert of the Real* (Shamir 2010) is a short film of mine that can clarify a few points about the fact that cinematic philosophy is not a representation or illustration of traditional philosophy. The film is a short visual manifestation inspired by a note made by philosopher Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994). The goal of the film is to suggest how the desert of the real would look and feel onscreen. It gives Baudrillard's note a cinematic life so that it can be experienced by the audience, who can see and feel the consequences rather than just reflecting on them or

imagining them. The film is one interpretation (out of countless possibilities) of Baudrillard's note through the cinematic medium.

Although the cinematic possibility of engaging with Baudrillard's note is very different from the written text, it is nevertheless not an illustration of the text, but provides a different kind of engagement or interpretation. It makes us experience what a desert of the real might look or feel like, thus showing us the consequences of Baudrillard's note. In so doing, it evokes a different way of comprehending Baudrillard's theory, using a radically different set of tools and methods than does the written engagement. Consequently, if the two methods or platforms work together as companions, we can gain a deeper understanding of their philosophical ideas from a variety of perspectives.

I also made another film that is worth mentioning here in relation to representation and illustration. Toward the end of my master's program at *The New School*, I wanted to produce a short student film, but on a considerably larger scale—something that could serve as the main item in my film-production portfolio. On my extremely limited budget, however, I could not compete with the traditional narrative films that were being made as thesis films, with huge average production costs, at other universities. I realized that my only option was to take a chance, going into an alternative direction and pushing the limits of my conceptual and technical capacities, while keeping my expenses modest. The result was a short film entitled *The Vermeers* (Shamir 2011), suggesting a different engagement with Jan Vermeer's paintings (1632–75) via a cinematic platform. The main goal of the film is to merge the content of the art film with the structure of the film trailer, with the aim of contemplating Vermeer's paintings from a different and unexpected point of view, loyal to the source, but also, true to the technological evolution. Although the film deals with the relationship between art history and the cinematic platform, it can also help to clarify why films are not bound to be representations or illustrations.

The Vermeers went on to win a gold medal in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' 2011 Student Oscars. However, the film received harsh criticism along with its success. The interesting aspect of this criticism was that it mostly dealt with issues of representation (of things such as Vermeer's lights, colors, techniques, painting apparatus, and composition). But the main goal of *The Vermeers* was not to represent or illustrate Vermeer's painting, life, or technique (unlike what a traditional art film would have aimed for). Instead, the main goal of the film was to create a different viewing experience of Vermeer's paintings through cinema. And

in the spirit of Gilles Deleuze,[21] neither art nor cinema has ever been representational. And if we go back to philosophy, just as Plato's writings are so much more than a typewriter illustration to Socrates's dialogues; cinematic philosophy must also be emancipated from the need to serve as an accurate or natural illustration or representation of written or oral philosophy. Although cinematic philosophy can—and should—stand on the shoulders of oral and written philosophy, it must strive to come up with new philosophical engagements and experiences while offering a different perspective on the practice of philosophy. For the cinematic platform to settle for its representational or illustrative possibilities is to accept a very narrow perception of its potential.

In this chapter, I have suggested a variety of ways in which oral, written, and cinematic philosophy can cooperate to better confront the chaos and to open new realms to the discipline of philosophy. But this is merely the beginning; cinema is a young practice and it is up to us to continue to explore how this new possibility can open innovative grounds for ideas, thinking, and philosophy.

Notes

1. My analysis also addresses a variety of different cinematic engagements, including fiction films, documentaries, shorts, and installations.
2. The fact that cinema is a popular art form that reaches large audiences holds a huge potential for cinematic philosophy. This means that rather than merely showing us philosophy, movies can ground these ideas in a contemporary context that goes beyond classrooms and libraries, reaching a public that faces these questions and issues via an engagement that touches them both emotionally and intellectually. A film, in this sense, does not illustrate a philosophical theory, but has the potential to examine whether a philosophical theory is relevant to our contemporary times.
3. The famous photo shoot sequence with Veruschka is much closer to sexual intercourse than it is to a professional photo shoot.
4. The film was originally released in 1982; there have been several different versions released in later years, with additions that significantly affect the film. My references here are to what is known as "The Final Cut," released in 2007 by Warner Brothers.
5. In order to prove to Rachael that she is a replicant and that her dreams and memories were planted in her mind, Deckard tells her intimate information that theoretically only she ought to know, thus proving to her that those dreams and memories had been planted in her mind and that she is, therefore, a replicant.

6. "The Scoliosis of Richard III, Last Plantagenet King of England: Diagnosis and Clinical Significance." (Appleby et al. 2014).

7. One example is the segment on the art forger Elmyr De Hory, who tricked the leading professionals in the art world into believing that his forgeries of such artists as Kees Van Dongen, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Amedeo Modigliani, Henri De Toulouse-Lautrec, and Pablo Picasso were authentic.

8. Again, we note that the connection between the film *The Draughtsman's Contract* and Wittgenstein's critique on the Newtonian science, is not based on illustration. We could have chosen a different critique on the Newtonian science, thus claiming that the film illustrate Wittgenstein's critique is out of the question. Our goal is to exemplify the shoulders the film stands on as a different confrontation to a philosophical problem.

9. Although it is considered to be the most acceptable model for scientific explanation, the deductive-nomological model is far from flawless. Notable challenges include the following: the deductive-nomological model fails to articulate how much information is needed for an explanation (David Lewis, 1986); there is a gap between predicting a phenomenon and understanding why the phenomenon occurs (Michael Friedman, 1974); since the use of general laws is essential to the deductive-nomological model, the problem of making valid generalizations and scientific laws, raised by Nelson Goodman (1983), could be used to challenge the deductive-nomological model. Challenges to the principle of reduction (Paul Feyerabend, 1962), which is another essential element of the deductive-nomological model, are also challenges to the deductive-nomological model.

10. Without getting too sidetracked by a technical and complex articulation of the deductive-nomological model, I will quickly note that the model is composed of two types of statements: the explanandum (the phenomenon to be explained) and the explanans (the information that proves the explanation). The sentences of the explanans fall into two subclasses: the first are general laws and the second are sentences that describe the condition of the experiment. The deductive-nomological model must meet four conditions of adequacy that constitute the relation between the explanation and the phenomenon that is explained. The first is that the explanans must give a suitable logical basis for the phenomenon that is explained. The second is that the explanans must contain general laws. The third is that the explanans must contain empirical content and must be capable, at least in principle, of being tested or observed. The fourth is that the explanans must be highly confirmed by the relevant evidence available (Hempel and Oppenheim 1948, 1–4).

11. Includes, but is not limited to, the directing, acting, cinematography, editing, lighting, special effects, plot, sound, dialogue, music, colors, set design, and art design.

12. When Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the Sherlock Holmes books and stories, there was no forensic science and the use of science was not accepted as a way to solve crimes. Most of the crimes at the end of the nineteenth century were solved by confessions.

13. Chapter 7, *Cinesophia*.

14. *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991).

15. At this point, it is not yet revealed that the man who is referred to as the Unmarried Mother is also called John.

16. The filmmakers use the slow, mellow hit song *Time in a Bottle* (Jim Croce, 1972) to intensify the contrast between regular speed and hyper speed.

17. Teddy's fictional version of reality does not stand alone, but is part of a role-play treatment conducted by the entire hospital staff.

18. On thought experiments, please refer to Chap. 6, *Why Philosophy Has Always Needed Cinema*, and Chap. 7, *Cinesophia*.

19. To a certain extent, the fictional role-play treatment works, and Teddy becomes aware of his situation. However, the result is that he realizes the monster he has become; therefore, he prefers to revert to being the fictionalized detective character so that he can die an honest man.

20. It worth mentioning that the film *What the Bleep!?: Down the Rabbit Hole* (2006) is a unique project, since it is a mixture of two different genres within the realm of cinematic philosophy. On the one hand, it incorporates a straightforward, reflective, informative philosophical explanation, which is closer in spirit to an oral lecture. But on the other hand, it also gives us the possibility to experience philosophy as a journey that we take alongside the photographer, Amanda (Marlee Matlin).

21. Deleuze and Guattari (1994, 193) proposes that the term *representation* should be dismissed from art, as art is not an imitation of the world but the creation of a world, and no art and no sensations have ever been representational.

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Conclusion: *The Vision of Cinematic Philosophy*

A CINEMA WITHOUT WALLS

Although our discussion has dealt primarily with cinematic philosophy, it is part of a larger, pressing contemporary issue. It is no secret that the technological advances of the twenty-first century are bound to intensify our dependence on the visual image and the moving frame while, at the same time, challenging the hegemony of the written and printed text.

We live in a world where cinema is no longer cinema, television is no longer television, and photographs are no longer photographs. The once-clear boundaries between them have become vaguer and more unclear as we set sail further into the twenty-first century. We no longer need to experience cinema merely at the cinematic theater: we can experience and are experiencing the "cinematic idea" everywhere and anywhere. Nor is our experience of television any longer confined to our living room, in front of the television set, nor our viewing of photographs confined to our photo albums. We have the unlimited possibility of engaging with these categories everywhere and anywhere. To coin a phrase, we can say that we live in the era of the "cinema without walls."[1]

But this is not the only boundary that has been blurred in our era. The once-clear dividing line between creator, on the one hand, and audience, on the other, has changed significantly. Not only can we experience the visual and cinematic world everywhere and anywhere, but the remarkable ease with which we can create visual images and moving frames, as well as the potential to communicate and make them accessible to a huge number

of participants via social networks and the internet, may elevate this practice to a new type of alphabet. We rely more and more on visuals, moving frames, images, and audio to communicate both basic and complex information. And while we may not yet be at the stage where we can identify this as a new alphabet, it does seem that we are heading that way. There is no doubt that our basic, essential possibilities for communicating, expressing, and understanding the world are changing dramatically.[2]

We swim in an ocean of images and moving frames that now compose and conduct the images of our thought. In his book *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger (1972, 32) notes that images of art surround us in the same manner in which language surrounds us. Only time will show whether this unlimited access and dependence on the visual and cinematic world will become a new type of alphabet that changes and expands our relation to language[3] and the world we live in. But there is no doubt that we are less dependent on the written word and printed text than we used to be and are becoming more dependent on what is already a kind of alphabet or language made up of visual or cinematic possibilities.

More than a revolution, this is actually a renaissance of our trust in the visual and image world. Looking back at history, one can argue that we have always been dependent on artistic, visual possibilities to confront the chaos. From cave paintings to thought experiments by way of Egyptian hieroglyphs, Greek theater, medieval paintings,[4] and Renaissance art, one can see that the visual world, was not just used for entertainment or matters of taste, but used to be a key player in making our world plausible. But the modern era overwhelmingly chose science, logic, and math for its truth-telling, confining the power of the image to the realm of taste, far from any discussion of truth or reality. All this time, however, a visual revolution has quietly and patiently awaited its renaissance, dependent on the technological progress that would allow its re-manifestation.

Our Times Demand Innovative Paths for Comprehending the World We Live In

Our times offer different possibilities for understanding the world in which we live, and cinematic philosophy is part of a wider call to revive our trust in the visual perspective as an equal companion in confronting reality. I believe that cinema touches the deepest level of philosophy, and philosophy touches the deepest level of human ideas and wisdom. Why should we limit ourselves to the belief that the written text is the only

proper medium for creating philosophy? Philosophy should not be confined to nor monopolized by one platform, but should be engaged in different ways over a range of media for thought. Our visual and digital times call for the emancipation of philosophy from the confines of the written text and the tentacles of professors who prefer to chain it to the academic ivory tower.

Robert Frodeman and Adam Briggle (2016) stress that the institutionalization of philosophy in the late nineteenth century was one of the most significant turning points in the history of Western philosophy—a process that precipitated the ongoing failure of contemporary philosophy. Before being institutionalized within universities, philosophy had no central home, and philosophers could be found everywhere, doing a variety of different things. After philosophy become a part of the university, however, it was transformed into a specialized discipline that could only be pursued in an academic setting, creating the expectation that a serious philosopher has to be someone who is part of a university.

Following Bruno Latour, Frodeman and Briggle call this process the purification of philosophy, which is, in sum, the separation of philosophy from society. There are two main causes for this purification: the first is the separation of philosophy from the natural sciences and the second is the appearance of the social sciences. Once the queen of all disciplines, philosophy has been dethroned and is now counted as just one among many disciplines; in the meantime, the natural and social sciences have divided the world up between them. Then, in order to take its place in academia, philosophy needed its own unique domain, with a special language, standards of success, and specified concerns. Philosophy adopted the same structural form as the sciences, but failed to match the sciences in terms of making progress and describing the world.

This act of purification gave birth to the concept of what we know, and what counts, as proper philosophy today. I believe, however, that philosophy is just too important to be kept in some remote tower. Cinematic philosophy is one path to bringing philosophy back to where it matters, back to where it can make a difference, back to the people, and back to the *agora*—the marketplace.

The possibility of experiencing philosophy as a cinematic event is a radical and exciting new way of engaging with philosophy. The cinematic platform has the power to take ideas and make them into events in motion that appear onscreen. We no longer are confined to imagining philosophy, but are able to cinematically manifest things that philosophy could previously

only dream about. Traditional paths for philosophy made us imagine philosophy. Cinematic philosophy makes us experience philosophy, and the possibility of the impossible has manifested in our time.

The future lies in a collaboration among verbal, written, and cinematic philosophy. To take inspiration from Spinoza, we can say that this division of media is, in fact, more like different attributes, different expressions or manifestations of a similar essence. Rather than dismissing any specific medium as a degraded possibility, we can embrace each platform as providing a different and unique access to philosophy, leading to different and unique types of philosophical works.

This leads me back to one of my initial points, that the birth of cinema in 1895 entailed a revolution in philosophical wisdom and thinking. After ages of confinement to the mind as an imagined possibility, the essential need that thought experiments point to can now be manifested as cinematic events onscreen. This creates a practice that has always been needed, but was never before technically possible and blurs the borders between cinema and philosophy; it establishes a new medium for philosophy, thereby offering a new possibility for engaging with philosophical wisdom, a new kind of access to it. The cinematic possibility offers a new platform for philosophy, and we are at the dawn of a new philosophy for philosophy.

BEYOND FILMMAKERS

The fact that we are now able to manifest a practice of thinking that has always been needed leads me to believe that in the very near future, we will observe a cinematic engagement with disciplines of knowledge that have traditionally been dependent on and oriented by the written word and printed text (first and foremost philosophy).[5] This will give rise to experts who not only master the written and oral crafts, but are also proficient in the cinematic, visual, and artistic crafts. In each discipline, these experts will have to understand the relation of their field to the visual and cinematic possibilities.

One piece of evidence for this new requirement for experts in the cinematic arts is Elizabeth Van Ness's (2005) argument that a degree in cinema studies might just become the new MBA (master of business administration, an immensely popular degree at the beginning of the twenty-first century). Van Ness examines the ongoing trend of students with no intention of becoming traditional filmmakers, who nevertheless choose to undertake a degree in cinema. She argues that for some of the

next generation of film students, a shot at Hollywood is no longer the goal. Instead, a degree in cinema has to do with mastering the language of the future. She concludes that cinematic skills are indeed too valuable to be confined to film industry professionals.

Van Ness's opinions fit well with Rudolf Arnheim's projection (1986, 146–51) that art education needs to be understood as a means of coping with the environment and the self. For Arnheim, the ability to visualize complex properties is necessary for scientific, technological, and artistic tasks. For example, he argues that the blackboard and diagrams (used in such fields as the social sciences, grammar, geometry, and chemistry) serve as proof that theory must rely on vision. But the majority of these diagrams are produced by people untrained in their creation, which means that the diagrams fail to transmit their full potential. For Arnheim, it is neither the technical skills of picture making nor the faithful realism of images that guarantees that the meaning is faithfully communicated. Instead, the thinking that is evoked via an image is created by structural properties that are immanent to the image. This demands mastering the artistic craft through education and experience so that the significant properties may surface.[6] Arnheim stresses that there should be no separation between the arts and the sciences or between the uses of words and the uses of pictures.

Our engagement with the world is changing, and it demands a different set of tools. There are those who will oppose the idea that any artistic, visual, or cinematic possibility can be a full partner in confronting the chaos. But just think of the importance of visual images (also known as maps) to the discipline of geography and to our everyday life. If it weren't for these visual images, we would probably need hundreds of written pages to generate the same information that we can get from one map. It shows us that there is a difference between a written manifestation of a territory and a visual manifestation of a territory, and within the discipline of geography, the visual property holds an essential and unique advantage. For another example, just think about the importance of visual icons to the contemporary computer world. The trash can and other icons are visual manifestations of a long computer algorithm. If it weren't for these icons, we would probably need commands made up of such long computer algorithms for every small action, which would restrict interaction with computers to a few experts, and, even then, severely limit the scope of that interaction.

The great artists of the past did not create art for art's sake; nor did they create it purely for entertainment, nor for mere reasons of aesthetics. They

created art to manifest ideas and wisdom and to express them as visual or narrative situations that were accessible, clear, and tangible to their audience. Filmmakers today must realize that they probably have, at their disposal, the most advanced thinking tool ever invented. To view filmmakers merely as entertainers or creators of amusement is to take a very limited view of their potential. Filmmakers create and manifest ideas and concepts as cinematic experiences. They are thinkers and thought provokers whose language is cinema, and who are able to use that language to manifest ideas and concepts as cinematic experiences. Filmmakers can choose to limit their scope to entertainment or amusement, but they are able to do much more. At the same time, to view philosophers merely as academics whose only purpose is to teach and write articles and books is also to take a limited view of what philosophers are or at least should be. Philosophers must learn and master the language of the future, i.e., cinema, in order to expand the media through which they manifest their thinking and philosophical creation and to open up to new possibilities of wisdom.

On the brink of any change there are always those who would condemn it, and those who, fearing the new, want to keep the old. Almost any change or progress encounters fear and resentment. Just think of the fear of books[7] manifested in the film *The Name of the Rose*[8] (Jean-Jacques Annaud 1986). In our times, the same type of fear has been transformed into a fear of cinema, movies, films, or anything that is remotely artistic. But now, instead of burning what they fear (as in the film *The Name of the Rose*), those who fear these things have confined them to matters of taste or mere entertainment. When I was a young man, Friedrich Nietzsche's words on this subject made a strong impression on me: "Very early in my life I took the question of the relation of art and truth seriously: even now I stand in holy dread in the face of this discordance" (*Nachlass*; see Bernstein 1992; see also Heidegger 1991).

Cinematic philosophy is not an isolated niche within cinema studies or philosophy. It is part of a journey into how we choose to understand and know the world we live in. Flooded by the advancements of modern science and oriented by the logical-deductive-mathematical structure for knowledge and truth, we cannot close our eyes to different possibilities for knowledge. Ludwig Wittgenstein's words: "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" (1922, para. 5.6) serve as a great inspiration for this project. Now, more than ever, we must find creative and innovative paths to comprehend and articulate the world in which we live. Do we choose to use new methods to understand this new world, or do we simply

condemn our world, remaining dependent on old concepts to understand it? In a society that is more and more dependent on and infused with visual images and moving frames, it is imperative to open our horizons and to fully understand these new practices for knowledge and wisdom.

The substance of our thought, which once roamed across the ocean of written words and printed text, now sails into the uncharted waters of visual images and moving frames. Not long from now, we will have overcome our general lack of trust in the visual, cinematic, and artistic media. This will open us up to new possibilities of knowledge and introduce a new era of thought, wisdom, and consciousness.

NOTES

1. This phrase is an allusion to André Malraux's *Museum Without Walls* (1967).
2. This is, of course, not to say that people will stop reading or writing (any more than they stopped talking when society shifted from oral to written traditions).
3. I am not talking about a fixed or structured language that would reveal the secrets of cinema. I am not saying that there would be a language in which red means one specific thing, a close-up means another, and intercutting means something else. Cinematic language depends on a variety of elements, such as sounds, visuals, dialogue, actors, colors, and edits, whose meanings are dependent on each other.
4. Jay Bernstein (1992) has a remarkable analysis of how history up to the modern age appears to grant art a cognitive potential. One of his examples is the use of Christian art in the medieval era to present the Christian religion and metaphysics.
5. Even the mere fact that so many theoreticians have tried to establish theories of cinema within other disciplines (such as cognitive film theory, psychoanalytical film theory, postmodernism, Marxist film theory, neo-realism, semiotics, and gender theories) suggests that cinema introduces a new practice of wisdom.
6. There are principles of pictorial composition and visual order that have been perfected in the arts for thousands of years, and in order for diagrams to be properly expressed, they need to be executed by people who have been trained in those principles.
7. One of the film's main motifs is the fear of spreading information and knowledge (and therefore, also progress) via the technology of the written word.
8. The film is an adaptation of Umberto Eco's mystery novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980).

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Epilogue

Sometime in October of 2001, I was sitting in my first philosophy class when the professor, Dr. Amihud Gilead, stormed into the classroom with the energy of a Roman cavalry. He threw his stack of books down on the table and looked at the class with a powerful silence. His first words, "every philosophical journey ends with failure," still echo in my mind; I can still feel the silence, surprise, and shock that floated through the classroom. After a few long seconds of silence, he added: "but these magnificent philosophical failures are worth living for."

I thank you for reading.

Yours truly,

Tal S. Shamir

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[1] Note: Page number followed by 'n' refers to endnotes.