

PHILOSOPHICAL FILM WORLDS

Can films themselves philosophize and if so, how can this be achieved and furthermore interpreted?

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Master's thesis
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ABSTRACT

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The mission and function of this thesis is to generally explore the ways in which philosophy studies and investigates films. More specifically its aim is to examine the theories of Stephen Mulhall and Stanley Cavell, on how films could be regarded as philosophic in nature through philosophy, that films could indeed be independently seen as philosophical exercises in action, film as philosophizing. My goal is to clarify the connection between these two cultural, human endeavours by also having a look at a theory of worldmaking by Nelson Goodman, on how aesthetical art worlds are created and abated. I will try in my thesis to explain why the film as philosophy approach is problematic for philosophy and why on the other hand the theory holds great overall importance for the meaning and function that philosophy is left with related to film in the academic world. I am thus going to also define the border where philosophy stands in relation to film and how it is different from film studies and other such academic disciplines devoted to the study of cinema. The perspective of this thesis is obviously critical and evaluative in nature and contrasting points of views are visibly reviewed, but I shall make it clear that I am in favour of treating movies as not just popular illustrations or handy views and arguments of certain philosophic theories. Instead they should be seen as making real contributions to the philosophical discipline. As such I strongly argue that different cinematic worlds can have philosophical proportions to them and can themselves not only utilize philosophical imagery, problems and questions but may also create new and scintillating answers or at least find new, meaningful philosophical questions and thus make definite contributions to such ongoing philosophical discourse – though the scope and validity of such claims can only be verified within each specific discursive context and dialogic debate. An understanding of different philosophical aspects of movies should accrue through critical interpretations of specific films and specific achievements of film. It does however remain that to argue that films make contributions to philosophy itself is something of a hard row to till and a tough argument to fill. The problematic nature of defining what philosophy is in the first place and what it means to do philosophy remains. To further explain and investigate the film as philosophy approach I will look at an 80's science-fiction Hollywood movie *Blade Runner* and try to show the reader how philosophy can arguably be done in movies. It has to be noted that I am here not giving agency to films, although I am saying that the people doing movies can be seen to "screen" philosophical exercises. Moreover, I believe that Mulhall and Cavell are trying to show us not what philosophy is, but what it should or at least could be.

Key words: philosophy of film, film as philosophy, film worlds, worldmaking, Cavell, Mulhall, Goodman.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The Curtain Opens.....	1 – 6
2. Philosophical Background & Academic Methods	
2.1 To The Dear Demon Reader.....	7
2.2 Philosophy of Film Versus Film Theory.....	7 – 9
2.3 The Importance & Emotional Engagement of Movies.....	9 – 11
2.4 Authorship of Movies.....	12 – 14
2.5 The Nature of Film – What Becomes Of Things On Screen?.....	14 – 16
2.5.1. The Photograph and the Photographed.....	16 – 18
2.5.2. The Photograph and the Receiver (Been Jammin’).....	18 – 21
2.6 The Internal History & Origin(s) of Cinema.....	21 – 22
2.7 Chalmers As an Example of Film Philosophizer.....	22 – 24
2.8 Films As Vehicles For Philosophic Discussion.....	24 – 26
2.9 Methods For Madness.....	26 – 27
3. Nelson Goodman’s Worldmaking	
3.1 Looking at Film Worlds.....	28
3.2 One World Versus Many.....	28 – 29
3.3 Describing Worlds & Intertranslatability.....	29 – 30
3.4 The Importance of Many Worlds.....	30 – 31
3.5 Making Worlds.....	31 – 32
3.6 Breaking Worlds.....	32 – 34
3.7 Subjects and Status of Style & Differences In Style.....	34 – 36
3.8 Quoting & Identifying Different Symbolic Systems.....	36 – 38
3.9 Different Ways Of Quoting.....	38 – 40
4. On Film a World Viewed: Film as Philosophy	
4.1 Why Engage With the Unaging Stage?.....	41 – 42
4.2 Cavell As the Well of Origin.....	42 – 43
4.3 Reflecting On the Condition of It’s Own Possibility.....	43 – 45
4.4 Criticisms from Andersen & Baggini.....	45
4.4.1. Andersen and Philosophical Cinematography.....	45 – 47
4.4.2. Baggini and Fictitious Representations.....	47 – 49
4.5 Shaw’s Shank Redemption?.....	49 – 52
4.6 Mulhall’s Response to the Ponces who Ponder His Poncing Up Upon Film.....	52 – 53
4.7 Over-Interpretations?.....	53 – 56
4.8 Blade Runner As An Example of Film as Philosophy	
4.8.1. Why Blade Runner?.....	57
4.8.2. Running The Blade of Humanity.....	57 – 59
4.8.3. Voight-Kampff Test of Humanity.....	59 – 60
4.8.4. Replicants as Non-human ”Others”.....	60 – 62
4.8.5. Eye For An Eye Makes Acknowledgement Blind.....	62 – 64
4.8.6. The Light That Burns.....	64 – 66
5. Curtain Calls and Falls.....	67 – 75
6. References, Bibliography & Appendix.....	76 – 81

1. THE CURTAIN OPENS...

Cinema is a fascinating and provocative visual medium in conveying different ideas or ideals and portraying landscapes, characters and events that might arguably not in some ways be so vividly shown in other forms of art. Cinema can encompass almost all of the different elements and forms of art known to man and by successfully doing so can heighten our sense of reality, give us vivid images, make us feel rich, meaningful moments, a plethora of emotions and most importantly for my investigation to make us stop for a while, step aside of our everyday lives and question the very fundamental things at our core that we sometimes seem to simply take for granted. These are amongst just some of its possible, frivolous impacts on us. Philosophy has many questions to ask about film. What is film? What are these film worlds we inhabit? In other words what do film worlds and the images on film relate to? How can we know anything about films? What can we know about films? What are the ethical implications of, say, propaganda films for a nation or heavily marketed and advertised programs for children? Where are the aesthetical lines between an artsy, philosophical avant-garde cinematic happening and a big, blockbuster, lackluster Hollywood drab really drawn? Can and should they be drawn at all? Who is the author of movies? How is it possible for two-dimensional images to move us? Why do we care so much for movies? I am mainly interested in a more specific question that has not until recently been of interest in the academic philophic world: Can a film be philosophical – or indeed – philosophy itself in the doing? In my graduation dissertation I will look at cinema from a philosophical perspective and argue that films can create and turn into philosophical worlds that may and do indeed affect and effect the ways in which we perceive and understand the world philosophically. The ways in which cinema can arguably do this are manifold and my central guiding pro graduation thesis question is *“How does cinema incorporate, instigate and translate philosophical and ideological aspects of ‘real world’ situations into cinematic experiences and how can those in return effect the audience’s perception and understanding of the world?”*.

I am interested in the real philosophical realities that fictional films present and am thus obviously concerned with the different realities (“worlds”) that we as cinematic viewers from time to time inhabit. This aspect is in my thesis covered by having a look at Nelson Goodman’s cognitivist and aesthetic theory of ‘worldmaking’, where films can be seen as an artistic expression centered on the creation, perception, and analysis of the art work’s world as a symbolic object. I will closely follow Goodman’s rather radical, cognitivist relativism and his theory on worldmaking and symbol

systems. Goodman's ideas have now been further approached and researched in the modicum of film by Daniel Yacavone and I will also try to look at his research on the matter. Another interesting take on the idea of film worlds is introduced by Daniel Frampton (2006) as he argues for the existence of a 'filmworld' that is created and 'designed' by what he terms the 'filmind' – the equivalent of the film itself – as a consequence of its 'film-thought' or 're-thinking' about its characters and their situations. In any world or worldmaking system, what is described or represented is necessarily related to how it is described or represented. These descriptions that Goodman talks about are authentic and unique, however they share yet another world, one in which the creators of such worlds inhabit, that of our own. If we look at film worlds as ideology-creating in nature we begin to see that in their unique approaches they still share something fundamental from "our world". What I mean here by ideology is a coherent, complete conceptual structure, which is truthfully created – either by the viewer, the filmmakers or both – in order to give meanings and a sense of sensibleness to understand reality as it is. Perception here is analogous to seeing the world in an "ideologized" way. Viewing a movie is an active act where one participates in a dialogue with the screen, thus opening up the possibility for a film to philosophize. Thomas Wartenberg (2007) calls these cinematic arguments "screenings", an argument is not presented, but rather "screened" on film. Fiction can arguably for some even turn into a worldview and this is achieved by immersing with the film world on a psychological level that Daniel Frampton (Filmosophy, 2006) calls a 'filmind'.

I will intend to however not look at film worlds simply as symbolic objects such as Goodman might see them but juxtapose his idea that these artistic worlds are in principle incommensurable with one thing they can and do indeed arguably share – that of them being able to philosophize. There is an obvious and present connection, relationship and dialogue between philosophy and cinema and I will in my thesis want to try and break the 'disparate gab' argument to further enhance the understanding of why these two very humane forms of creative thought and imagination should be seen as having a strong link between one another. Even though it is true that with respect to art, specifically, there can be no 'translation' of one art world into another except at the expense of discarding what is unique about each, as such one can tackle the almost solipsist aesthetic argument with the idea of a broader understanding of art through film as philosophy as first stated by Stanley Cavell and furthered by Stephen Mulhall. As Cavell puts it, the first successful movies were not really so much applications of a medium that were defined by given possibilities, but the creation of an entirely new medium by their giving significance to specific possibilities:

“Only the art itself can discover its possibilities, and the discovery of a new possibility is the discovery of a new medium. A medium is something through which or by means of which something specific gets done or said in particular ways. It provides, one might say, particular ways to get through to someone, to make sense; in art, they are forms, like forms of speech. To discover ways of making sense is always a matter of the relation of an artist to his art, each discovering the other.” (Cavell, 1996, 122)

As such I argue that different cinematic worlds can have philosophical proportions to them and can themselves not only utilize philosophical imagery, problems and questions but may also create new and scintillating answers or at least find new, meaningful philosophical questions and thus make definite contributions to such ongoing philosophical discourse – though the scope and validity of such claims can only be verified within each specific discursive context and dialogic debate. The aspect of films themselves philosophizing is also one of the central themes of my dissertation and a guiding question for it, that the reader should also keep in mind at all times, is this: *Can films themselves philosophize and if so, how can this be achieved and furthermore interpreted?*

I will also in my work try to present to the reader different ways in which cinema can or indeed has been viewed from a philosophical perspective, something that is at the present time broadly speaking called the philosophy of film. Throughout the discourse on the philosophic background to cinema I intend to go through four different ways in which cinema can be understood and dissected philosophically.¹ The classifications will not however be as strict as one might imagine and like to think: they will only be guidelines to understand the different philosophical approaches to cinema, since some of them do indeed contextually overlap with one another;

Firstly, a *film theory approach*, which seeks to develop concise, systematic concepts that apply to the study of film as an art form. There are other cultural-ideological approaches and ways of “reading movies”, such as a *psychoanalytical*, *structuralist* or *feminist approach* to cinema. These I will mostly have to disregard in my reading of the relationship between philosophy and cinema simply due to the fact that they are too broad to be concisely explored, examined or investigated here but will try to at least lead the reader to the right authors for starting points and pages if he / she is interested in these particular approaches. The way in which cinema engages itself emotionally with the audience and how movies have become important to us is also briefly explored.

Secondly a *theoretical approach*, film as illustration of theory and theoretical problems where film

¹These classifications are according to my knowledge formulated by Robert Sinnerbrink who in his lecture at Jyväskylä in the summer of 2006 firstly introduced them to me and I have slightly altered them for the thesis since.

is a vehicle and illustrator for philosophical analysis of contemporary problems or philosophical discussion. I will give an example from my own life; a lecture held by David Chalmers at the University of Victoria regarding the *Matrix* movie. I coin him as a film philosophizer, even though he was very meticulous in going through the metaphysical problems related to the idea of brains in a vat his treatment of the movie in itself was still in my mind rather superficial. Other similar approaches that I will briefly go through is the *auteur* approach, where the filmmaker, the director is solely seen as the artistic force, the author of the whole movie. The thought of films being vehicles for philosophic and social discussion and criticism is also momentarily brought to the limelight and attention of the reader.

Thirdly, we can call this a *metaphysical approach*, where the cinematic viewing experience is dissected in a metaphysical way and metaphysical problems are derived and drawn out from it. In this discussion I will introduce some ideas about the ontological problems of cinema by Stanley Cavell and Walter Benjamin, their thoughts on the photographic reproduction and transcription and the metaphysical unrestlessness of the human body as a subject for the film camera. The thought of a movie having an internal history and the fact that movies do have a definite historical origin is also discussed.

Finally there is the fourth approach, *film as philosophy*. I will try to understand how this rather new approach might function, how it could be or has been implemented to the philosophical study of specific movies and what problems it poses on a general theory of the cinematic medium. Stanley Cavell was really the first philosopher to properly address – or rather to revive – the issue of film as philosophy from a purely philosophical background and field of academics in the 1970's. His work has been carried on by Stephen Mulhall, whose recent writings, or more specifically an introductory note published in a book of his in 2002 has spawned much of the recent philosophic literature on the matter. I shall mostly be looking at and focusing on the contemporary writings and works of Mulhall and Cavell and the discussions and commentaries which their writings have provoked and produced amongst peer philosophers.

I will use the movie “Blade Runner” to give the reader not only a sense of where my aesthetical appreciations lie when it comes to cinema, but also to make it a prime example of a movie that can arguably be viewed as a cinematic happening to qualify for a “film as philosophy” title. This is obviously controversial but I will try to persuade the reader about this by exploring the different themes in the movie and how they relate to philosophy. The discussion will be somewhat mute if

the reader has not at least seen the movie at some point, so I advise you on this note as much of the discussion is very specifically related to the movie, though I will obviously try my best to give a sense of the movie's ambiance for a possible reader that for some odd reason has not seen it.

The modest suggestion by the film as philosophy approach is that films can themselves make contributions to the ongoing philosophical debates, dialogues and discourses. In other words films create worlds which can have philosophical proportions to them and these worlds can themselves not only utilize philosophical imagery, problems and questions but can themselves create answers or at least solidify these questions and make definite contributions to ongoing philosophical debates. The idea here obviously stretches the boundaries and perception of conventional philosophy but what I am here arguing, in the same vein as Stanley Cavell and Stephen Mulhall, is that we have to look at philosophy from a wider point of view. It cannot be contained in the written academic jargon of a few intellectual anglo-american university professors. It can arguably cross symbolic systems and reproduce and exemplify vitally within them, as Nelson Goodman argues over art. The way to understand these kinds of philosophical debates is only to also "do" them. Viewing films is a beginning, but the nature of film allows it to have such a broad scope of presentation that what can come out of them is a multitude of different symbolic levels of engaged discussion and dialogue, perhaps in song, dance, poetry or art. These different symbolic interpretational systems can understand each other but can also stay foreign to one another. What is important is to try to always treat films one at a time, one "world" at a time. It is good to note that I am here not arguing for a continuous and overlapping theory of film but outlining a specific philosophical way of looking at cinema through the notion of creating film worlds and interpreting them as philosophical manifestations.

The discussion on film can also take the form of philosophical academic inquiry, e.g. written language, such as is the format of this semi-intellectual thought-process write-up of mine, but it in my mind cannot be fully contained within it. If the format would allow me I would surely present the reader with a song or a short film to better enhance my arguments. I here rely heavily on Nelson Goodman's general view of the arts as contributing to the understanding and indeed to the building of the realities we live in to build my own thesis for understanding film. Ultimately, in Goodman's view, art is not sharply divided, in goals and means, from science and ordinary experience. Paintings, dances, and such are all in a sense symbols that classify parts of reality for us, as do such things as scientific theories and what makes up common, ordinary knowledge. It is probably true that criticism and layers of doubt can be thus cast on the function and meaning that philosophy is

left with. What is philosophy then? Simply everything that man intentionally creates and interprets from this world? Perhaps such a broad description is based on a premise that human action involves some form of intentionalism and that this intentionalism requires interpretation and that this interpretation can be seen as philosophical in nature when it takes the form of doubt, casts shadows into the clearness of reality, peers into the depths of endless questions. If the philosopher with his language and rhetoric has this at his disposal then why does not the filmmaker or the artist? If the reader accepts these few premises of mine at the beginning whilst peering into the murky fountain of film philosophy, let us take a deep breath of fresh air and together plunge and spring through our little philosophical inquiry into the shadowy and at times glistening projected realms of cinematic, moving images!

2. PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND & ACADEMIC METHODS

2.1 To The Dear Demon Reader

Dear demon reader, this section is intended for your viewing purpose and pleasure. I will try to here holistically look at the philosophy of film as an academic endeavour, where my thesis situates itself in this field of academia and what other possible roots and routes can be taken in the already vast forest of philosophical writings concocted about cinema. I shall try to show you the way that we are going to be walking on, which paths have historically already been tramped by other philosophers, why we will not be venturing into some thickly branched philosophical ravines, what sort of conventions the field has already produced – that might also trammel our own quest – and what new, borrowed and blue might my own contribution here make. If the road seems too thick with plants and other incessantly growing things we have to cut them down and make way with our Ockham's razor. If the road ahead seems too big, then the tour guide here sincerely is to blame for choosing a path too wide and will hopefully know how to guide you into more interesting parts of the philosophical forest. If the tour has not been of interest to you then we are both to take a hard look at our expectations, needs and wants and contrast them together. In any case I hope to show you why the philosophy of film right now is a very vibrant and active branch of philosophy and what it has to contribute to the overall philosophical problems with which we are all still faced with every single day of our living lives.

2.2 Philosophy of Film Versus Film Theory

Philosophers have only recently, that is to say in the past two three decades, academically found film to be of great interest to them. As Thomas Wartenberg notes, many film scholars who are not professional philosophers have made many contributions to the philosophy of film. This vastly differentiates the area from many other such philosophical disciplines: While physicists or other scientists often write about the philosophy of science, the academic discipline of the philosophy of physics or biology is dominated by professional philosophers. However this is not the case in the philosophy of film. Another peculiarity is that within film studies, which itself is an institutionalized area of academic study, there is a sub-field of film theory that has significant overlap with the

philosophy of film even though the majority of its practitioners operate on significantly different philosophical assumptions than Anglo-American philosophers of film. A film theory approach can generally be said to seek and develop concise, systematic concepts that apply to the study of film as an art form. Questionably one of the characteristics of philosophy as a discipline is its questioning of its own nature and basis. The philosophy of film shares this characteristic with the field in general. Indeed, a first issue that the philosophy of film must address is the grounds for its own existence. This involves not only the question of what the field should look like, but also that of whether it has any reason to exist at all (Wartenberg 2008).

So having this in mind, how, if at all, can or should we assess and access cinema from a philosophical perspective and field of academics? Put the question in another simple way as Andrew Light puts it: *"[...]the question then remains as to what philosophy brings to the understanding of film that other academic fields do not?"* (Light 2003, 4). Philosophy here not in my mind understood only strictly – and perhaps provocatively – as an academic hobby of bored, rich, western men, but more importantly a view of the world which leaves questions sometimes unanswered or unsettled but still tackles baffling and uneasy matters bravely, without hesitation. Is there indeed truthfully any specific need for a separate philosophic discipline devoted to film in addition to more empirical studies of film undertaken under the support of film studies itself? The question is indeed a pressing one, for it asks philosophers to justify their recently found interest in film. How can this be justified without it seeming as if film philosophers are unsoundly just trying to incorporate a highly popular form of popular culture into their academic domain? Are professional philosophers just making *"an attempt by an esoteric academic field to gain popularity among an undergraduate population and a general public that is unable and/or willing to read difficult texts, preferring to watch films, television and related visual media instead"* (Wartenberg 2007, 10)? Should we on the other hand agree with Stephen Mulhall when he notes that

" [...] philosophy has something distinctive to contribute to the ongoing conversations about particular films and the medium of cinema that play such an important role in contemporary public culture." (Mulhall 2002, 10)?

Is there a reason to view movies through a philosophical dissection and if so, how can this at all be achieved and done? The answer to the first question in my mind is yes, there is a sufficient amount of arguments to conclude that indeed cinema has to be viewed and reviewed from a philosophical perspective. Andrew Light confirms when he says that *" [...] some books [on movies] already have a substantial enough philosophical content to independently justify what philosophers*

have been doing in this area.” (Light 2003, 6). However I think that this type of argument is not completely accurate. The mere fact that there is philosophical content in anything does not in my mind solely justify for philosophy as an academic discipline to come and blatantly philosophize and engage itself with whatever the subject matter is. However it is good to note, as Wartenberg does, that philosophical aesthetics has always had a concern not just with art in general but with specific art forms. Beginning with Aristotle's *Poetics* philosophers have sought to explain the specific characteristics of each significant art form of their culture, at least within our western culture. Plato was quick to banish poets from his Republic and even though this goes to show that philosophers are skeptics of art – if not, as one of my teachers wryly has said, failed artists themselves – proves that there is a present and felt connection between art and philosophy. From this point of view, there is no more reason to question the existence of a philosophy of film than there is that of a philosophy of music or a philosophy of painting, two fields that are well accepted among the concerns of aesthetics. Since film is a significant art form in our contemporary world, philosophy might even be judged to have a responsibility to investigate its nature. (Wartenberg 2008). If one is interested in further exploring the different approaches of film theory and film philosophy with respect to cinema and each other, a good starting place is a collection of essays edited by Murray Smith and Richard Allen entitled “*Film Theory and Cinema*” (1997).

2.3 The Importance & Emotional Engagement of Movies

What exactly happens when we are looking at a film and when we truly immerse ourselves into it and “forget” our external world? Is this really the case? As this is not a psychology paper we will not look in-depth into the mechanisms that arguably “suck us in” to the world of movies, though we will be more fully exploring the idea of a film world later on by having a closer look at the theory presented by Nelson Goodman. In our endeavour we will simply state that movies exist, human beings view movies and for some reason have an emotional engagement with them. For a fuller cognitive approach to the matter, I suggest the reader turn to Gregory Currie’s decisive cognitive analysis in *Image and Mind: Film, Philosophy & Cognitive Science* where he asserts that film is essentially a pictorial medium and that trying to explain the psychology of film viewing in terms of the viewer’s imaginary occupation within the world of the film is false and that the film viewing experience is usually always impersonal. Currie insists on the realism of pictures and the impossibility of assimilating them to language, something that we will quickly look into when we

talk about the photograph, the photographer and the photographed. Currie is also in stark contrast to the psychoanalytical approach, whose paradigm has been the tendency to think of film as an essentially illusory medium, capable of causing the viewer to temporarily think of the film as something “real”, and of himself occupying a place of observation within that world. The psychoanalytic approach has been most formidably practiced by Jacques Lacan and a full account of the view in terms of philosophy of film can be read in Christian Metz’s *“The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema”*.

What is so special about movies though? Why do we care for and talk so much about them? Stanley Cavell deals with these issues in his book *“The World Viewed”*. He looks at cinema as an art form and makes a good observation when he points out that

” [...] *those who live on the promise of art, those whose pride is education and those whose pride is power of practicality – all care for movies, await them, respond to them, remember them, talk about them, hate some of them and are grateful of some of them.*”(Cavell 1979, 5)

This is obviously still just plain observation without a philosophical context, but the main argument is that movies are and have become increasingly important to us. Why is this so? How and why do we indeed care what happens on screen? Why should we care what happens to fictional characters? After all, since they are fictional, their fates shouldn't matter to us in the way that the fates of real people do. However we do get involved in the destinies of these imaginary beings and the question really is why and how is this even possible. Because so many films that attract our interest are fictional, the question seems to be an important one for us to answer. One answer common in the film theory tradition, according to Wartenberg (2005), is that the reason that we care about what happens to these fictional characters is because we identify with them. Although or, perhaps, because these characters are highly idealized, namely they are more beautiful, brave and so on than any actual human being could be, viewers identify with them, thereby also taking themselves to be correlates of these ideal beings. But once we see the characters as versions of ourselves, their fates matter to us, for we see ourselves as wrapped up in their stories which seem to be our stories at least for a while. A cultural-ideological approach by feminism has obviously put this type of approach into question. A full account of a feministic approach can be found in *Women’s Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* by Annette Kuhn or a collection of different essays compiled by Sue Thornman entitled *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*.

We can however argue that this type of identification is too crude a tool to be used in trying to

explain our emotional engagement with these characters, for there is a wide variety of attitudes that we take to the fictional characters we see projected on the screen. And even if we did identify with some characters, this would not explain why we had any emotional reactions to characters with whom we did not identify. Clearly, a more general account of viewer involvement with cinematic characters and the films in which they appear is required. The general outline of the answer philosophers of film have provided to the question of our emotional involvement with films is that we care about what happens in films because films get us to imagine things taking place, things that we do care about. Because how we imagine things working out does affect our emotions, fictional films have an emotional impact upon us (Wartenberg 2008). There are more specific readings of the imagination as a vehicle for understanding movies, such as a simulation theory or thought theory approach. Gregory Currie's approach is arguably a simulation theory approach and people interested in that kind of approach should approach his texts. For another, structural linguistic and thus semiotic approach can be found on Christian Metz's *Film language: a semiotics of the cinema*. In *Cinema and semiotic: Peirce and film aesthetics, narration, and representation* Johannes Ehrat's analysis of meaning in cinema purports that what is needed is greater philosophical reflection on the construction of meaning. He attempts to resurrect meaning by employing Charles S. Peirce's theories on semiotics to debate the major contemporary film theories that have diluted it. A thought theory approach has been developed by Murray Smith and Noël Carroll with respect to the emotional response to fiction and they argue that filmgoers can be moved emotionally by imaginatively entertaining thoughts, without necessarily believing in their truthfulness. For more on the thought theory, see Carroll, Noël: *Philosophy of Horror* (79 – 88) or Smith, Murray: *Engaging Characters*.

It is good to then ask how should films be any different from let us say novels on this matter? After all we do get emotionally involved to some of them and some become quite important to us on their own part. Why should movies not have the same impact on us? It does not in my mind matter whether it is simply crude psychological identification or a more complex comparison of interrelated themes of imagination of places and events which make us feel involved. The more pressing question in my mind is to ask what magnitude do we usually give these feelings and to what extent can cultural products such as movies have an overall impact on the way we imagine and understand the world. But novels are generally the work of one specific author whom we grant the creative rights of that given piece of writing. A good question to be raised and asked in relation to film then is, who is the creative owner of these movies?

2.4 Authorship of Movies

Another theoretical approach to movies, which we will now focus our attention on, is that of the *auteur* approach, where the *auteur*, filmmaker, has an active role in the creation of his/her movies and whose movies are characterized by his creative influence. The filmmaker is as such an active maker of the movie. According to the approach, ideally the director is the final editor – and thus the author, *auteur* – of any given movie. On this line of interpretation, the director of the film is the creative intelligence who shapes the entire film in a manner parallel to literary novels or classical musical compositions. However films are the product of many individuals working together. This becomes apparent when one watches the credits at the end of any recent big budget or independent film and sees the countless list of names that come scrolling by. So how is a film supposed to be the geniality of just *a* specific author? Wartenberg smartly and sharply solidifies the absurdity of this question when he points out that

“A negative consequence of the influence of auteurism is the relative neglect of other important contributors to the making of a film. Actors, cinematographers, screenwriters, composers, and art directors all make significant contributions to films that the auteur theory underestimates.” (Wartenberg 2008)

As a general theory of the cinema, then, the *auteur* theory is clearly flawed. Not all films can be attributed to the control of the director. Actors are the clearest examples of individuals who may have such a significant impact on the making of a specific film that the film has to be seen as attributable to them even more importantly than the director. On the centrality of acting having a large role in the overall film narratives has more fully been explored by Johannes Riis and a good, concise treatment on acting from him can be found in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (Routledge 2009, (3 – 12)). A semiotic approach to actors as characters and vice versa can be found in Eero Tarasti's *Snow, forest, silence: the Finnish tradition of semiotics* and in there an essay by Henry Bacon called *Actors as characters, characters as actors, in audiovisual fiction* (262 - 270). Another fascinating way of interpretation can be found in *Cinematic Thinking: Philosophical Approaches To the New Cinema* by James Philips, where each essay is organized around an interpretation of a postwar filmmaker and the philosophical issues his or her work raises.

Another cultural comparison might be of use, for example that of an album by say an artist we call “X”. When we (hopefully) buy the artist X's record we come to think that we are buying his creative effort alone. However anyone who knows a bit about how the recording industry works

knows that there are numerous people who make up even just one artist's recording possible. Other musicians, producers, graphic designers and photographers all have their share to play. Sure they get their mentioning on the "credits" in the booklet, but the audience and listener is still not thinking that they are buying their efforts per se. It is thus however arguably psychologically easy to think of the album as only the artist's sole creative effort. This is to clarify how easy it is to have this sort of an approach on such cultural products. However to return to our film approach, another way in which the *auteur* approach can also be cast to an unfavorable light is highlighted by Stanley Cavell as he eloquently retorts and refutes the approach when he asserts that:

"The auteur emphasis turns us away from the aesthetic proposition even more unnoticeable in its obviousness – that a movie comes from other movies. Each of the arts knows of this self-generation, however primitive our understanding remains about the relationship between tradition and the individual talent." (Cavell 1979, 7).

It is in my opinion a mistake to treat all films as if they were simply the product of one crucial individual, the director. A more general criticism of the *auteur* theory is its emphasis on individuals. Most of the great directors studied by film theorists worked within well-defined institutional settings. To attempt to understand films without placing them within their broader context of production has been seen as a real shortcoming of the theory (Wartenberg 2008). Another way still to do away with the individualistic approach of authorship or at least to criticize it is by a more theoretical formulation within postmodernism, with its famous – or infamous – declaration of the death of the author. What this self-consciously rhetorical gesture asserts is that works of art, including films, should not be seen as the product of a single controlling intelligence, but have to be seen as products of their times and social contexts. The goal of the critic should not be to reconstruct the intentions of the author but to display the various different contexts that explain the production of the work as well as its limitations.

While the general institutional context is certainly crucial for understanding a film, the *auteur* theory does nonetheless provide a useful focus for some efforts in the scholarly study of film: an exploration of the work of individual directors. If one is interested in finding out more about this specific approach, I would suggest turning to Andrew Sarris' writings on the matter, for example his succinct essay *Auteur Theory and Film Evaluation* in the collection of essays compiled by Thomas E. Wartenberg, entitled *The Philosophy of Film: Introductory Texts and Readings* (2005) or the film director François Truffaut's essay in the same compilation, *La Politique Des Auteurs*. The thought of the director as the final maker of the movie is originally credited to Truffaut, who later really

became the crest in the era of the "new wave" in French cinema. He was himself originally a film critic, who developed his theory and used the term in a polemic way, to denigrate the dominant movie making of his time, where the great literary works of art were being adapted into the silver screen and sometimes made into cinematic masterpieces. To give value to his new approach he then went on to argue that only the movies that are the makings of one specific author can be considered art and give the honorary title of art. Sarris, who was also a film scholar and critic absorbed Truffaut's theory to defend and support film studies as an academic discipline. For Sarris the theory was a way to evaluate and value the worth of movies. Sarris' original contribution to the theory was that he claimed that even the bad movies of the great directors had more intrinsic artistic value and were thus better than masterpieces of other, lesser filmmakers.

The idea that Cavell introduced in the small quote just a few paragraphs above is in my mind much more compelling and question-begging than the general author approach: A movie comes from other movies, that is to say that it, as is the case with any other form of art, usually needs a tradition to spring from. It needs a tradition that either gives it a tendency or a place in what can only be seen as a continuum of arts. However from this there arises some baffling philosophical problems to which we turn our attention to in section 2.6. Right now we will look at perhaps the most common metaphysical, philosophical question that can be asked about film: What is film?

2.5 The Nature of Film – What Becomes Of Things On Screen?

We have thus far looked at cinema as an emotionally engaging medium and pondered its historical relation to itself and other forms of art. We also discussed the creative integrity of any such given cultural product. These, it is good to note, have all been discussed by film theorists already before philosophers had any interest at all to talk about movies in-depth. A way in which philosophers can indeed distinguish themselves from other academic disciplines is to talk about the metaphysical and ontological aspects of cinema. In a recent collection of essays entitled "*Cavell On Film*" written by Stanley Cavell, he asks in the introductory notes for the compilation of essays

"What becomes of things on film? [...] does this title express a genuine question? That is, does one accept the suggestion that there is a particular relation (or a particular system of relations, awaiting systematic study) that holds between things and their filmed projections..." (Cavell, 2005, 1 – 2)

The question to the answer is undoubtedly yes, there are numerous metaphysical problems concerning specifically movies – as in moving pictures – as with any other form of art spawned by culture. The real question is how we go on about defining them and assessing their coherence. Firstly, from a philosophic standpoint, we have to look at ontological problems that arise from the medium itself. Many of these were already addressed by Stanley Cavell in the 1970's but some of them are eloquently readdressed by Stephen Mulhall. When talking about movies he points out that the medium is itself dependent upon the photographic reproduction (or better, transcription) of human beings, the projection of moving images of embodied human individuals presented to a camera:

” In one sense, in one frame of mind, this phenomenon can appear utterly banal; in another it can seem utterly mysterious – as fascinating as the fact that a human being can be portrayed in paint, or that ink-marks on paper can express a thought.” (Mulhall 2002, 3)

This “mysterious aspect of film” is a matter which begs for closer systematic study. Within this viewpoint there lies a number of philosophical conundrums and one of the most pressing ones is later introduced by Mulhall when he asks us a well-known problem in the philosophy of art: “ [...] *what exactly is the difference between an object in a photograph and the object itself?*” (Mulhall 2002, 63). In other words what are objects in themselves and on screen? There is also another problem closely tied to that problem, namely the perplexing issue and connection between a photograph's viewer – “the receiver” – and the photograph itself. Cavell also addresses this issue in another rather distinct way when he points out that

”The reality in a photograph is present to me while I am not present to it; and a world I know, and see, but to which I am nevertheless not present (through no fault of my subjectivity) is a world past.” (Cavell 1979, 23)

Here Cavell is pointing to the temporal difference that the audience and the filmed projections have with one another. So how do photographs and the objects they are photographs of relate to one another, what is their relationship? And how about the receiver of such photographs, what is his/her stance first of all to the photograph and then to the object of which the photograph is a representation – or rather a transcript – of? We will now look at these matters more closely because the implications that these conclusions on photographs have indeed bear direct consequences to the overall analysis and interpretation of our philosophical view on cinema. It is obviously the one pressing question that has to be first fully addressed and if not answered then at least fully exposed before venturing into other possible viewpoints and philosophical standpoints.

2.5.1 The Photograph and the Photographed

According to Mulhall, the first problem about the connection between an object in a photograph and the object itself was firstly introduced into the discussion of the philosophy of film by Cavell. Cavell raises the philosophical question of the relationship between a photograph and that of which it is a photograph and Mulhall simply continues to express and develop this idea through a sort of a dialogue when he points out that

” [...] Cavell has argued that a photograph of an object is not, as painting of it may be, a visual representation of that object (it does not stand for that object, nor form a likeness of it), but rather a visual transcription of it.” (Mulhall, 2002, 63 – 64)

So in taking a picture one is not in a sense using a method of interpreting what one sees but in a sense the camera is doing the interpretation for you. But are photographers not intentionally looking through the lens at the world and interpreting it in a way when they are for example choosing the specific time, place and composition of how they want to take a certain photograph? Perhaps the question is not entirely accurate or reflective of what Mulhall is trying to say. We should instead focus on what is meant by the notion of a transcription in the first place. Transcribing something suggests a mechanical approach and in an earlier discussion of Cavell’s ideas Mulhall insists that

“The notion of ‘transcription’ is in part meant to highlight the fact that the photographic recording process is inherently mechanical. In this respect a photograph resembles a record of a concert or an opera, it is analogous to aural transcriptions; but it is also importantly different from them.” (Mulhall, 1994, 224)

The way in which a photograph is different from, say a recording, is according to Mulhall because it does not copy the sight, look or appearance of an object in the way in which a recording can be said to transcribe the sound of an object – primarily because a sight is either an extraordinary happening or an object itself;

” [...] what we see when we sight something is not the sight of an object but the object itself. Objects can be said to have or to make sounds, but not to have or to make sights; so there is nothing of the right sort for a photograph to be a photograph of short of the object itself.” (Mulhall 2002, 64)

So photographs are indeed transcripts of actual objects in the world but still their nature and connection with one another and the world is not entirely resolved. To further complicate the issue we have to think of photographs in the way that Cavell thinks about them, of frames and fragments in the world:

“The world of a painting is not continuous with the world of its frame; at its frame a world finds its limits. We might say: a painting is a world; a photograph is of the world. What happens in a photograph is that it comes to an end....when a photograph is cropped, the rest of the world is cut out” (Cavell, 1979, 23-24)

To find an example to further assist (or confuse) in the comparison between objects and transcripts consider this: the transcription of an actual object, say a picture of the mouth of Mona Lisa in Da Vinci’s painting, has successfully cut out something essential from the actual object of the representation the painting should be about, the portrait of Mona Lisa. Should we then continue to say that the picture, which is just a mechanical transcript of a representation of Mona Lisa’s lips, is an inaccurate, cut out picture of the world? What then is the connection between the objects which the painting was a representation of – Mona Lisa and her actual lips – and that of the picture of the representation? Perhaps it might seem that this is just pointless nitpicking and we should instead focus on film, but as we shall discover, the conclusions we draw from these ideas have direct implications to the metaphysical problems we also find of the objects projected on screen.

In his reading of Cavell’s argumentation, Mulhall suggests that the most obvious worry with this kind of treatment of the problem between a photograph and a painting, a visual representation and a visual transcript, is that it seems to further obscure the distinction between seeing an object in a photograph and seeing the object. A way this apparent paradox can be addressed, according to Mulhall, is to think that we are approaching the question of this undeniable difference with a questionable assumption that the objects in a photograph or film must differ in some specifiable respect from real objects, one having or lacking a feature that the other does not. We can distinguish real objects from one another by specifying criteria, determining specific differences between them. So thus we can distinguish real objects from objects in a photograph in such a way;

”[...] there are no criteria which distinguish a photographed object from the object itself and the distinction must be specified not in terms of visible differences but in terms of the different relationships in which we stand to them.” (Mulhall 2002, 64)

Here Mulhall entwines and ties the two introduced problems irremovably together. We will now

look at the ways in which we can stand in relation to the photographed objects and objects itself and see how the matter is much more easily apprehensible when looked at from the point of view of the perceiver and the perceived.

2.5.2 The Photograph and the Receiver (Been Jammin')

First off, in a rather sceptic and existential twist, let us look at Cavell and his rather unnerving thought on the matter. Cavell challenges us to think about our relationship to the characters and places on screen as he says that

“A screen is a barrier...It screens me from the world it holds – that is, makes me invisible. And it screens that world from me – that is, screens its existence from me. That the projected world does not exist (now) is its only difference from reality. (There is no feature or set of features, in which it differs. Existence is not a predicate).” (Cavell, 1979, 24)

According to Mulhall for us to try and protrude into this condense thought a very useful comparison here is our relationship to the characters in a play. Those characters do not differ in any specifiable respect from our fellow human beings outside the theatre, but our relationship to them differs. More precisely, whilst we can place ourselves in the same time as the play's characters and can confront each presented moment of the play's events as the present moment of its characters lives (importing neither our knowledge of its ending nor any assumption that what has already happened dictates their fate), we and they cannot occupy the same space. That is to say that there is no path from our position to theirs, we are not in their presence. To connect this to the analogy of the photographic reproduction Mulhall asserts that

“By contrast, the viewers of a photograph or film share neither a space nor a time with the object or person photographed; they are not in its physical presence, and the moment at which the object was captured by the camera is not made present to them and cannot be made present by them [...] In short, the world of a photograph does not (and cannot) exist now.” (Mulhall, 2002, 64)

Still we are in some sense deluded into believing that we share that same space and time with the characters on screen, that we are in a sense observers of these actions and happenings on screen. How can this be so? Another useful comparison is also introduced by Cavell, to that of a novel, and being acutely aware of the different stages of temporal experience and narration of films he says that

"In viewing a movie [...] I am present not at something happening, which I must confirm, but at something that has happened, which I must absorb (like a memory). In this movies resemble novels, a fact mirrored in the sound of narration itself, whose tense is the past."
(Cavell 1979, 25 – 26)

Absorbing moving images, in a sense visual transcripts and embodiments of objects and persons captured on film by camera and the connection between the absorber and the absorbed – though not sharing a common space nor time with each other – is in short the metaphysical problem which has to be dealt with if we are to look at cinema from a purely metaphysical perspective and are simply concerned with the metaphysical aspects of experiencing these moving images, movies. To think of movies rather as memories of the camera seems at first to be a bit far-fetched, but when examined with detail we find that the idea seems plausible to how we actually acquire knowledge of and from movies. The idea is not saying that it is simply an image of past reality that we are looking at on screen, but rather that it is reality we are absorbing and observing now in the present.

"If the motion picture camera presents us with no more than an image of reality, it is nevertheless an image of nothing less than reality; so precisely the same aspect of photography's power which makes film an image of scepticism (its exclusion of subjectivity) also allows it to represent an acceptance of the world's independent existence."
(Mulhall, 1994, 229)

The skepticism presented by Mulhall and Cavell can not be fully assessed here. There is to note however also another very interesting issue concerning the camera's knowledge of the metaphysical restlessness of the live body at rest, which is also called "Cinema's Optics of the Unconscious". This thought is furthered by Walter Benjamin in his writing *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). Benjamin's writing is one of the early truly philosophical investigations into the problems that film presents. His premise is that the mechanical reproduction of different works of art have "broken" the aura, the uniqueness, of those artworks. When authenticity cannot anymore be tied to artistic doing and production, the function of art is reversed. It is according to Benjamin then not anymore rooted in tradition and ritual, but is based on politics, in how a value can be pointed to the expression of art. According to Benjamin, photography and cinema are the best case examples of this. I wonder what Benjamin would say about the matter nowadays, as the ability to shoot photographs and video has been practically made available to everyone interested in doing so. Have the politics of art and auras of artworks thus been redeemed again as they are now part of tradition? Perhaps the uneasiness of even the analogical reproduction was to Benjamin and his temporal colleagues a matter of great fear though in our time it can be seen

as somewhat a dated and archaic matter. Still Benjamin was also interested in the same things that still puzzle us: The actor performing to the camera, that does not have to appreciate the performance as a whole – such as the audience of a play might – but subjecting the actor to many “optical inspections” or a movie actor not being able to relate and react or change his acting accordingly to reactions from the audience or have a personal relationship with it. Benjamin says that people identify themselves thus not with the actor but with the camera, a sensation of emptiness that is similar to that of watching oneself in the mirror but here the mirage has become detached, moving. The moving image is taken in front of the audience and this fact cannot escape the movie actor and is something that the actor is always conscious and aware of. As Cavell puts it:

“Under examination by the camera, a human body becomes for its inhabitant a field of betrayal more than a ground of communication, and the camera’s further power is manifested as it documents the individual’s self-conscious efforts to control the body each time it is conscious of the camera’s attention to it.” (in Mulhall, 1994, 240)

For Benjamin, the mechanical reproduction of art also changes the perception of art of the masses. Entertainment requires you to forget and the masses want to reset their thoughts whereas art demands its viewers to focus and concentrate. Cinema interestingly does according to Benjamin have a possibility to explore its surroundings in completely new ways. The universe expands with close-ups, movement widens with slow-motion. Benjamin sees that a clearly different environment opens up to the camera than to the naked eye – although an unconsciously penetrated environment does change into an environment actively explored by man. Cavell furthers:

“The capacity to allow one’s embodiment to manifest one’s self (even the unconscious or unknown reaches of that self)...is one which can be exercised only by permitting oneself to suffer or be victimized by it; and the camera’s transcription of its exercise requires a capacity to allow oneself to be read by the camera. In both respects, therefore, we are dealing with essentially passive forms of activity...” (Mulhall, 1994, 240)

Benjamin also pegged a psychoanalytic approach as he saw that the camera introduces us to unconscious visions and sights, just like psychoanalysis does to unconscious impulses. More about Benjamin and his connection to psychoanalysis can be read in Elizabeth Stewart’s *Catastrophe and Survival: Walter Benjamin and Psychoanalysis* (2009).

To conclude this chapter we can once again say that by absorbing the moving images and interpreting them as we please we are at the same time affirming not only our current position in the world but also a world that is in a sense no more:

“The motion picture camera makes a world present to us from which we are absent; it causes live human beings and real objects in actual spaces to appear to us when they are in fact not there, it makes present a no-longer-existent world.” (Mulhall, 1994, 228)

Movies can be thus seen to transcend time at least in a way parallel to many art forms. We have here rather exhaustively gone through the metaphysical problems related to cinema but if one is interested in reading more about them, I suggest a few key readings in the area. An early philosophical writing about the nature of cinema’s reality is done by Siegfried Kracauer in his book *Nature of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. An even earlier review of some queasy ontological conundrums are from an early psychological and film theory approach discussed by Hugo Münsterberg in an essay entitled *Defining the Photoplay*, which can be read in *Hugo Münsterberg On Film: The Photoplay – A Psychological Study and Other Writings* or a shortened version of it is also found in Wartenberg (2005). A concise theory of photography can be found in *Another Way of Telling* by John Berger.

2.6 The Internal History and Origin(s) of Cinema

It is a good question to ask what exactly can be said about the history of cinema in the context of philosophy. Do films share a common narrative or do they all have their own, separate and internal history? Does the inheritance of conventions, techniques and resources add up to the artistic overall impact of a movie? If movies can and do have a context, a certain point of reference and allusions to each other what is it and can they also thus have an internal history? Stanley Cavell addresses many of these issues by asserting that

“An immediate block to the thought of movie having an internal history is that we know, or ought to know, their origin. There was a time in living memory where there were no movies at all and the first one couldn’t surely have come from the others.” (Cavell 1979, 8)

This poses a problem between cinema having an internal history and its original origin. What is then the connection between the history of film in the context of a given cultural tradition and subjective creativity? The question itself is too large yet again to be concisely explored here. While motion picture films have been around for more than a century, film is still a relative newcomer in the pantheon of fine arts. How could it thus have an internal history? However we already have the key here to resolve this apparent paradox when with precision and clarity Cavell soon points out:

"But how are the other arts different? Whatever the original state of an art, a new work is born in civilization from the powers of the art itself." (Cavell 1979, 9)

What Cavell is saying is that art has to be viewed as a power which is able to generate and regenerate new forms of art itself. Thus cinema is only a continuum of the other arts preceding it and using this line of argument might also be a creative tool for a new kind of art which has not yet even been invented. This makes sense considering that films are essentially, when thoughtfully considered, just an extension or grouping of many arts put together. Theatre, photography, music, art, poetry, the list goes on. All of these can and have indeed been used with or in conjunction to cinema. So it is no wonder that these should indeed so to speak "evolve", or at least to say the matter without any implications on evolvment, collaborate in new and innovative ways. To see films as not being art is to misinterpret art itself and its function and "mission", if one is to assert something of the sort to a cultural phenomenon such as art.

There are still other philosophical ways of looking at movies and we turn our attention to these other ways now, namely when we look at the ways in which philosophers can theorize about movies and use movies as tools to further a certain theory or a point. This theoretical approach take film as illustration of theory and theoretical problems where film is sometimes seen as a vehicle and illustrator for philosophical analysis of contemporary problems.

2.7 Chalmers As An Example Of A Film Philosophizer

In 2003 I took part in an open lecture held by an Australian philosopher and cognitivist by the name of David Chalmers at the University of Victoria, in British Columbia, Canada. He had a lecture entitled *"The Matrix as Metaphysics"* and it was about the philosophy of mind in the context of consciousness. In his presentation, which closely followed his paper similarly entitled *"The Matrix as Metaphysics"*, he used the movie *The Matrix* as an example of the philosophical fable of a brain in a vat. In his presentation he baffled and blazed us with an agglomeration of different philosophical hypotheses concerning a brain in a vat scenario such as René Descartes' classical, skeptical Evil Genius Hypothesis. Although he demonstrated to us a thorough knowledge of the different ways in which the situation can be viewed, he seemed to use the movie simply as an attractive and popular tool to draw out all of these philosophical hypotheses without actually

making much reference to the movie itself. Stephen Mulhall voices out a concern for treating movies this way when he says that

" [...] such theorists exhibit a strong tendency to treat the films they discuss as objects to which specific theoretical edifices could be applied. Even the most useful of these discussions would usually begin with a long explanation of the relevant theory, and turn to the specific film only at the end, and only as a cultural product whose specific features served to illustrate the truth of that theory – as one more phenomenon the theory rendered comprehensible." (Mulhall 2002, 7)

Mulhall is mostly here talking about film theorists in the Film Studies tradition, but in my mind Chalmer's treatment and paper does exactly this as well – namely treat the movie as an object which a theory or hypothesis can then supervene and "explain" the whole movie as just a cultural product without a voice of its own in the history of the movie's reception or comprehension. A good example of an objectification of the movie is given in a passage when Chalmers is talking about whether a certain hypothesis he has just presented is a skeptical hypothesis, making an entirely arbitrary allusion to another movie, *The Truman Show*, when saying

*"It is common to think that while *The Truman Show* poses a disturbing skeptical scenario, *The Matrix* is much worse. But if I am right, things are reversed."* (Chalmers 2003, 20)

Yet again he does not look closer to the movies for a context, but simply skims through them as if they were just handy moving images which illustrate certain arguments. Rather than treating the movies in themselves as philosophical inquiries, in my mind he just seems to use them as popular examples of pop culture to discuss and reiterate the problems which philosophy faces with the idea and supposition of a brain which is envatted. Of course Chalmers was not necessarily coming from a certain theoretical background or paradigm, but his way of handling the movie without making much reference to the movie itself is in a sense absurd, like writing a criticism to an art exhibition but then talking about exhibitions or art in general without referencing the specific exhibition itself. On the *Matrix* one can find books about its philosophy these days in abundance. A good treatment for it can be found in Wartenberg (2006) in an essay entitled *Philosophy Screened: Experiencing the Matrix*. (270 – 284) or a full-on run of all of its different themes are explored in William Irwin's book called *The Matrix and Philosophy* (2002). One has to note that the emphases on the different essays in that book do not have an overarching method for analysing the movie and many of the writers fall in the same trap as Chalmers above, working from the movie to the philosophical problem, rather than treating the movie in and of itself as living philosophy. I am here not arguing

whether that is the only right way to assess a movie and indeed the multifaceted nature of analysis can only be seen as a good thing here. If one is interested in finding out specific readings of certain, recent Hollywood films and their philosophy one should turn to *Movies and the meaning of life: Philosophers Take on Hollywood* by Kimberly Ann Blessing or Mary Anne Litch's *Philosophy Through Film* or perhaps William G. Smith's *Plato and popcorn: a philosopher's guide to 75 thought-provoking movies*. More specific readings of particularly science fiction films can be found in Mark Rowlands' rather jovial *The Philosopher at the End of the Universe: Philosophy Explained Through Science Fiction Films*, Michael Philips' *Philosophy and Science Fiction* and Susan Schneider's *Science fiction and philosophy: from time travel to Superintelligence*. For a handy index of major science fiction motion pictures and on the field's development can be found in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*.

2.8 Films As Vehicles For Philosophic Discussion & Social Criticism

I have actually since Chalmers' lecture and since starting to get interested in the philosophy of film encountered the same problem numerous times when a philosopher has used a film to further make a claim, to justify a point or simply to recall the issue from a movie which perhaps the reader has presumably seen. It is good to note that I am not in any way saying that there is anything wrong with this type of approach to movies. One should use every possible intellectual resource they find relevant in coming to understand certain issues. Recently, according to Wartenberg, there have been many books that take film to be at least a vehicle for the illustration of philosophic ideas. Wartenberg seems to suggest that part of this is because people seem more willing to take a philosophic conundrum seriously when they see it registered on the silver screen rather than they do when they encounter it in a written text. In part, it is because philosophers are increasingly realizing that film is often a means for reflection on significant issues. The other part of this reflection is also that films themselves have started to use a lot of gimmicks, such as structures of narration, significant plot changes at the very end and visuality to challenge people to render them to philosophical inquiry, made audiences challenge their position to the possible ideas portrayed in the movies. There is nothing significantly new about any of this, but the change has rather occurred in how people conceive and theoretically write about films these days. Mulhall notes that

"It is part of the power of moving pictures to find interest in the most insignificant repetitions, turnings, pauses, and yieldings of human beings." (Mulhall, 1994, 239 – 240)

These “gimmicks” might confuse some, irritate some and for some make them interpret the world in new and interesting ways. There are more than numerous movies out there of this magnitude that do indeed employ many ways to challenge the audiences but indeed Chalmers was probably at the limelight of it all when using the movie *Matrix* as an example. It is probably the most vigorously philosophically discussed movie in recent popular culture. At least this is what Wartenberg is suggesting when he says that

“The Matrix...has engendered more philosophical discussion than any other film. There are already a myriad of essays and a number of books that investigate the philosophic claims of this engaging film.” (Wartenberg 2008. 6: Film as a knowledge and/or insight)

Indeed at least on the philosophy section of bookshops in the english-speaking world this is very apparent. In these books philosophers have found many issues in the movie, such as whether we could be deceived by our senses as to the nature of reality to that of whether there are valid reasons to condemn illusory pleasures, to be of philosophical importance. My question to this type of academic inquiry is that why on earth would they not find issues of such extent? Given that films – like novels, plays and paintings – are the products of intentional human practical activity, have representational content, and can take pretty much anything as their subject-matter, it is really not surprising at all that these themes should also be found in movies. Just as Mulhall asks

” [...] why couldn't their ways of presenting their narrative worlds embody sustained reflection on the part of those who fashioned them upon the kinds of questions that interest philosophers, and even the kinds of questions about film that interest philosophers?”
(Mulhall 2007, 2)

Of course this is not to deny that some, or even most, films show no traces of such reflection or to claim that philosophical enquiries into the nature of film could not legitimately view and see any film purely as an instantiation of film as such. The question really is in what ways are these inquiries done. Is the movie used as an example simply to narrate certain structures of philosophical jargon or is the movie taken to contribute something original to these conversations? We turn our focus to the latter type of approach in the fourth chapter. Many use films to tackle certain social issues and to criticise social norms and conventions. A good treatment of this is William Benedict Russell's book *Teaching Social Issues With Film*. Andrew Light's book *Reel Arguments: Film, Philosophy and Social Criticism* gives socially critical examples of how films contain important philosophical lessons about how we live our lives, and in turn how philosophy helps us to better

understand film.

Propaganda films also offer us an intriguing way of looking at films as a direct influential social medium. In Noël Carroll's book *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: An Anthology* there is a wonderful treatment of Leni Riefenstahl's nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* written by Mary Deveraux called *Beauty and Evil: The Case of Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will* (347 – 362). A rich and suggestive analysis of military 'ways of seeing', and a disturbing account of how these have now permeated our culture can be found in Paul Virilio's book *War & Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (1989) where he investigates the many different, systematic and cinematic techniques and ways that cinema has been used in the conflicts of the twentieth century.

2.9 Methods For Madness

The answer to the question of how we go on about philosophically studying cinema is not an easy one. The way in which we can try to 'read movies' through the philosophic discipline then is to look at individual movies and their film worlds free from 'heavy theories' and focus on the content of the movies alone. The effects this approach has on a more general theory of film can also be raised and one could also try to further do an analysis for the claim that the approach is actually itself an overarching 'method' for addressing movies from a philosophical perspective. That is however not what we shall be doing right now. As we are in the context of studying films and their projected worlds to us, we need to first have a firm grasp of how these possible film worlds are created, how this sort of worldmaking in aesthetical philosophy and art in general is viewed from a philosophical perspective. To achieve this I will next be looking at Nelson Goodman's aesthetical theory of worldmaking and then going onto how these film worlds could be seen as being philosophical in nature by the film as philosophy approach by Cavell and Mulhall.

A further linguistic note still should be made about the different notions and concepts I use in relation to my thesis. Words such as "cinema", "films", "motion pictures" and "movies" are used relatively interchangeably, however I have tried to usually distinguish cinema as being the general production and industry of motion pictures and films and movies as having a synonymous relationship with one another. Film is a term that can also be seen to encompass individual motion pictures, the field of film as an art form, and the motion picture industry in general. However there

might be some inaccuracies every now and then with the usage, clarity and meaning of each of these terms discussed for which reason viewer discretion is advised and all language inadequacies and fallacies of allusion should be blamed on the writer.

3. NELSON GOODMAN'S WORLDMAKING

3.1 Looking at Film Worlds

In Hollywood movie trailers we are often introduced to a movie's ambiance, it's signified atmosphere by hearing the phrase "in a world where..." from a thunderously deep and resonant male voice. The trailers seemingly tell us that we are to enter into fiction through a thought that we are visually and audibly inhabiting a world of some sort, of which components of it are quickly revealed to us, such as that the world is something where "...humans are no longer the epitome of the world" and so on. This type of approach to movies has been sought by George Wilson amongst others. According to this classical illusionistic theory of cinema the viewer is made to believe that he or she is a spectator at a real action, watching from within the space of the action, situated where the camera is. (Currie, 1995, 165). Thus according to this type of "Imagined Seeing Thesis", viewers of mainstream fiction films imagine themselves to be looking into the world of the story and seeing segments of the narrative action from a series of definite visual perspectives. In its traditional version, viewers are taken to imagine the movie screen as a kind of window that allows them to watch the unfolding of the story on the "other side". However, it is hard for this view to account for what is being imagined when, for example, the camera moves, or there is an edit to a shot that incorporates a different perspective on a scene. As a result, an alternative view has been suggested, namely that viewers imagine themselves to be seeing motion picture images that have been photographically derived, in some indeterminate way, from within the fictional world itself. But this position runs into problems, since it is normally part of the film's fiction that no camera was present in the fictional space of the narrative. The resulting debate is over whether to reject as incoherent the Imagined Seeing Thesis or whether it is possible to develop an acceptable version of this thesis. (Wartenberg 2008)

3.2 One World Versus Many

Many filmmakers also set their movies in a certain logical universe which they have envisioned and visually created themselves, as are, for example, the movies of Kevin Smith, George Lucas and David Lynch to name but a few contemporary authors whom I am fond of. Already these fictional worlds pose us a kind of problem of monistic versus pluralistic way of looking at worlds. The

American aesthetic philosopher Henry Nelson Goodman claims that these problems seem to disappear and evaporate under analysis, as within one world there is always contained contrasting aspects and even though the one world may be taken as many, so can the many worlds be taken as one. Can we then say anything final about worlds, if one or many depends on the way of taking? Goodman is himself talking about multiple actual worlds, and not, as he satirically states

"[...]of the many possible worlds that many of my contemporaries, especially those near Disneyland are busy making and manipulating." (Goodman 1978, 2).

Daniel Yacavone notes that Goodman is talking about 'alternative' worlds that analytic philosophers often discuss. (Yacavone 2008, 86). However we are not only interested in exactly those worlds but worlds that films can be said to produce. I would think that Goodman is too quick to judge the merits of fictional worlds as simply manipulated but I think there is a fair amount of sarcasm here on his part and perhaps this sarcasm is entirely brought by my own accord. As Yacavone points out, Goodman never actually refers to cinema all that much. (Yacavone 2008, 87). He is nevertheless obviously also concerned over these worlds as well and he points out that the interpretations of "real", "unreal", "fictive" or "possible" is a subsequent question. First we need to have a firm foundation on the actual, physical world(s) and only after that can we say anything of the following or preceding worlds of fiction. So first the metaphysics, the first nature of things and subsequently things that follow from it. Still we are not interested in creating a metaphysically debauched and bloated theory only to see it crumble down in a sudden debacle, but on how and indeed if at all we can try to concretely envision film worlds from a philosophical perspective. First we need to tackle the problem on how, if at all, we can describe and talk about them.

3.3 Describing Worlds & Intertranslatability

Goodman asserts that as we try to describe worlds it becomes apparent that we are dealing with frames of reference, where the issues described do not as much belong to what is described than to systems of description. (Goodman 1978, 2) If one asks, for example, how a movie was like, we are quick to tell the other person how the movie was under such and such frames of reference, e.g. compared to the filmmaker's or actors' previous works, to the genre of that movie, to the time period of the cinema at that time or to other movies in general. If we insist on wanting to know how the movie was apart from all other frames of reference – how the movie was in and of itself – we

are left with a vast void of an unreferencable world. Thus we are confined to ways of describing whatever is described. We are however interested in the intertranslatability of different descriptonal and symbolic systems and how they can interact with one another. Even though our universe consists of many descriptonal systems rather than world or worlds, we are looking for transformability between these diverse multitude of what Goodman calls versions and visions of the world. Sometimes this can prove to be hard, if one wants to for example translate the works of Van Gogh to the language and world of science since henceforth we are faced with many troubles; Is there a fundamental disparity, a difference between these frames of reference that cannot be overcome? We can try to offer a relativist notion that under given systems each is right, but we are really not interested in such a foul neglecton of the importance of worlds to each other. We have to delve and dig deeper to find a way for contrasting and conjoining these versions to each other. The truth-value of these has to be described and depicted later but we are to at least look at and estimate the importance of them to one another.

3.4 The Importance of Many Worlds

As Goodman notes the fact that there are many world-versions is hardly debatable and the real pressing question should be whether there is a reason for a pluralistic notion of worlds that is not entirely trivial. Goodman presses the point that there is at least one and that is that many different world-versions are of independent interest and importance, without there being a presumption or requirement of reducibility to a single base, e.g. one world. (Goodman 1978, 4). Goodman describes and gives a strong example of a monopolistic materialist who maintains that one system, here given as physics, preeminates in such a way that every other version must eventually be reduced to it. Again Goodman satirizes as he calls for James Joyce's world-view to be reduced to mere physics. Clearly we are facing a real problem here: Even though there can be many benefits in reducing things from one system to the other and contributions to the understanding of relationships among world-versions, this is quite rare and usually results in the system having to go through all other systems if one is to demand a full and sole reducibility. Another example closer to my study should suffice: How are we to philosophically explain the works or even just one movie of David Lynch without bringing in psychoanalysis, dream therapy, his views on transcendent meditation or certain notions from film theory and his other movies? These worlds coexist but are not entirely independent of each other, even though we can separately distinguish and study them. Should we

try and "explain" these worlds off through the use of philosophical language and its connection to history we would be doing a major intellectual disservice to them. If we are to have a fuller understanding of Lynch's works these "worlds" are vital to our perception and realization of this artist's often paradigmatic subterfuge, otherwise the philosophical inquiry will be entirely moot and effete. Thus we have to accept that unity is not sought in an ambivalent *something* beneath all other versions but in an overall organization embracing them. (Goodman 1978, 5). Goodman does this by an analysis of different symbol systems which we will soon look further into but first we have to closer dissect the notion of worldmaking.

3.5 Making Worlds

Goodman obviously lies his foundation on Kantian soil, as on the one hand he sees a multiplicity of worlds in a non-Kantian way but on the other he also sees this being close to the theme of pure content – as I understand it, *der Ding an sich* – which is far off from intuitive interpretation of this world. In the case of perception without conception or vice versa he merely alludes to the likes of Berkeley, Cassirer et al. which in his mind have already so fully set forth the issues that they need not be restated. He does however clearly state that

"[...] worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking" (Goodman 1978, 6).

Here the good old phrase from Shakespeare's King Lear is also called into mind: *"Nothing will come of nothing!"*, which yet again is a reformulation of Aristotle's thoughts. Film worlds have many perceived problems when it comes to the conception of perceived and concocted realities on film. Films do come from other films, an issue we already looked at in 2.6. The problem for example with fictional characters appearing on screen and how people perceived them in the early days of cinema is rather well raised and eloquently articulated in the novel *One Hundred Years Of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez:

"Dazzled by so many and such marvelous inventions...they became indignant over the living images...for the character who had died and was buried in one film and for whose misfortune tears of affliction had been shed would reappear alive and transformed into an Arab in the next one. The audience who paid two cents apiece to share the difficulties of the actors, would not tolerate that outlandish fraud and they broke up their seats." (Garcia Marquez, 211)

Here the heightened reality of cinema brings us closer to concerns over embodiment and mortality. One is to only conduct a reconnaissance a little over a hundred years back of the Lumière brothers showing their gesticulate and mimical first moving images of a train arriving in La Ciotat to an audience that was so flabbergasted and overwhelmed that they thought the train would leap from the screen and onto the auditorium. Even though this might be seen as the first cinematic myth of its time, it is still true that more than at that time the heightened sense of reality of the silver screen has been since taken more and more as a given. Even though things are projected to the screen in a two-dimensional fashion we still perceive them to be quite three-dimensional. Why is this? Perhaps because we accept and understand the worlds that are projected to us three-dimensionally and sometimes even in the fourth, timely universe. We are nevertheless not so much interested in the metaphysical dilemmas of cinema as we are on how we can understand movies from a philosophical mindset that is not entirely baseless or related to some general theory of the medium, as has been the case with film studies. Here we can not look to the gods for guidance in understanding how worlds are made but look at the certain relationships among worlds that are already created.

3.6 Breaking Worlds

Even though Goodman is not interested in how or whether particular worlds are made from others he still draws out certain processes that go into all kinds of worldmaking. These are composition & decomposition, weighting, ordering, deletion and supplementation & deformation. With the first Goodman is talking about putting things together and taking them apart, grouping them, naming and giving things a label. He says that we do not create an entirely new world every time we do this but that worlds can differ in that not everything belonging to one belongs to the other (Goodman 1978, 8). Repetition and identification is relative to organization and an example of this can be two musical performances that differ vastly but are nevertheless performances of the same work if they conform to the same score. I discussed Walter Benjamin's take on digital reproduction in 2.5.2 and again Benjamin's thoughts would be of service in this matter, but let us just refer to him again and say that two musical scores offer us an interesting dilemma which can be contested with Benjamin's idea of an artwork's aura: Is the fact that a piece of art – in this case a musical composition – can be performed many times a problem for the artwork or the artist? Perhaps when we record them is

when things would begin to be a problem for Benjamin. But I digress. Weighting has to do with differences and contrasts in emphasis when sorting out relevant and irrelevant kinds of things that belong to certain groupings.

An intriguing note for my study is Goodman's claim that works of art characteristically illustrate rather than name or describe relevant kinds (Goodman 1978, 11). How so? We might draw on the art of the surrealist René Magritte in his painting *"The Treachery of Images"* (La trahison des images) to press this point. In the image it is stated that *"Ceci n'est pas une pipe"* (This is not a pipe) though we can clearly see a pipe. (And what we are here actually seeing is a digital or printed reproduction of a drawing of a painting of a pipe). Here there is an illusion of naming though the actual purpose of the painting as I see it is to draw a distinction between what is named and what is not seen, as we are only seeing an image of a pipe.



Other such examples from the likes of dance and music can be given, as they can also be seen as not having any direct subjects and the further we go into things not having a subject-matter, the more we still have to argue that they exemplify and expressly manifest forms and feelings. Giving things a value or a rating of relevance and importance usually results in hierarchies rather than dichotomies and such emphases are an example of ordering, which is another form of Goodman's worldmaking. Different constructional systems and measurement rely on ordering. Certain arrangements and groupings are essential in handling vast quantities of material. Here examples might include the ordering of time into seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, decades, centuries, millenia, eons etc. These modes of organization are not found in the world naturally but are surely built into the world by man. We are also quick to supplement our knowledge of information that is not readily available to us. (Goodman 1978, 9 – 16). If a movie for example

gives us two different filmic or stage scenes the human mind is too easily persuaded to draw a line between them and, so to speak, fill in the blanks. What is of importance to us again is that we can obviously find what we are prepared to find and be blind to things that hinder our pursuits. This is good to note as we try to venture and muse the possibility of movies being philosophical through worldmaking. These different ways and processes of making worlds often do, as Daniel Yacavone points out, work and operate in combination with one another (Yacavone 2008, 87) so they are not to be seen as separate and rigid methods of worldmaking but rather overlapping mediations of human interaction of some sort.

Truths about and in the world can, as we have already witnessed, be metaphorical rather than literal in nature but these cannot be tested with "the world" as there is no such thing. But when is something a belief and when does it become a precept? There is supposedly no direct criteria for success in making a world, as even a literally false statement can be metaphorically true, as was the case with Magritte's pipe. Goodman still feels that the every day man's world is the one most often concocted of different fragments from scientific and artistic – perhaps also religious – worlds to create an amalgamation called "the world", the real reality in the world, which, *"like realism in a picture, is largely a matter of habit."* (Goodman 1978, 20). A relative reality gives us an ironic one world but does still not *"imply that all right alternatives are equally good for every or indeed for any purpose"* and *"a willingness to welcome all worlds creates none"* (Goodman, 1978, 21). Simply seeing that we have a freedom to adopt and explore many different frames of reference still gives us no clear indication of the direction of the interpretation we are to take with them. *"Awareness of varied ways of seeing paints no pictures. A broad mind is no substitute for hard work."* (Goodman, 1978, 21). What we should turn our focus to then is the notion of style, how and when is style something that comes out of a world and what is the relationship that it has with subjects and symbol-systems.

3.7 Subjects and Status of Style & Differences In Style

The distinction that subject is what is being said and style being how it is said is in Goodman's view old-fashioned for architecture and music do not in a strict sense have a subject so thus their style is not a matter of how they say something as there is nobody literally saying it. They have to be understood and interpreted in other ways, which Goodman calls 'aspects of style' where the subject

is involved though not immediately present. Goodman does not rest on the notion that style would depend upon an artist's conscious choice and that differences in ways of writing or painting or composing or performing are differences in style. (Goodman, 1978, 23).

"But need style, as conceived here, be confined to works, or might the term "work" in our definition be as well replaced by "object" or by "anything"? Unlike some other definitions, ours does not rest upon an artist's intentions. What counts are properties symbolized, whether or not the artist chose or is even aware of them; and many things other than works of art symbolize" (Goodman 1978, 35 – 36)

We have to further maintain Goodman's position that what a work is and what it does are different and that subject and style are always somehow interweaved, not dogmatically separate. But could we also say that works of art can do much more than just inadvertently symbolize meanings? That they could make judgements, arguments, that they could philosophize?

"[...]we often find it hard to tell just what a work says or expresses. That we have trouble making a determination implies that there is something to be determined: that the work in fact does or in fact does not say so-and-so, does or does not exemplify (or express) a given property." (Goodman 1978, 37)

When we are for example determining whether a movie is philosophical and not only wears on its side philosophical mixtures and spews out already churned philosophy but clearly states arguments, we should keep in mind that if we are having trouble determining just what those definitive arguments are that it is often indeed hard to express symbolized meanings well hidden in the structure of the stories and relationships of people in the film worlds. I would disagree with Goodman when he states that *"knowledge of the origin of a work [...] informs the way the work is to be looked at or listened to or read, providing a basis for the discovery of nonobvious ways the work differs from and resembles other works"* (Goodman 1978, 38). While it is true that works of art are always at odds with each other to carve out a style and sentiment I don't think we necessarily need the metadata of historical accuracy or identification of stylistic worlds to understand a work in our own time. How a work of art speaks to the listener or reader is infallibly more precious than the possible gap in time and space between the audience and the author, though this might obviously shed some further light and give insights into the historicity and childhood of every time period.

Let me give a rather mundane but simple example of an imitation of style in the context of movies. Let us think about a really bad parody movie of Hollywood blockbusters – bad here simply denoting my personal displeasure in these films – such as "Epic Movie". The movie is referencing

tens of different movies through the quotational use of music, dialogue, costumes, sets etc. that are trying to mimic their parodied fathers fully. Can we say that this movie is referencing those other movies? Does the movie thus have a style of its own, as it is simply trying to emulate all of the other movies? What is the definition of parody and how does it relate to other forms of art?

"Emotions, feelings, and other properties expressed in the saying are part of the way of saying; what is expressed is an aspect of how what is said, and as in music and abstract painting may be an aspect of style even when nothing is said. (Goodman 1978, 29)

I confirm with Goodman on the issue of style being aesthetically important even in the case of not having a direct subject and that when placing a work to a time period or a style is in fact, by definition, characteristic of an author or period, region or school. However it is good to note, as Goodman does, that these aesthetic definitions of style do not reduce them to a device for attribution. According to Goodman, style has to do exclusively with the symbolic functioning of a work as such (Goodman 1978, 35). In my understanding an artist's style in other words cannot simply be reduced to a list of attributes that make up his or her style. We can list the different ways in which for example Quentin Tarantino or Terrance Malick have a definitive style of filmmaking but that that list, however exhaustive and methodical it would be, would still only work as a means of identification of authorship and prior identification of their works for a critic of a given subject matter. The list could not reach the symbolic significance of the works that the *auteurs* of film have indeed intended or the philosophical proportions that the film worlds inhabited could give to ours. (Goodman 1978, 38) The question and discussion of authorship in movies was already furthered in the part 2.4 of this graduation thesis.

3.8 Quoting & Identifying Different Symbolic Systems

A famous uncredited quote goes something along the lines of *"Talking about music is like dancing about architecture"*. This quotation, which is meant to be comedic, shows us the displeasing nature of trying to compare symbols and meanings through something that Nelson Goodman calls symbol-making systems.

"If a string of words can quote another string of words, can a picture quote a picture, or a symphony quote another symphony?" (Goodman 1978, 41)

Although not being sufficient conditions, Goodman claims that for direct verbal quotation, both naming – reference to what is quoted – and containment – of what is quoted or other replica or paraphrase of it – are necessary requirements. In his view the linguistic relation required in direct quotation between what is quoted and what is contained is syntactic identity, or if we are to take what is quoted as an utterance or inscription then the relationship is syntactic replication, namely the sameness of spelling. He points out that on the other hand the relation required in indirect quotation is semantic paraphrasis, some sort of equivalence of reference or of meaning. (Goodman 1978, 43, 46)

Goodman raises the question of when do we have quotation in nonverbal systems by first theorizing on how a picture can directly quote another. He points out that the mere containment of one picture in another no more constitutes quotation than does containment of one expression in another. "*A double portrait does not quote the contained portraits; a seascape does not quote the picture of a ship in it*" (Goodman 1978, 47). Goodman is searching for the means of which a picture refers to another that it contains, namely what could be a pictorial analogy of quotation marks. A picture of a frame can fairly obviously be put around a picture, much like quotation marks on an expression to quote it. But if one wants to directly quote for example Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, one can hardly put the *Mona Lisa* directly into the canvas and paint a frame around it. The containment requirement is surely too severe a demand if the implication is that a picture can only quote what is actually within it.

Goodman makes a distinction between a copy and a replica. In the case of paintings strictly technically speaking there are no direct replicas of them, since each painting is unique. Replicas may drastically differ so long as they are spelled the same way. Goodman asserts that since picture has no alphabet and no notational criterion for sameness of spelling, direct verbal quotation has no strict analog in painting. But what about the uniqueness of film? Goodman argues that a photograph is not unique, as photographic picture belongs to a multiple symbol system. In the age of digital and mechanical reproduction we can argue that films cannot have a uniqueness to them in terms of having a physical time and space to them. These days they can simply exist in bits on a hard drive and visual stimulus on the computer and movie screen but are never able to be located in one point and time in the universe. Is this problematic? Goodman offers a view that the relation among prints consists in their having been produced from the same negative while the relation among the inscriptions consists in their being spelled the same way. (Goodman, 48). Daniel Yacavone seems to agree, that the digital reproduction of images poses new kinds of problems related to temporality

(Yacavone, 2008, 96).

3.9 Different Ways of Quoting

Goodman suggests that perhaps we could somehow analogize pictorial copy to that of paraphrasing. However we face a problematic situation of not finding ways to express indirect quotation as a pictorial analogy. The distinction between direct and indirect quotation is in Goodman's mind not so strict and sharp in picturing as in language. (Goodman 1978, 49) In musical quotation the notation defines replica-hood as two performances of the same score, however else they may differ, are still counted as replicas of each other. Thus there is no problem of replication from a musical performance to the other. Or is there? What makes the difference between merely containing a replica of a passage and referring to that passage? When is something a homage and when is it a plagiarized ripoff? When does a cover version of a song stay "true" to the song, when does an artist make it their own and when does it turn into a parody? Answers have to be looked elsewhere, here we are simply interested in the difficult task of labeling things as musical quotations. It will soon also be clear how this relates to Goodman's theory of world-making and my quest to find ways to talk about movies philosophically. He thinks that it soon becomes apparent that the musical equivalent of quotation marks in music is "nothing". *"The containment condition gives trouble for pictures while the reference condition gives trouble for music"* (Goodman 1978, 50 – 51). It should be at this stage noted that unless we are talking about a silent film or a blank screen with only music heard, the quotational troubles on film are double-fold or are both exempt from them, depending on which way we want to perceive or approach the issue.

Goodman thinks that the fact that music has no analogue for quotation marks seems rather an accident and rather amusingly suggests that nothing stands in the way of introducing even ordinary quotation marks themselves as quotational characters, to serve as quotation marks. (Goodman 1978, 51). If the quotation marks are not played they function in a very similar way to that of linguistic quotation marks, since both of them are unpronounced and neither of them occur spoken, only written. Goodman is quick to point out that in music sound is the end product whereas in language what is written is no mere means to what is said but is of at least equal importance in its own right. What then could be the equivalent musical analogue of paraphrase, as paraphrase is a semantic relation and music has no denotational qualities? Some might suggest a transposition or a variation

but in Goodman's view this is false, since those are syntactic rather than semantic relations.

When we speak of films being philosophical we are also concerned in making a statement that some form of cross-system quotation can exist. Not only quotation, but referencing and argumentation in the form of thoughts without written words, worlds without wording. We are saying that pictures together with sound can produce statements of and from our *real* world. As Marx pointed out, philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways though the point, however, is to change it. If we argue that filmmakers not only make interpretations of the world but also change it with their films, we are entering into a limelight debate about the vitality and indeed, philosophy, of films. What can be said about the presentation of culturally created works of art and how can they be explained through different modes of symbol systems? For Goodman this is not a problem. "*A visual system that has means for quoting its own symbols normally has means for quoting other visual symbols.*" (Goodman 1978, 55). He sees that as pictures can be quoted directly or indirectly in language, so can linguistic expressions be quoted in pictures, as we saw with Magritte's art – though the implications can be rather riveting.

A picture about a sound is still a picture but Goodman is looking for ways in which these different modes are bridged and contained with one another. "*Sound can be contained in a picture, or a picture contained in sound only if the notion of containment is stretched beyond any pertinent limit.*" (Goodman 1978, 55). Still there is no direct way in which pictorial and auditory symbols stand in a direct discursive relation to one another and no way to linguistically separate them. Or is there? The idea of commentary and criticism is brought to mind. Films are commented and criticised in magazines, newspapers and everyday flimflam jargon of the hoipolloi and the elitist critics. In common discourse the separation and interconnectedness of symbol systems is no problem at all. Obviously some critics use a more subjectivist approach to referencing and criticising movies but some indeed have this false belief in objectively drawing out the key elements and themes of a movie. It is however extremely hard to try and dissect what is an intrinsic and what an extrinsic feature of any given cultural work. A good poet is said to never try and explain his poems to anyone, but whether or not something is or is not intentionally intrinsic to a work, what makes any form of art shine is its power to exemplify, set, show or put forth its properties. As Goodman pronounces: "*Exemplification, though one of the most frequent and important functions of works of art is the least noticed and understood.*" (Goodman 1978, 32)

As Daniel Yacavone eloquently puts it, for Goodman, the pre-existing building materials for the creation of art worlds are all the symbolic world-versions of reality, both artistic and non-artistic, available to the artist at a given time and place. (Yacavone 2008, 87 – 88). Further investigation should be put on how the different processes of worldmaking that Goodman raises directly relate to filmmaking and how from his theory of symbolic systems we could try to create a theory of film worlds as philosophical dialogue and arguments, film as philosophy. Another interesting issue is the temporality of film worlds and how one could try to extrapolate Goodman's ideas concerning film as philosophy. Daniel Yacavone is currently doing his Ph.D on a theory of Film Worlds and I am eagerly waiting whether it might have some conclusions to my own studies. Now however we turn our focus on Stanley Cavell, who happens to be a contemporary of Goodman's, so there is perhaps an interesting philosophical and temporal parallel there to also be sought.

4. ON FILM A WORLD VIEWED: FILM AS PHILOSOPHY

4.1 Why Engage With the Unaging Stage?

Perhaps a broader question to be asked, before dwelling deeper into the issue of film as philosophy, is to ask why is it that we need to study films from an academic point of view at all? Well, first off, as Stanley Cavell argues, there needs to be an ongoing appreciative engagement and conversation with the particular films that shape our experiences and existence. (Cavell 1984). This is obviously a statement of interest, not of fact. Surely one can live a life void of any particular connection to movies and not have any engagement and conversation with them, but in this day and age I argue that such a life is not fully rooted in the present visual, aesthetic and media-centered existence of ours. Thomas Wartenberg furthers when he states that *“From the standpoint at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is clear that film was the predominant art form in the twentieth century”*. (Wartenberg 2007, 3). It became a cultural form that can no longer be ignored by anyone. Going ahead well into the twenty-first century it becomes apparent that some form of multimedia entertainment and presence is going to be felt no matter how hard one should try to avoid it. If one does not accept this premise, then this essay’s conclusions will not perhaps reach that reader’s attention and acceptance as such. Secondly though – as to the ways and methods in which we go on about academically pursuing and studying movies – rather than just treat films as cases that need to be philosophically examined, we should immerse ourselves in their film worlds that are rooted in our everyday existence, albeit sometimes in a more heightened, subliminal way. According to Cavell, films have an *‘expressive capacity to sustain an ongoing conversation’* (Cavell 1984, 11 – 14). Russell Goodman in his write-up with Cavell points out that within the field of academic film studies, where the study of Hollywood film has long been established, even entrenched, within academic departments, this ongoing appreciative conversation with the films, a certain process of acknowledgment, is often missing.

“The films receive frequent treatment— they are cases to be examined, and then known, for all manner of cultural, psychosocial, historical symptoms— but their expressive capacity, their ability to sustain an ongoing conversation, remains unacknowledged.”
(Goodman 2005, 119)

We turn our focus on this expressive capacity of films to sustain an ongoing conversation in the coming few chapters. A distinction is hopefully academically thus set between the ways in which,

say film studies, and philosophy treat filmic material and issues. When talking about certain movies one has to obviously have seen them to appreciate the conversations that are being held about them. In order to give an example of this approach I will specifically go into an in-depth review of one such particular film, *Blade Runner*; in the last chapter. It has to be mentioned that many of the contemporary film philosophers in the field do indeed discuss and “read” specific movies rather than try to build a philosophic approach to how movies should be examined academically from a philosopher’s standpoint. I am interested in exactly this, since I do believe that films can offer us more than just neat imagery and narrative captions. Films should be studied from an academic point of view not only to exchange ideas and thoughts about them but moreover to build an aesthetic awareness of films as a possible source for philosophic ponderation. Cavell justifies and solidifies the value of studying film, and particular films, as follows:

”How could we show that it is... sufficiently... worth studying? Now we are at the heart of the aesthetic matter. Nothing can show this value to you unless it is discovered in your own experience, in the persistent exercise of your own taste, and hence the willingness to challenge your taste as it stands, to form your own artistic conscience.” (Cavell 1984, 11)

Cavell places the worthiness of studying films at the very heart of aesthetic problems and argues that what matters is the subjective willingness to engage and discover filmic experiences. To have an artistic conscience means many things to Cavell but what we are here mainly interested in is the development of exactly how this aesthetic discovery functions to bring us aesthetic experiences with philosophical ponderation. These experiences become, philosophically speaking, persistent exercises with ethical, metaphysical, ontological and indeed aesthetic dimensions and the dilemmas and debates that are spawned from the undercurrents of film experiences should be given the necessary convocational and dialogical depth they deserve, given that the author of these experiences is willing to engage in conversation with others. I hope you are willing to also do so since that is what we will be doing next!

4.2 Cavell As The Well of Origin

Seeing film as a source of knowledge and even as a potential contributor to philosophy itself has only recently found fruition amongst a few key writings from certain Anglo-American philosophers. This view has been forcefully articulated by an American philosopher Stanley Cavell, whose interest in the philosophy of film helped spark the field's development. Cavell was really the first

philosopher to properly address – or rather to revive – the issue of film as philosophy from a purely philosophical background and field of academics in the 1970's. Before this the academic discussion and playing field related to cinema was almost entirely dominated by film studies. For Cavell, philosophy is inherently concerned with skepticism and the different ways that it can be overcome. In his many books and articles, Cavell has argued that film shares this concern with philosophy and can even provide philosophic insights of its own. Another influential philosopher in the field, Stephen Mulhall, has said this about Cavell: “*However his [Cavell] work...possesses a real unity: in part, this is because he finds that the films he studies themselves study their relation to their medium and its audience.*” (Mulhall, 1994, 223). His work has been carried on by a British philosopher by the name of Stephen Mulhall, whose recent writings, or more specifically an introductory note published in a book of his in 2002 called *On Film* has spawned much of the recent philosophical debate and literature on film as philosophy which I will try to go through as thoroughly as possible. I shall mostly be looking at and focusing on the contemporary writings and works of Mulhall and Cavell and the discussions, commentaries and critiques which their writings have provoked and produced amongst peer philosophers. When necessary, I will use some of my own examples to further illustrate the matters at hand.

4.3 Reflecting On the Condition of Its Own Possibility

Mulhall has since Cavell become perhaps the most influential philosopher in the recent debate and Mulhall does actually indeed owe much of his philosophy to Cavell. In his introduction to *On Film*, a philosophical dissection of the Alien movies and other science fiction films by the directors of the Alien movie franchise, he has voiced out the possibility of cinema being philosophy itself. Obviously films can and do dig deep into raising basic philosophical questions and issues of the human spirit, especially when we are talking about films by artists, *auteurs* who foster their independent products without the restraints of money and producer involvement – The sarcasm should be inherently present here but let me emphasize it thus – but that big blockbuster, lackluster loveaffairs of visual pathos and eggerious ethos would have any philosophical content to them at all?! Aren't big-budget movies suppose to entertain rather than make the audience ask questions? “*Philosophy is hardly a popular endeavour in contemporary America. Why think that popular films try to address its concerns?*” asks Thomas Wartenberg (2007, 3). When talking about those Hollywood movies Mulhall will be studying in his book he asserts that he does not want to look to

these films as handy or popular illustrations of views and arguments properly developed by philosophers:

"I see them rather themselves reflecting on and evaluating such views and arguments, as thinking seriously and systematically about them in just the ways that philosophers do. Such films are not philosophy's raw material, nor a source for its ornamentation; they are philosophical exercises, philosophy in action – film as philosophizing." (Mulhall 2002, 2)

The statement is rather bold: films themselves can philosophize, are philosophy in the doing. What does this mean though? As philosophers we right away turn to the definition of words which should not be used lightly. What is meant by philosophy in this context? What does it mean to philosophize? Rather than giving us a lengthy answer as to what philosophy and philosophizing mean to him, Mulhall goes onto discuss the Alien movies in depth and draw out philosophical issues from them. In any case here Mulhall arguably lays down the foundation for the film as philosophy approach. This seems to be the clearest indication and statement for the philosophy of film to take on a rather interpretive and dialectic approach to films. The theory – if one can call it that – has as many supporters as it has critics in the philosophy of film tradition and we will look further into these discussions in the coming chapters. Mulhall furthers his claim in a short passage denoting that

"[...] film can be seen to engage in systematic and sophisticated thinking about their themes and about themselves – that films can philosophize." (Mulhall 2002, 7)

As Mulhall does not really specify what he means by philosophy, it has been seen as a shortcoming and drawback of his argument. For films to be doing philosophy implies agency for the films, something that some may object heavily to. Thomas Wartenberg argues, that "doing philosophy" is only a shorthand expression for stating that the film's makers are the ones who are actually doing philosophy in/on/through film. He also makes a distinction that even if one is comfortable in claiming that films can do philosophy is a different claim from saying that films are philosophy. (Wartenberg 2007, 11 – 12). Asserting that a film is a work of philosophy is a stronger claim than saying it can philosophize.

Mulhall's contemporary philosophical critics have not fully understood that it is within specific debates about certain movies that his larger theory of film philosophy either falters or excels. However Mulhall revisited his writings a few years later and issued a second edition of *On Film*

where he discusses and tackles some of the concerns that his peer reviewers have had. We will now look at some of those concerns laid out by his peers and then see how he responds to arguments against his claims on film as philosophy.

4.4 Criticisms from Andersen & Baggini

There have been a few main critics of Mulhall's work and more generally to the film as philosophy approach. I will focus my attention on two critics, Nathan Andersen and Julian Baggini, as their criticisms in my mind get to the heart of the philosophic matter at hand. Andersen's paper is called *Is Film the Alien Other to Philosophy?: Philosophy *as* Film in Mulhall's On Film* and Baggini's similar criticism is provocatively entitled *Alien Ways of Thinking: Mulhall's On Film*. Here I will try to meticulously dissect the criticisms that they offer in their papers and offer my take on their criticisms. Later I will look at how Mulhall actually responded to their criticisms and look at the debate from a third narrative, a philosophical criticism by Joshua Shaw of the second version of Mulhall's book.

4.4.1 Andersen and Methods for Philosophical Cinematography

Andersen generally questions the way in which Mulhall approaches movies in the first place. In his own writing he is looking for other "cinematic" ways to ask philosophic questions. He is not content with Mulhall's idea of films being philosophical only if they highlight and ask philosophical questions on issues they raise. How, if at all, can a movie then present philosophical issues in a cinematic way? Andersen bluntly and blatantly wonders if filming a conversation between two philosophers would count as philosophy through cinema. In my mind this is a rather drily dubious and awkwardly pointless idea since what we would be getting is a transcript of a conversation, a kind of documentary-like philosophical atrophy where possibly engaging discussions are turned into a visual and aural reproduction without the many elements of philosophical exercise and engaging dialogue which "actual" movies and film worlds would present.

Andersen further distinguishes two methods for cinema to engage itself in philosophical

conversations. From a *formalistic* point of view it is editing that can raise questions for the audience. The audience is forced to create connections between two interrelated scenes by spatially and temporally "filling in the blanks" and this is done individually by any and every member of the audience. A certain picture is created in the mind of the viewer and thus also a meaning is drawn out of potential questions. Andersen however questions whether there is fundamentally anything philosophical about this. He says that only if those potential questions hold the values of self-reflection, openness to critique, the analyzation of concepts and evaluation of arguments, can it be accounted for as being 'philosophical' in nature. If these criteria are not met, a film cannot be said to have philosophical content and should instead be accordingly dealt as issues of other aesthetic importance, Andersen states.

In my mind Andersen's view of philosophy is highly distinguishably academic and in its persistency to hold certain things in higher value as accounting for having a philosophical basis, rather mundane and unimaginative. For something to be philosophical is to have certain visible and valuable characteristics that one can safely academically demonstrate and then harbour them into the philosophical emblems of sunken ideologies. This is what Andersen in my mind seems to be suggesting. Rather than seeing philosophy as a vibrant hodgepodge of different concoctions from all walks of life, that is made up of not only academic, but also artistic and aesthetic endeavours Andersen is presenting us with a philosophy that does not want to engage itself with anything else but itself, making it a kind of self-referential academic closet that only concerns itself with matters that befit it. In other words it would academically corner itself so heavily as to not being able to walk around before the paint has dried out, e.g painting itself in an academic corner. A counterargument to this could be that there needs to be some form of reference when talking about philosophical matters, a way of academically distinguishing this issue from that. A statement of "everything is philosophy" isn't beneficial at all, but this is not what is being said. Of course we need something firm to hold onto as being 'philosophical' per se, but simply shutting out movies as not having philosophical issues if they do not comply with certain prefixed elements just seems to be a bit too draconian for my taste.

Well, another point of view on how films can have philosophical proportions is something that Andersen calls a *realist* view. According to it a movie is going to generate negative and positive feelings towards the movie depending on how well we have believed in the trueness of that movie, in other words how 'real' the reality of the movie has been for the viewer. A movie could thus raise philosophical questions for example by making us doubt our metaphysical beliefs. Andersen

however notes that many times even within science fiction there are certain metaphysical and genre-specific conventions that movies do not usually cross. The emphasis in my mind has to be put on the word "usually". Of course it can be said that most movies will not even question the conventions that our everyday existence gives us but aren't the most philosophically engaging and interesting films the ones that happen to do exactly just that?

Andersen furthers his thoughts by noting that what might be philosophical is something that leads and creates paths to thoughts, to open spaces where thinking can freely occur and where it is possible to come up with new ways to understand and organize knowledge and experiences. In order for these paths to be created, there needs to in Andersen's view be a motivation for thoughts. If a movie can create this kind of a motivation it can be said to be philosophical. The line of reasoning here is a bit better than that of the first, formal view that Andersen presents, but some reoccurring problems and questions arise yet again that call for criticism. What are these open spaces that Andersen talks about where thinking can freely occur? Just a reformulation of a Hellenistic idea of a philosophic pantheon where grey-bearded, toga-wearing, laureate-covered men can converse with each other under a vine tree during a glass of wine? Well, in all seriousness I think that seeing a motivation for thoughts as the prime way that a movie could be philosophical just seems like something extrinsic to the movie itself. Sure it is part of the experience of engaging yourself with a film, but it isn't really giving the movie itself any say on what that motivation might be. "*New ways to understand and organize knowledge and experiences*" does have a certain sense of vagueness to it that is asking for trouble but it does have more depth to it when thinking about tangible things on how movies can and could be philosophical. Perhaps the thought can be playfully turned around: Aren't movies in fact doing exactly this as they are presenting to us fictional places, faces and spaces? They are giving us new ways of looking at things from the camera's point of view which we need to not just absorb, consume and accept but also hold and mold a position, a stance which should be in direct contact with the movie, as it is in verisimilitude part of our world. Surely films are also always in a sense new experiences for us that might make us question our own experiences in the real world. Is this not indeed real philosophical dialogue in action?

4.4.2 Baggini and Fictional Representations

Another vocal critic of Mulhall's approach to cinematic philosophy has been Julian Baggini. He

asserts that Mulhall is rather showing us what film as philosophy might and could be, not so much as what philosophy could be. Baggini evokes Wittgenstein's famous aphorism that "*What can be shown cannot be said.*" (Wittgenstein 1921) and then erroneously derives that Mulhall's writing is paradoxical and writing about his writing is double-paradoxical. Baggini does consider that one can show things with words without explanation – as is done when one is singing. In the same way one can either explain what philosophy is or just do it. He sees Mulhall's approach as being problematic as such because of this, since Mulhall in Baggini's view cannot directly say what film as philosophy is but he has to show it with concrete filmic examples. Fictitious movies cannot in Baggini's mind fill this same criterion of 'show & say', simply because they are fictitious. Films can only offer us symbolic representations of the world, but don't provide us with reasons for thinking that these representations are accurate. Baggini then asks, how can fictitious representations tell us anything about the nature of reality in a philosophical way. He notes that Mulhall does not separate philosophy from literature and Baggini notes that both of them want to explain the world truthfully. But what does truthful mean in terms and in the context of philosophy? The truthfulness of philosophy, according to Baggini, becomes apparent in its way of presenting arguments precisely and clearly. These arguments are not necessarily just formal and logical provisions of arguments but reason-giving in their nature nevertheless. How a filmmaker sees the world and presents it truthfully and how we reflect on this view is the way that we can assess a movie's philosophy. In other words philosophy says, cinema shows. According to Baggini, Mulhall's arguments on movies can only be accepted if we also accept a larger view on what philosophy is. A larger view that Baggini is obviously not willing to accept.

Let us look at Baggini's claims more closely. His insertion of Wittgenstein to the discussion might at first seem like a clever and philosophical move to do but in fact it isn't very beneficial to the conversation at all. Why is this? In my mind Mulhall does not fall into the trap of not being able to directly say what philosophy of film or more astutely film as philosophy is just as the muddling metaphysician cannot ever find a thing called a "fruit" – just different fruits – so it must be that there is not a thing that can be said to be a philosophy of film(s). The ostensible reach and dissection that Mulhall goes onto is in my view the only method of dwelling into the subject matter truthfully. To say, as Baggini states, that one cannot say anything about the philosophy of films without mentioning some films is just misplacing and languishing Mulhall's ideas. He is not trying to build an over-arching method or theory of film but instead trying to claim that at least the films he is covering in his book have this status of being philosophical cinematography. Just as Baggini himself at the very end of his essay acknowledges, "*In whichever ways Mulhall's key idea of 'film*

as philosophising' is taken forward, it represents a challenge both to film theorists and philosophers who think they already know where and how film and philosophy meet." (Baggini 2003)

Baggini's idea of a certain kind of truthfulness that both philosophy and literature adhere to should also be called into question. The only way to truthfully and philosophically represent the world is to make sound and coherent, logical arguments, according to Baggini. Here Baggini seems to be belittling the arguments that movies can have and do make. Just as Stanley Cavell writes about a tendency in film study, to "*claim...to see and analyze something that the films they discuss cannot see and analyze, whereas the films are, according to my reading, exactly about that something.*" (Cavell 1984, 7) so it should be noted that cinema, just like philosophy and literature, can see the roots of its own tree, e.g be truthful to that certain cinematic world it is inhabiting and argue within that context. What Baggini here is doing is showing a tendency to produce "*interpretations of a work...which do not allow the work its say in its interpretation.*" (Cavell 1984, 8). Being truthful to a certain world is especially noticeable in movies that are set in the same universe but in different times or places, such as is the case with such ideology-spawning movie franchises as *Lord of the Rings* – a book which, mind you, gave birth to many personal ideologies already before being made into an epic trilogy – , *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *The Matrix* and so the list goes on. *Sequeldom* is a fascinating sub-genre and issue within film philosophy which Mulhall also briefly discusses in his book but which we will not here venture further into.

4.5 Shaw's Shank Redemption?

Joshua Shaw points out in his write-up of Mulhall's 2nd edition of *On Film* that he finds Mulhall's idea of film as philosophy to be both his most provocative yet most ambiguous claim and that Mulhall's analyses of the different films seem, at times, rushed. (Shaw 2009, 189). He is poignant in pointing out that he is not doing justice to Mulhall's book if he simply – again, as did most of his earlier critics – disregards Mulhall's interpretations of particular films. Yet this is exactly what, Shaw notes, the bulk of Mulhall's critics have mostly done. How can one simply overlook the arguments that are placed in the specific readings of specific films? One does not usually count in the fact that movies might themselves have a stance on how people interpret them and that interpretation is not something fixed in stone in terms of meaning and value but something that might well progress along with the viewer. As Russel B. Goodman points out, when talking about

Cavell's film philosophy,

"The eloquence of particular films, however, means that they will continually have a "say" in their interpretation, ensuring that we will never know them, or know our experience of them; rather, we remain in the process of knowing them and knowing our experience of them." (Goodman 2005, 119).

Shaw suggests that Mulhall draws attention to the various ways in which philosophers can invite us to imagine specific scenarios so as to 'reorient' our thinking, and says that Mulhall persuasively argues for films being able to initiate such reorientations through representations of particular experiences. He takes it that initiating such reflection, reorienting viewers in this way, would count as philosophy for Mulhall. Shaw gives a smart retort for Baggini's counting of philosophy as being only about reason-giving as he reminds us of Nietzsche's literary remarks on eternal return in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's literary remarks strike Shaw as being philosophic even if they do not, by themselves, give the reader a reason to believe in eternal recurrence. Shaw seems to be saying that in a sense Mulhall is right to favour a more permissive conception of philosophy. Shaw also notes that Mulhall misrepresents Baggini's claims and says that *"His [Baggini's] point is not that films cannot philosophise but that the Alien films do not philosophise."* (Shaw 2009). This might be true but those accountings of Mulhall are specific representations of particular experiences which one can either accept or argue against, not simply ask for better ways of generally representing your ideas and to define philosophizing. Baggini does not in his criticism, it has to be stated in his account, go onto specific details about Mulhall's readings.

Shaw sees Baggini's view on Mulhall's ideas to be rather problematic for the whole definition of philosophy: *"[...]the more you ponder Mulhall's proposal, which is persuasive, the harder it is to pin down what makes philosophy unique."* (Shaw 2009, 193). There is a connection between film and philosophy and in Baggini's mind there are good motives for absolutely wanting *"[...]the open border between philosophy and film to remain a border, one we cross with ease but the legitimacy of which we recognise"* (Baggini 2003). This legitimacy is reason-giving, which we have already discussed but it has to be noted that Baggini wants to obviously retain something for philosophy that is uniquely an affirmation and integral constituent of it. There is obviously a certain trepidness here, for, as Shaw puts it, *"[...]the more I follow this train of thought, the more the distinction between philosophy and non-philosophy becomes hazy"* (Shaw 2009, 193). Even if movies do not need to give us reasons for accepting certain philosophic claims, do we still anyhow need some form of an assertion of a philosophic claim for that claim to exist in other than the philosopher-

turned-film-critic's mind? Shaw points out that if it is enough for a movie to simply inspire viewers to reflect on certain problems on philosophic issues without giving any asserting solutions to possible claims made by the movie, the more confused one can get over what constitutes a philosophic movie and distinguishes it from a non-philosophical film. Shaw is not fully satisfied with Mulhall's answers to his critics and claims that the biggest worry that everyone seems to have about what Mulhall is offering us is that it renders it unclear what it means to philosophise in the first place. It has to be noted, as Shaw does, that Mulhall states that his proposal about film is a 'modest' one (Mulhall 2008, 131). It might consequently be too radical to claim that Mulhall is asserting that films can philosophize, but he does want to let an understanding 'accrue' based on "[...]critical interpretations of specific films and specific achievements of film" (Mulhall 2008, 153).

Shaw wonders whether Mulhall favours a similar approach to philosophy, that its nature is best revealed by exemplary moments of it. In other words nothing in terms of ideas and ideals would be fixed in stone and philosophy would be seen as just a continual work in progress, where films might have philosophical prowess and poise as convincing as those made by professional philosophers. I think Shaw takes his reading of Mulhall a bit too far though when he claims that *"the idea of film as philosophy is provocative because it implies that film is uniquely philosophic."* (Shaw 2009, 195). I don't really see this being the case. Although Mulhall does at the end of his reply to some critics point out that

"To my way of thinking the creation of film was as if meant for philosophy – meant to reorient everything philosophy has said about reality and its representation, and about art and imitation, about greatness and conventionality, about judgment and pleasure, about skepticism and transcendence, about language and expression." (Mulhall 2008, 146)

To me this quote does not imply that film is uniquely philosophic but rather that there are elements that cinema can work with that give it endless possibilities to have philosophic issues drawn out and presented similarly to, say, literature or theatre. If the passage seems to suggest that there is a unique connection between film and philosophy, what is it in reality that makes film so distinctly philosophic from other forms of art? The simple notion that it can have at its subject matter anything it pleases in (these days, at least technologically speaking) any way it pleases? Isn't the same true however for literature and art as well? It might be that the viscosity of the cinematic medium is what makes it stand out amongst these different aesthetic interpretations as being able to make judgements in the way that philosophers do. As Thomas Wartenberg asserts: *"Films are*

capable of giving philosophical ideas a liveliness and vivacity that some may find lacking in the written texts of the tradition". (Wartenberg 2007, 4). The truthfulness that Baggini suggested as the basis for explaining the world with such-and-such claims is not wholly convincing in relation to philosophy, but perhaps it explains to us why we would seem to grant films with more power of persuasion if not precision, as they can present to us a world in front of our eyes that we can fully immerse ourselves into, as if we were part or at least an observer of that world. Some might claim that novels do the exact same thing only through the faculties of imagination of the reader but it would seem to me to be the visuality of films that has the excitement behind it to deliver this kind of experience.

4.6 Mulhall's Response to the Ponces who Ponder His Poncing Up Upon Film

The debate on film as philosophy has not died down one bit and many philosophers have asked Mulhall to more fully explain his views on how films can philosophize in general. They have, as I have tried to briefly show you here, deprecated the way in which he claims films to be philosophy in action and then backs his claims with specific readings of certain films. If one does not accept that those movies in any way demonstrate philosophical attributes then his claims would seem to be on rather barren land. Are Mulhall's arguments then somewhat counter-inductive in their reasoning, as he does not generalize and formulate a full theory of film philosophy from particular examples but still wants to show a way in which films might philosophize with concrete filmic instances? It depends on whether we seem to think that he comes to a certain general conclusion about films not simply being an ornamentation for philosophers but philosophy itself through his examples. In any case the dialogue continues and perhaps the most fecund thing that Mulhall has done for aesthetic philosophy is to start fully engaging itself with contemporary cinema which might have prolific consequences in terms of what philosophy wants itself to be in the aesthetic arena.

The clear argument which Mulhall voices out in the introduction of the book created a lot of discussion amongst peer philosophers and colleagues who could not quite decipher Mulhall's condensed theoretical writing about cinema. It is to these objections and criticisms that he later returned in a writing entitled "*Film as Philosophy: The Very Idea*" where he responds to some of the inquiries and criticisms that other philosophers have made. According to him some have in a sense misinterpreted him by reading out from his introduction a wider mode of thinking and general

method about film. He asserts that it is

” [...]only in the cut-and-thrust of argument about such concrete details of our experience of particular films that we can hope to evaluate the claim that there are such possibilities of the cinematic medium.” (Mulhall 2007, 3).

Mulhall sees that the sole focus of attention and criticism from other philosophers has been on the introductory part of his book, and the most disappointing aspect – from a philosophical and intellectual point of view I would imagine – of the critical response to his book is that

”[...]even those responsive to its concerns tend not to engage in any detail with the specific readings of particular films that make up the bulk of the book itself, and that are in fact where its more general claims either stand or fall.” (Mulhall 2007, 5)

So what – if anything – can there then be done if we are to claim anything specific about the connections and correlations between film and philosophy without looking at specific films, as is the case when not discussing specific cinematic pieces such as mostly this thesis of mine? Well, we can think of how films and philosophy relate to one another, since

”[...]to make progress by reflecting upon the conditions of its own possibility is also as good a characterization as could be desired of the way in which any truly rigorous philosophy must proceed; for any philosophy that failed to engage in such reflection would fail to demand of itself what it makes its business to demand of any and every other discipline with which it presumes to engage.” (Mulhall 2002, 6)

But how do studies of particular films relate to more theoretical studies of the medium as such? What about philosophy in film, a popular mode of philosophic thinking about film? Christopher Falzon has more recently taken this approach further in his book *Philosophy Goes To The Movies: An Introduction to Philosophy* where he uses certain film examples to give an introduction to philosophic matters, something which in my mind falls into the category of film philosophizing, which was already discussed earlier in 2.7.

4.7 Over-interpretations?

Is there a unified model that can be employed to characterize this newly vitalized domain of philosophic inquiry? The answer is that there probably is not a single model that can take into

consideration all of these different aspects. It is however obviously in the best interest of philosophers who are interested in the field to know all of the different ways of interpretation. However there is always the risk of running into an exhaustive amount of interpretations and thus the risk of overanalyzing and overly interpreting movies becomes a big risk. To read things into movies that simply are not there makes it puzzling and casts a rather gloomy shadow as how to continue with a pursuit and inquiry of philosophical proportions. How can one define what is intrinsic rather than intrinsic to a movie? On another note, who is there then to “respond” for the movie itself? Surely not the director since then we would yet again run into the abyss of the *auteur* approach and its inherent problems. It seems that it would have to depend on peer review and open debate and discussion that would keep the matter from hopefully being convoluted too much by over-interpretations.

*“Whether or not a particular reading of a film in fact reads things into it as opposed to reading things out of it is not something that can be settled apart from a specific assessment of that reading against one’s own assessment of the given film (and vice versa).
(Mulhall 2007, 8)*

The lack of apparent philosophization and indeed a conventional – written or simply oral – delivery and representation of ideas and thoughts in movies is not an excuse as to not regard cinema as philosophical and indeed philosophy in the doing, it just takes on a rather different form. It can be hard to think how a film might have a logically structured argument, since all there really is is moving pictures with people, events and places. But this is yet again to undermine the power of art to articulate and express genuinely original thoughts or to simply arouse such discussions. Sure there is not a shared space of thought and discussion where the audience and the movie might philosophically have a “discussion” but I believe that the viewing experience should rather itself be thought to be the discussion. When meticulously thought this is exactly what can happen: It is true that the movie watching experience itself in at least a movie theatre can be a pretty passive experience when thought of from the viewer’s point of view. However after a really engaging movie the audience is relentlessly forced and indeed wants to discuss the issues raised or highlighted by the movie respectively on their own, much like after a really intense and good philosophy seminar or lecture. I think anyone reading this will not have a hard time of identifying themselves on this respect. Thus movies can be really powerful vehicles in bringing forth discussion and at times it is apparent that they themselves have something original to contribute to such conversations. When talking about the Alien movie franchise Stephen Mulhall points out that

"[...] the sophistication and self-awareness with which these films deploy and develop that issue [embodiment], together with a number of related issues also familiar to philosophers, suggest to me that they should themselves be taken as making real contributions to these intellectual debates." (Mulhall 2002, 3)

Indeed this might be the case with the Alien movies as with many others. However it is really in the specific argumentation, in the cut and thrust so to speak about those specific movies, that we can try to assess how much of what someone "reads out" from a movie rings true, as supposed to when someone just reads things into it that are not there in the first place. The ways in which we can rightfully and philosophically view and appreciate the contributions to intellectual debates made by movies is to assess and evaluate a film from its perspective – from its world – without overcrowding it with philosophical jargon thrown from our 'philosophical citadels', whenever it is not apparently applicable or appropriate from the viewpoint of the movie itself.

Not all movies obviously engage the viewer philosophically, that is not what Mulhall is saying – although that is a claim which might be a topic of another thesis all on its own. What he is saying, however, is that rather than allowing their experience of particular films to teach them what film might be, people who have criticized his approach often permit their preconceptions about the nature of film to dictate what their experience of particular films might be. So rather than allowing their experience of particular films to teach them what ethics, art, imagination, emotions and thinking might be, people permit their preconceptions about the nature of them to dictate what their experience of these phenomena as presented in or activated by particular films might be. And finally rather than allowing their experience of particular films to teach them what philosophizing might be, they permit their preconceptions about the nature of philosophy to determine what their experience of particular films might be.

Not seeing films as closely culturally connected to its subject matters and independently and forcefully being able to make argumentations about them is in short the issue that Mulhall and Cavell have tried to raise in the tradition of the philosophy of film. I argue much like they do that all of the philosophical approaches to cinema that I have here gone through have their own significance but that only the final approach, film as philosophy, is truly challenging and holds meaning to a philosophical debate on the nature of cinema – and on the rather specific arguments which one has to look into when discussing certain movies, just as is the case when talking about Aristotle's ethics, Marx's political philosophy or of Hegel's metaphysics. Philosophizing can occur within any and every mode of human existence, insofar as those engaged in a particular form of human practical

activity find themselves driven to question the nature of their own enterprise and the resources with which it is pursued, and to incorporate both the process and the product of this self-questioning into the practical activity from which it emerged. If this type of self-questioning is indeed possible for the physicists and the literary critics then why not for the filmmakers?

4.8 BLADE RUNNER: An Example Analysis of a Film as Philosophy Approach

4.8.1 Why Blade Runner?

I have decided that the best way for me to further explain and explore the idea of film as philosophy is not only to infiltrate and instigate the theoretical aspects of this approach through the thoughts of Cavell and Mulhall, but to also translate and transpose those ideas to the actual world at hand and choose a movie, which in my mind gives the reader a good example of how a film can bring about new and refreshing ideas or old and refurbished thoughts into the philosophical discussion on certain themes and topics. An example movie which in my mind qualifies for a strong case for the "film as philosophy" approach is a film called Blade Runner. I will in this chapter explore the movie as not only a tool and illustration for philosophical problems – though it is obviously also those things – but will try to also focus on the philosophy that the movie itself is presenting and arguing. The reason why I chose this movie to showcase and highlight some of the philosophical aspects that movies can have are mainly personal, but also because I believe that Blade Runner deals with many philosophical matters that are wholly related to philosophy as an academic discipline and as a cultural product that is completely aware of itself and its surroundings. Stephen Mulhall also discusses some of those aspects and devotes a good few and concise pages to Blade Runner in his book *On Film*. I will look at some of the issues that Mulhall raises and try to mingle those with my own ideas and readings of the film and at the same time obviously explore its general and more specific themes. Since there are numerous different versions of the movie out there, I am specifying that the movie version I am referring to here is that of the *Remastered Director's Cut*.

4.8.2 Running the Blade of Humanity

Blade Runner is an American science fiction film directed by Ridley Scott in 1982. It stars Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young and Darryl Hannah amongst its key actors. The story and screenplay of Blade Runner is somewhat based on Philip K. Dick's novel called *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?*. The film shows us a rather dystopian view of a futuristic Los Angeles in 2019, where organically engineered robots with artificial intelligence called *replicants* are manufactured, produced and maintained by a powerful corporation called *The Tyrell Corporation*. What makes the idea of these replicants so compelling philosophically speaking is that they are

indistinguishable from humans. What does it mean to be a human being? Mulhall notes that *Blade Runner* distinguishes itself in this matter from other movies, that are for example in the case of thrillers concerned more with "complexities of plotting or concealment of the identities and purposes of the criminals" (Mulhall 2000) or other science fiction movies that focus on technology rather than people, or employing exotic and alien backdrops instead of human encounters and emotions. Mulhall makes an apt analogy that in order to allow the movie's thematic questioning of humanity to dominate the sequence of events, it might be more accurate to describe the film as being obsessed with the matter of humanity obsessed in the way the leader of the replicants is obsessed with his quest for life, for a life which is on a par with that of human beings. I think Mulhall goes on a limb to give us a rather stretched and far-fetched statement, when he stipulates that "to show that Roy Batty misconceives this quest as one for more life as if a replicant might become human by living longer is the goal of the film." (Mulhall 2000). It is true that the question of what it means to be fully human is indeed a key theme in the movie, but to state that it is the entire goal, the intentioned primal force of dramatic tension, then I think that Mulhall's approach feels a little forced. Yet this theme is prevalent in the discussion of *Blade Runner* so we will obviously look further into the matter in the few coming chunks of chapters.

The motto for the *Tyrell Corporation* and thus the replicants is "more human than human", which gives us a tricky conundrum: What does it mean to be *more* human? Is there a certain limit to humanity that can be overcome? Is evolution a progression towards a certain fulfilment, a perfection in the making or indeed just an aimless set of naturalistic laws that govern our being-in-this world? I think quite easy allusions to the Nietzschean idea of an *Übermensch* is called into question but also more pressing overall questions having to do with differentiation and humanity are put in the limelight. Since language started to evolve humans have, in my understanding, tried to differentiate things from each other and from the one that is making the distinctions, usually given an assertion of a "me", a personal *res cogitans*, that is able to peer into and out of this world within its form of *res extensa*. These distinctions might be arbitrary and biased, but it has to be noted that making distinctions seems to be a characteristically human endeavour, not to say that monkeys and other animals would not be capable of such a form of division. Why is it that we do these distinctions though? Where and to what extent do we need them? Do we need them at all? We can look at recent social history and note that it was not until a hundred years ago that for example women and people of other colour except white men were not considered to be fully human. This is still the case in some countries, where extreme, religious regimes reign, subjugating, enslaving and suppressing female and other voices not belonging to the "norm" and their given birthrights. Now we

are also discussing whether animals should have rights as well and children were granted their own set of rights in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child billed in 1989. The discussion of machines having rights is thus in my mind a natural progression of these often dichotomous dialogues, though too often the other interest party does not yet have a voice or an advocate group of its own. Blade Runner might not perhaps offer a finalized thought on the matter but it makes its point without embellishment, tying together not just themes of repression and what it means to be human, but themes such as the implications of technology for humans and the environment. These themes I want to further look into in this writing as I try to study and also introduce the movie's main plot to a reader that is unfamiliar with the film.

4.8.3 Voight-Kampff Test of Humanity

Harrison Ford plays a retired police officer Rick Deckard, more precisely he is a "blade runner", whose purpose is to try and capture replicants that have escaped from the authorities. These humanoids, who have served as soldiers and slaves in off-world colonies, have come to Earth illegally. As a "blade runner", Deckard's job is to track down replicants on Earth and "retire" them. Retiring means to end their life but to "retire" something obviously has a strong connotation of shutting down a machine rather than ending a human, humane life. The way in which Deckard and other blade runners are able to distinguish replicants from humans is by administering and running a test called the "Voight-Kampff test", which distinguishes humans from replicants based on their empathic response to differentiating, cross-referenced questions related to human action. The test measures bodily functions such as respiration, "blush response", heart rate and eye movement in response to these emotionally provocative questions. In a situation like this where machines have in a sense become at least visually indistinguishable from humans it is rightful to ask what would be the measures – and indeed if there even needed to be any – of trying to differentiate humans from "non-humans"? Later on we are also given the open possibility of Deckard himself being a replicant but on that note a little later on.

The movie is quick to ask itself the philosophical questions and problems that are raised in a thought-experiment like this. As Deckard comes to the *Tyrell Corporation* to test the Voight-Kampff machine on the Nexus-6 model Rachael, played by Sean Young, they have this following dialogue:

Rachael: *May I ask you a personal question?*
Deckard: *Sure.*
Rachael: *Have you ever retired a human by mistake?*
Deckard: *No.*
Rachael: *But in your position that is a risk?*

Tyrell wants to see a negative result before a positive one and as Deckard asks what that would prove, Tyrell asks Deckard in return to indulge him. "On you?", asks Deckard. "Try her", Tyrell says amusingly, referring to Rachael, who was there to meet Deckard when he first entered his facilities. It takes Deckard many questions to figure out that she is actually a replicant. What makes Rachael's character stand out is the fact that she is an experimental replicant who to herself honestly believes to be a human being; Rachael's consciousness has been enhanced with childhood memories from Tyrell's niece. As a result, a more extensive Voight-Kampff test is required to identify her as a replicant. During the testing Rachael suggests that Deckard himself be tested. Depending on which version one is looking at we are at one point during the movie also given an image of a unicorn. Deckard's unicorn dream sequence inserted into the Director's Cut coincides with Deckard's partner blade runner, Gaff's parting-gift of an origami unicorn and is seen by many as showing that Deckard is in fact a replicant as Gaff could have access to Deckard's implanted memories. As the replicants had no memories of their own, they had to obviously be implanted, and the connection between the appearance of the origami model towards the end and the dream sequence earlier on could be seen as a sign that Gaff knew what Deckard was thinking because it was an image shared by other non-humans.

4.8.4 Replicants As Non-human "Others"

It can be argued, as I will argue here, that in Scott's *Blade Runner* it is the machines, namely the replicants, made by the Tyrell Corporation, that are seen as something external to humanity, something inhuman – though of human origin – by the other characters in the movie. The Voight-Kampff test is the only way to figure out if a person is a replicant or not. It seems rather odd that empathy should be used as the measure and indicator of whether someone is human or not, since mentally disturbed people are very much capable of terrible, inhumane acts of violence, sadism, torture and other such heinously gruesome and horribly monstrous atrocities. Of course we can here easily be accused of labeling as well, as we define a healthy person with respect to mental health in terms of not having certain attributes and if they have them they are seen as mentally deficient. This

is obviously a statement of the human condition, but here I allude to Kant's notion of "radical evil" in human moral life in his treatment of the Christian doctrine of original sin: We are able to do "evil" and are really in some sense children of cruelty. In Kant's case it was when there are exceptions made to the demand of the categorical imperative in circumstances when such an exception seems to be in our own favor. In the world of Blade Runner, being cruel towards replicants does not seem to have any straightforward benefits towards humans, if only that they do not have to feel their humanity threatened. What would people with mental disabilities be classified under the Voight-Kampff test? Captain Bryant, Rick Deckard's boss, calls replicants "skin-jobs" and when a replicant is killed it is simply indeed called a systematical and routine "retirement". A nagging question remains, however, which might be put in the following way: which of the two, Deckard and Bryant, is right? How can we know whether any one of these entities can correctly be regarded as human? Stephen Mulhall rightfully asks in his essay on the Blade Runner

"-- if we (and anyone in the world of the film) can see that nothing counts against their being treated as human, how and why do most of the human beings in the film apparently fail to see this?" (Mulhall 2002, 35).

An answer to the question might simply be that the biases of the people in viewing the replicants as simply machines, since they are of human construction, has to do with the frightful thought of life emerging from something that is not in essence living. The replicants constitute an easy "other", something which can be understood as not being "us" but "them". As Mulhall points out though,

"Bryant's failure to acknowledge the replicants as human is not based on ignorance or repression of these facts, but is rather the expression of one possible attitude towards them". (Mulhall 2002, 35).

This attitude seems to be the prevailing one, though we are only shown a portion of different attitudes in the movie towards the replicants. The head of the Tyrell Corporation, Dr. Eldon Tyrell obviously has a distinctly different view; *"Commerce is our goal here at Tyrell. "More human than human" is our motto."* He sees the replicants as being even more human than humans themselves, a rather odd notion at first, but this view is concreted in the final moments between Deckard and Roy Batty, the leader of the Nexus 6 group of replicants. Paradoxically however they are sold as commodities to armies and other such military purposes and thus do not actually at all possess the same rights as human beings. Mulhall eagerly points out that even though endowing the replicants with intelligence levels and physical strength at least equal to that of any human being, it is made very clear from the beginning that the possession of such capacities goes no way towards settling

the ontological status of their possessors; in fact, rather than confirming the replicants as candidates for humanity, the fine-honed perfection and virtuosity of their physical and mental skills tends to cast doubt upon their candidature. Mulhall takes it that that is the reason why those scenes in which the replicants manifest their invulnerability to extremes of heat and cold (in the hygienic chill of the eye laboratory or the hot water in which J. F. Sebastian boils his egg) tend to alienate the viewer from Leon and Pris. The superhuman flawlessness of Roy and Pris stands out more strongly when contrasted with the physical decrepitude inflicted on Sebastian by a genetic flaw known as Methuselah Syndrome accelerated aging. (Roy asks why Sebastian is staring at his visitors, and is told: *"Because you're so different, you're so perfect."*) Sebastian's physical inadequacies evoke sympathy in the viewer but not in Roy or Pris; the way in which they manipulate him as a means towards their goal of confronting Tyrell simultaneously confirms the humanity of their victim and the inhumanity of their attitude towards him. Perfection seems to signify difference, as Sebastian implies.

4.8.5 Eye For An Eye Makes Acknowledgement Blind

In the movie eyes are a recurring motif, as are manipulated images, calling arguably into question reality and our ability to accurately perceive and remember it. As the fugitive replicants Roy and Leon visit and enter the eye manufacturing laboratory of Chew, played by James Hong, they interrogate him and as he understands that the visitors are in fact replicants that he himself helped to design he wistfully says *"You Nexus, huh? I design your eyes."* to which Roy Batty, played by Rutger Hauer, wittily responds *"Chew, if only you could see what I've seen with your eyes! "*. It can be suggested that the Voight-Kampff test might also show us a metanarrative of the story, since the eye that the test is testing is looking straight into the camera and thus to and at the audience, making it seem that the movie is fully conscious of being watched and thus giving us a kind of metastructure. I think this kind of an interpretation is not too forced or far-fetched but I still will not venture any further into that interpretation but only acknowledge that such interpretation is readily available.

The replicants are trying hard to achieve the status of a human from humans. Mulhall points out that the humanity of the replicants or indeed of all human beings is in the hands of their fellows; their accession to human status involves their being acknowledged as human by others. They can fulfill all the criteria, but they cannot force an acknowledgement from those around them; and if their

humanity is denied, it withers. As Stanley Cavell would put it, we do not know that any given entity is a human being; rather, we acknowledge or deny their humanity in the attitude we adopt towards them (Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, 1979). The theme of adopting an attitude towards replicants is in the movie more fully explored in the relationship between Deckard and Rachael. Officer Deckard obviously fancies Rachael, the Tyrell's Nexus-6 model, early on. Their relationship becomes a central theme in the movie, as Deckard has to evaluate and re-evaluate his position towards replicants once his feelings for her start to increase. Mulhall argues that we already know that Deckard will deny Rachael's humanity, that his relationship towards her will begin by being death-dealing because of the scene in his apartment block in which she startles him in the elevator. When Rachael comes to Deckard to find comfort and reassurance against the shock of discovering her status as a replicant, Deckard simply takes her last pinches of humanity away by reciting to her her own memories which he knows to be those of Tyrell's niece and then also telling her that they are planted into her as her own memories. Here the thoughts of John Locke are forcefully abounded and resounded. He emphasized the importance of memories and a sense of continuity over time which gives a person his humanity and personality, something which Deckard denies Rachael of.

Later on, when Rachael inquires whether Deckard has himself taken the Voight-Kampff test, those questions fall on deaf ears. For the viewer, Mulhall notes, this question hangs together with the accumulating evidence that the blade runner business and its barter of life-taking for a living wage is dehumanizing; we begin to see the way in which a refusal to acknowledge another's humanity constitutes a denial of the humanity in oneself. When the two confront each other and the situation seems ripe for them to manifest their feelings towards each other the difficulties arise because Deckard forces the right words into her mouth and thereby he violates her autonomy; Rachael is given a lesson in how to express her inner life, and by the end of the scene she does learn how to go on and find the appropriate words unprompted but this learning process occurs within an overall context of teacher and pupil i.e. of a power-relationship which fails to allow for the equality of participants. The way in which Deckard and Rachael here acknowledge their feelings for one another inevitably prevents a full acknowledgement of Rachael's humanity; and since it was Deckard who set the terms of this encounter and who failed to find a way of educating Rachael which acknowledged her autonomy, the responsibility for Rachael's failure to be fully respectful of her own humanity is his.

In the final scene Deckard goes back to his home and thinks he will find Rachael dead there, only to discover that she is still alive. Then he leans over her and asks her if she loves him. Rather than

forcing words into her mouth, Deckard asks open questions and Rachael is free to choose her answers more precisely and she freely chooses to acknowledge her love for Deckard. According to Mulhall by creating a conversation in which Rachael could do this in a way which respects her own autonomy, Deckard comes to share in the responsibility for their achievement of equality and the full mutual acknowledgement it permits. *"These two have earned their escape from the nightmarish city-scape in which everyone's humanity is at risk."* (Mulhall 2000). The possession of human form and behavior of the requisite complexity can make an entity eligible for treatment as a human and it is a necessary condition for being so treated, but such entities can only develop in their personhood and only become fully human if their humanity is acknowledged rather than denied. That is exactly what Deckard eventually does.

4.8.6 The Light That Burns

As Mulhall puts it, part of being human is being mortal and Blade Runner attempts to explore the significance of human mortality in complex ways. The leader of the rogue replicant squadron Roy Batty is obsessed with his quest for life, for a life which is on a par with that of human beings. This is because their life span has been predetermined by the makers of the replicants and has been restricted to four years. Thus it makes their emotional capacities, memories and experiences limited and are in a sense comparable to that of a child's. Roy Batty and the group of replicants take on the view that their desire for more life is the desire to become more human. Since they know the exact time of their death, they are deprived of normal human conditions, where a person's life span – however finite it may be – is not predestined. However, as Mulhall puts it *"Every moment of human life is necessarily shadowed by the possibility of its own non-existence"* (Mulhall 2002, 39) a thought hauntingly connected to Heidegger and his idea of Being-towards-death. According to Mulhall

"The possibility of our own impossibility and its emergence reveals the irrelevance of any distinction between replicants and human beings on the length of their lifespans or the certainty with which they can predict an end to their lives on a given day". (Mulhall 2002, 39).

This is what Roy Batty already discovers as he confronts his "maker", Dr. Tyrell, who asserts that *"The light that burns twice as bright burns half as long - and you have burned so very, very brightly, Roy."* Tyrell finds that it is the intensity, the attitude with which Roy experiences every

moment, which makes him even more human. The authenticity of life as eternal becoming, letting every moment burn brightly whilst still acknowledging the transience of the present is a thought developed especially by Friedrich Nietzsche and furthered by Charles Taylor, but poignantly also treated philosophically in the movie. There are some obvious connections made in the movie with that of Christian imagery and Nietzschean notions of slave morality and the *Übermensch*, the overman, in the final sequence with Roy Batty and Deckard, but the most interesting feature of the last sequence is the moral lesson of mortality Batty learns and is then trying to teach and pass on to Deckard.

As Batty finally understands that mortality is as internal to human existence as embodiment, genuine humanity turns on finding the right relation to it, as Mulhall puts it. After this revelation he saves Deckard from a certain death and thus shows him compassion, in essence a genuine human emotion, if not perhaps the most genuine emotion of them all. In the face of death Deckard is hysterical and fearful but as Batty rescues him he sees the calmness with which Batty is ready to face his own, slow death. Batty's final, moving words in the rain are thus:

"I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhauser gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die."

He finally understands that he has lived a full life, but that that life is transient and now has to face his death. Deckard can only watch him slowly fade away and as he does, a voice-over comes in:

"I don't know why he saved my life. Maybe in those last moments he loved life more than he ever had before. Not just his life, anybody's life, my life. All he'd wanted were the same answers the rest of us want. Where did I come from? Where am I going? How long have I got? All I could do was sit there and watch him die."

Seeing Batty's final struggle against his mortality has made Deckard finally understand his failure in acknowledging Batty's humanity and even his failure to understand his own 'humanity' or human-like existence, given that he may well be a replicant too. Thus he grants him the human status, not seeing him as a replicant, or "the other" any more, but more or less a human companion – a human other as Mulhall puts it – who passes away. Understanding that he is unable to do anything about the matter also makes him see that although replicants might be constructed by humans, once they

are, they become apt to face life, its degrading features, experience mortality and in the end face death in the same manner as humans have to face it. As they are conscious of this, that should be a reason good enough to see them as essentially human.

5. CURTAIN CALLS AND FALLS...

To conclude with, I would like to take a look back, to cast a backwards glance at what I have been trying to do here, drawing out some conclusions and possible dissatisfactions with my work, working out where my dissertation stands in the overall philosophical waters and what kind of things could one still find of original philosophical interest in the fairly recent tradition of the philosophy of film. I will also try to thus look forward and bring in some new, interesting voices and furthering thoughts which I left quite mute from the bulk of my dissertation. To say that we have reached firm conclusions would be highly preposterous, so let us walk a fine line between claiming something like that as such and humbly acknowledging how feeble and at times fragile our attempts to grasp anything firm these days truly are. With this postmodern mindset in mind, what have we achieved and come to? Where did we possibly take a wrong turn and go wrong? Did we find something of true interest and originality along the way? How were the sights? Does anyone send postcards these days?

In the second chapter we peered quite widely, if not in an overly deep way – though not to hopefully say narrowly or in a shallow way – into the many different sub-genres that have been already created within the tradition of the philosophy of film. I was hopefully able to make a distinction between philosophy and film studies, arguing that philosophy can and should be able to distinguish itself from film studies, as philosophical aesthetics has always had a concern not just with art in general but with specific art forms and so there is a present and felt connection between art and philosophy that is not fully covered and sought by film studies alone. As such I accepted and furthered Stephen Mulhall's claim that philosophy does indeed have something distinctive to contribute to the ongoing conversations about particular films and the medium of cinema itself, and this something more specifically is at least philosophy's characteristics as a discipline to question its own nature and basis, something that arguably also films can to a certain degree do. Films arguably have an expressive capacity, an ability to sustain an ongoing conversation, that film studies very often does not acknowledge. Here is where I think that philosophy has much to contribute.

When talking about the importance and emotional engagement of films I contrasted three views on the matter, firstly the realist, simulation theory approach most notably developed by Gregory Currie, that stated that the viewer's imaginary occupation within the world of the film is false and that the film viewing experience is usually always impersonal. Secondly, the structural linguistic

and thus semiotic approach furthered by Johannes Ehrat, purported that what is needed is greater philosophical reflection on the construction of meaning. Thirdly I introduced a thought theory approach that has been developed by Murray Smith and Noël Carroll, arguing that filmgoers can be moved emotionally by imaginatively entertaining thoughts, without necessarily believing in their truthfulness. All of the approaches try to answer the difficult question of why do we care about what happens in films as films get us to imagine things taking place. How we imagine things working out does affect our emotions, so fictional films do have an emotional impact upon us and this is problematic as much for the philosopher as for the psychologist.

As I talked about the *auteur* approach I simply stated that as a general theory of the cinema, the author theory is clearly flawed because not all films can be attributed to the control of the director, and that the theory's emphasis on individuals is somewhat perverted. Even though we can study the works of art from great filmmakers who have had significant impact and made strong contributions to their films, we should still not in general see them as the sole creators of those works. As I discussed the nature of film, the ontological and metaphysical aspects of cinema, I found two main metaphysical connections to be of philosophical interest, that between the film and the filmed projection and that between film and the film viewer. Film is a transcript of an actual, filmed object in a spatial and temporal existence that is different from that of the film viewer's, who thinks that he is watching these actions and happenings taking place on screen though those projections are "*a world past*". I also offered Walter Benjamin's somewhat archaic thoughts on the matter, that the mechanical reproduction of different works of art have "broken" the aura, the uniqueness, of those artworks but tried to bring his thoughts to date by asking whether the ability and availability for practically everyone to shoot photographs and video again redeems the politics of art and auras of artworks as they are now arguably part of tradition.

I also introduced in my mind a somewhat dangerous philosophical way of treating movies that I coined "film philosophizing", where professional philosophers use movies as straightforward visual examples to simply further their own theoretical constructions. Another way to in a sense misuse movies is to introduce basic philosophical topics in a teaching situation through the example of movies, though this has to be seen as a double-edged sword: It could also be argued that when one is using a movie to illustrate a certain philosophical issue, one is taking the movie to be of a serious enough importance in that issue and area to justify its place within that teaching situation. I guess it all boils down to how the person showing the movie – a teacher in this situation – can and wants to unravel and decipher the issues raised by the movie. Is *The Matrix* just a fine example of Plato's

and Descartes' more fine-tuned philosophical formulations or could we discuss the movie free of these often times heavy theories? I have in my own, still very brief teaching history seen and used quite a lot of different filmic teaching materials, be it from a movie, a documentary or a tv-series. The results have varied but in the spring of 2010 I got to use six different movies in a teaching experiment during my teacher practice at the Jyväskylä Lyceum and there we together with the students jumped into these film worlds and took them seriously, without right away drawing analogies to already formulated theories, but instead having discussions and even debates within the context of the movies alone. I thought the students found this to be exciting and when I collected their thoughts and feelings about my experiment through a questionnaire they all unanimously said that this kind of approach was not only refreshing and welcome, but that some that had already seen those movies before thought that by philosophically looking at them again opened up not just new questions and thoughts related to those movies but also thoughts that could be related to the reality that they inhabit. This is not to say that one should not introduce thoughts from the history of philosophy at some point or another and indeed bring them to further enliven and enrichen the conversation, but if you start from those theories, I have at least empirically seen this to not be as engaging and inspiring as working first from within the movies themselves.

Nelson Goodman's theory on art and aesthetic worldmaking was perhaps the hardest part of this dissertation. At first I thought that his ideas of worldmaking blended very well with my overall ideas of film and thought of many different ways that they could and would help me in my dissertation. I am not entirely dissatisfied with what his ideas gave to my own thoughts on the matter and those I will very soon have a look at, but it has to be noted that if I were to do this dissertation all over again I would either focus on Goodman's aesthetical ideas related to film alone – which would be a very fruitful dissertation topic all on its own mind you – or leave him out entirely. However I decided to keep his thoughts in here for a few, good reasons. I saw that the idea of intertranslatability between different symbolic systems along with the different ways of quoting between them is the real kicker that can possibly bridge the gap between film and philosophy at least for the film as philosophy perspective. Goodman's thought on what a work is and what it does being different is important, and the idea of finding it hard to tell just what a work of art says or expresses is intriguing, because the mere fact that we do have trouble making a determination implies that there is something to be determined: that the work in fact does or in fact does not say so-and-so, does or does not exemplify – or express – a given property. As I already stated earlier, when we speak of films being philosophical we are also concerned in making a statement that some form of cross-system quotation can exist. Not only quotation, but referencing and argumentation in

the form of thoughts without written words, worlds without wording. We are saying that pictures together with sound can produce statements and arguments of and from our *real* world within that film world that still is and becomes part of our world, even though that world to us is always a world past.

To argue that films make contributions to philosophy itself is something of a hard row to till and a tough argument to fill, as we have hopefully seen in this dissertation. Mulhall tried to show us a way that this can be done, similarly as I tried to show you in the last chapter by using the movie *Blade Runner* as an example of such an approach. Whilst trying to explain Cavell's and Mulhall's film as philosophy argument, we ran into many troubles. Firstly the whole notion of what is meant by philosophy was quickly called into question. Mulhall asserts that films are exercises in philosophy and philosophy in action, that films can philosophize. Not only this but that they engage in systematic and sophisticated thinking about their themes and themselves – much like philosophers do. Treating films as philosophy, rather than speaking of them only in relation to philosophy or subjugating the film in question to pre-existing theories is not something that everyone in the philosophical community is willing to accept or feels comfortable with. Many would rather use them simply as a resource for the dramatisation of philosophical problems or as "*philosophy's raw material, a source for its ornamentation*" as Mulhall wryly puts it. By claiming that the films that for example Mulhall and Cavell discuss actually "do" philosophy, explore philosophical themes and actively think through philosophical problems can quickly become a laborious and lamentable effort to prove and might turn into an aesthetic debating arena resembling something out of a Roman colosseum where philosopher-turned-film-critics dispute each other's arguments through a war of words where disagreement reigns high and dissension descends upon the battle ground more quickly than the conflicts can be resolutely resolved.

I understand the effort on the nay-sayers part, like Andersen and Baggini, to maintain that there is a certain method that philosophy has, that can not permeate through, as such, into artistic and aesthetic arenas. I do however find it a bit disappointing to see that these philosophers are in a sense unable or unwilling to acknowledge the power that art can possess and the philosophizing nature that artists often times have of our world. One should also keep in mind Thomas Wartenberg's idea that asserting that a film is a work of philosophy is a stronger claim than saying it can philosophize. Yet again I do agree that we in a sense need something firm to hold onto as being 'philosophical' per se, but as the question of what philosophy is is a true philosophical question itself, by simply shutting out movies as not having philosophical issues if they do not comply with certain prefixed

elements, just seems to be too strict to claim that films are not ever able to address such issues. Wartenberg also maintains that *"film is able to give philosophical concepts and ideas a human garb that allows their consequences to be perceived more clearly"* (Wartenberg, 2007, Preface). The modest idea of a film giving philosophical concepts a garment is however somewhat obscure. Is it that the film as a visual medium is able to give ostensible clarity to ideas by presenting them in such a way? Could it also not be argued that this attire can be entirely vague and even concealed because nothing direct is usually said but only shown?

In any case to argue that films could be of relevance to philosophy was a decade and a half ago, according to Thomas Wartenberg, *"met with a rather stony silence"* (Wartenberg, 2007, Preface). Now it can be seen as a truly viable sub-discipline of philosophy that *"takes films seriously not just by thinking about philosophical issues concerning the nature of the medium as such, but also by using films as a way of addressing philosophical issues"*. (ibid). It is not historically so clear where the rather stony silence that Wartenberg witnessed along with a few colleagues a decade and a half ago was turned into enthusiastic responses, debates, seminars, journals and even books from fellow philosophers these days. One could try to pinpoint the emergence and growth of the philosophy of film to the changed conditions of film viewing and a change in the mindset of the current media-saturated and visually discombobulated first world generation, that was brought up surrounded by movie theatres reeling out hundreds of films every year, televisions spewing out thousands of hours of video footage every single week, VHS tapes & DVD's being sold in abundance to customers wanting to see things over and over again and video camcorders becoming more and more widespread. The very recent digital development has seen the internet explode into perhaps the biggest visual medium of all, what with YouTube having billions of video clips and people being able to shoot high-definition videos with their cellphones and share them right away with everyone on the internet. The saturation that I here quickly and perhaps dubiously describe, started arguably in the eighties and does not seem to me to be stopping anytime soon. As Wartenber says, *"the fundamental changes in the accessibility of films has affected not only the teaching of film – paving the way for Film Studies to become a serious academic discipline – but also our viewing habits."* (Wartenberg, 2007, 12). As this field of visuality in our lives gains more and more importance and our viewing habits have changed from watching a movie just once in a movie theatre to being able to watch it repeatedly as many times as one wants, surely then philosophers have to have some sort of a stand and say in all of this and one way of doing so is to take the ideas presented by these visual objects as strong cases for subjective and argumentative paraphernalia, as we have tried to do in this dissertation to a large degree.

Of course not everyone is willing to accept this line of argument, instead arguing for the triteness and vapidness of the visual medium in conveying ideas and thoughts. These philosophers emphasise that philosophy is something that can only be done and achieved through a logical and written deduction, where reasoning rules and counter-arguments can be presented and the discussion will not stop when the reel goes dark. However I believe that these philosophers do not want to let go of the idea of philosophy being strictly restricted to a sensation of reading and thinking, because the idea of philosophy permeating art is somewhat horrifying and has always been disconcerting at least to the analytical part of philosophy. Perhaps the reel on their part has already gone a bit dim as they are not willing to accept the fact that dramaturgists, novellists, screenwriters, filmmakers and anyone else working in the aesthetical world of dramatic narratives and stories could capture something even more original, beautiful and meaningful than what the philosopher has at her disposal with just words. Why could a philosopher not be able to convey an idea in visual terms? Is it because the argument is then not precise and clear? Because the receiver has to work in order to find meaning and this meaning might be different from what the sender had originally intended it to be? Why is this problematic? Surely if a philosopher could express his ideas visually, one could also say that the filmmaker is poised to do philosophy in her films?

Ah yes, doing philosophy. We keep returning and running to the same problem of trying to come up with different notions and ways to explain what philosophy and doing it really means. Wartenberg offers a partial solution when he introduces the idea of "screened" philosophy. So we are trying to come up with terminology for understanding the ways in which film relates to philosophy. This might be seen as problematic for a number of different reasons. The first one is that it gives agency to films, something many could object to. They may argue that only inanimate creatures are able to do anything, so it would be a mistake to say that a film, a cultural object, would be able to *do* philosophy. Wartenberg retorts this in two different ways. First he says that the expression of doing philosophy is only a *façon de parler*, a figure of speech, meaning that what is actually meant is that the filmmakers are doing the philosophizing. One could obviously say that a film always does do something to you, just as listening to a streaming lake might do to your well-being, but that is a bit beside the point. Another way to respond is to say that philosophers themselves often attribute actions to written texts, such as that *The Phenomenology of Spirit* develops an idealist metaphysics. The attribution of philosophical abilities of films should thus only be on a par with the standard treatment of written works. When a film is able, for example, to develop a counterexample to a philosophical claim or present a philosophical argument, Wartenberg wants to generally claim that

the counterexample or argument has been "screened". The claim or argument has thus been made in a "*specifically cinematic manner*" (Wartenberg, 2007, 12). Screening here simply refers to a specific cinematic technique for presenting a philosophical view, claim or argument that "*depends upon features of the film medium itself.*" (Wartenberg, 2007, 13). But what is exactly meant by "specifically cinematic"? To simply insert read-outs of famous philosophers' texts to the movie's soundtrack would not, according to Wartenberg, be screening philosophy, because there would be nothing inherent to the cinematic technique of screening in repostulating something that could be read from a book. Wartenberg acknowledges that the distinction is a difficult one to draw out carefully and precisely. To present Descartes' Meditations in the same scrolling, fading text style such as in the beginning of the Star Wars movies would be counted as a specifically cinematic technique, but Wartenberg is quick to point out that this would not be *necessary* for the argument to be presented in this way rather than in its original form of a written book. The idea of the filmic medium being essentially necessary for a certain philosophic argument begs the question of whether there is anything about Wartenberg's screened philosophy which would require it to be presented in just such a way on film, rather than verbally.

"If we say there is, then we seem to make writing philosophical discussions of the film impossible, while if we say there is not, then we have contradicted the claim of necessity".
(Wartenberg 2007, 13).

Similarly to Mulhall, Wartenberg diverts the attention to the fact that we have a general idea of paradigm cases of what would constitute screened philosophy. I am here obviously in a sense likening this idea to Mulhall's thought of film as philosophy. In the same way that philosophy has become increasingly interested in film, so too can the roles arguably be reversed and one could say that films have also become more and more interested in philosophy and have started to take on and tackle philosophical matters much more bravely than ever before. Wartenberg, echoing the late and great Walter Benjamin, states that films' newfound interest in philosophy "*can be at least partially explained by the changes brought about by digital and other means of mechanical reproduction*". (Wartenberg, *ibid*). These include the way that Wartenberg sees the use of "twist" narratives being employed more and more for the purpose of fooling the audience into thinking something and then later revealing something else, for example in which a crucial character's real identity or status is concealed until the end from the audience (e.g. *The Usual Suspects*, 1995, *Sixth Sense* 1999) or when something is revealed to the character himself (*The Truman Show* 1998, *Fight Club* 1999). Other such narratives could be the concealment of the true nature of a universe and its reality (e.g. *Planet of the Apes* 1968, *The Matrix* 1999 to name but just a few) or playing with a movie's

temporal structure (Memento 2000, Irreversible 2002, Inception 2010) or its temporal nature (Groundhog Day 1993, Mulholland Drive 2001, Vanilla Sky 2001, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind 2004). Wartenberg argues that because of the change in viewing habits of the audience, this has also changed the habits of film production and thus this new demand for filmmakers provides a partial explanation of the increased frequency of philosophical films. It has to be noted though that it can only be seen as a partial explanation, just as Wartenberg coins it, because it could easily be said that such movies and narratives have existed way before digital reproduction gave filmmakers more liberties and demands at the same time.

In order to give the reader a fuller account on my movie taste I have also attached as an appendix a list of 100+ films and 90+ television shows that are and have become, in one way or another, important to me. Quite absent are many such art-house indie films, which most film buffs and lovers would immediately add to the list. There would also undoubtedly be in no apparent order films from such *auteur* names as the Russians Andrei Tarkovsky and Sergei Eisenstein, the Swedes Ingmar Bergman and Vilgot Sjöman, the French new-wavers Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut and Jean Renoir, the Italians Federico Fellini, Michaelangelo Antonioni and Pier Paolo Pasolini, the German expressionists Ernst Lubitsch and Fritz Lang, the Americans Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, D. W. Griffith, John Cassavetes, John Huston, the Mexican Luis Buñuel and the Japanese Akira Kurosawa. The list of directors here is not to be seen as just an ostentatious flaunting of film knowledge on my part but the list of these extremely influential film directors can be seen as a certain development within the film studies tradition to focus on individual directors, something that is obviously very much still so with our stevenpielbergs, stanleykubricks, woodyallens, martinscorceses and quantintarantinos of today, who have carved a specific style and niche of filmmaking for themselves. Much like philosophy has for the longest time been centered around the ideas and thoughts of certain philosophers, so too has the film tradition seen many film directors form and break traditions. Much like philosophy has had certain thought-traditions rise and fall, so too has the film tradition seen its waves and crests of different ways of filmmaking. It has to be noted that most of the people on this list have as well been extremely influential in other things than just filmmaking, many of them excelling in painting, writing, producing and acting as well. There are even some filmmakers, as Terrance Malick, who was already a sound Heidegger scholar but eventually turned into a film director. But I digress.

We are beginning to come to the end of my brief but personally exhaustive writing stint into the philosophy of film. I have always been a huge fan of movies and television shows and especially

been fond of those types of movies that were and are able to ask the hard questions, the philosophic ones, through a narration that usually ends up in a certain aristotelian catharsis. When I first started studying philosophy I had absolutely no idea that films could even be considered to strictly academically speaking be philosophical ponderations in action, even though I had emotionally and empirically seen and felt this to be true a long time ago. It was only in the summer of 2006 when I went to a seminar held by Robert Sinnerbrink from Macquarrie University that I realised this sort of approach was not only an entertaining possibility in a world of possible things, but very much a viable and visited vision of what films could be in the eyes of philosophy. I have ever since also become more and more interested in the tradition of film philosophy, of which large chunks can be read on these pages. It should at this point be apparently clear to the reader that film and philosophy are firmly connected and that some films and filmmakers exhibit a strong philosophic tendency and these philosophic approaches and strides should be taken seriously by the audience of philosophers in the glooming, platonic cave of projections.

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If one is interested in getting to know more about the recent writings on the philosophy of film, I highly recommend going to <http://www.film-philosophy.com/> which is an exhaustive place of film analysis, philosophy and film philosophy where philosophers openly debate and review movies and each other's papers on specific films, filmmakers and the nature of the film of philosophy in general.

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Appendix 1: MY 100+ LIST OF IMPORTANT MOVIES

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)	Magnolia (1999)
A Clockwork Orange (1971)	Kiki's Delivery Service (Majo no takkyûbin) (1989)
Alien (1979)	Memento (2000)
Amélie (2001)	Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)
American Beauty (1999)	Moulin Rouge! (2001)
American History X (1998)	Mulholland Dr. (2001)
American Psycho (2000)	No Country for Old Men (2007)
Amores Perros (2000)	Frozen Land (Paha Maa) (2005)
Artificial Intelligence: AI (2001)	Paprika (2006)
Avatar (2009)	Persepolis (2007)
Being John Malkovich (1999)	Planet of the Apes (1968)
Blade Runner (1982)	Rent (2005)
Brazil (1985)	Requiem for a Dream (2000)
Brokeback Mountain (2005)	Ambush (Rukajärven Tie) (1999)
Burn After Reading (2008)	Se7en (1995)
Cast Away (2000)	Spirited Away (Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi) (2001)
Children of Men (2006)	Samurai Fiction (1998)
Citizen Kane (1941)	Shakespeare in Love (1998)
Closer (2004)	Shrek (2001)
Crash (2004)	Sin City (2005)
Cube (1997)	Singin' in the Rain (1952)
Dead Poets Society (1989)	Slumdog Millionaire (2008)
District 9 (2009)	Snatch (2000)
Dogma (1999)	Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope (1977)
Donnie Brasco (1997)	Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back (1980)
E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (1982)	Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi (1983)
Eastern Promises (2007)	Synecdoche, New York (2008)
Pan's Labyrinth (2006)	Castle in the Sky (Tenkû no shiro Rapyuta) (1986)
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)	The Bourne Identity (2002)
eXistenZ (1999)	The Dark Knight (2008)
Fight Club (1999)	The Fifth Element (1997)
Forrest Gump (1994)	The Fly (1986)
Show Me Love (Fucking Åmål) (1998)	The Incredibles (2004)
Funny People (2009)	The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou (2004)
Gladiator (2000)	The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001)
Go (1999)	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003)
Good Will Hunting (1997)	The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002)
Groundhog Day (1993)	The Mask (1994)
Talk to Her (Hable Con Ella) (2002)	The Matrix (1999)
Happiness (1998)	The Shawshank Redemption (1994)
Harold and Maude (1971)	The Sixth Sense (1999)
Howl's Moving Castle (Hauru No Ugoku Shiro) (2004)	The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999)
Holy Smoke (1999)	The Truman Show (1998)
How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)	There Will Be Blood (2007)
Inception (2010)	Titanic (1997)
Inglourious Basterds (2009)	My Neighbor Totoro (Tonari no Totoro) (1988)
Irreversible (2002)	Trainspotting (1996)
Kick-Ass (2010)	Troy (2004)
Kill Bill: Vol. 1 (2003)	True Romance (1993)
L.A. Confidential (1997)	V for Vendetta (2005)
La vie en rose (2007)	Vanilla Sky (2001)
Life of Brian (1979)	Walk the Line (2005)
Little Miss Sunshine (2006)	WALL·E (2008)
Run Lola Run (Lola Rennt) (1998)	Watchmen (2009)
Love Actually (2003)	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)

Appendix 2: MY 90+ LIST OF IMPORTANT TELEVISION SHOWS

<u>"Allo 'Allo!"</u> (1982)	<u>"Matlock"</u> (1986)
<u>"24"</u> (2001)	<u>"British Men Behaving Badly"</u> (1992)
<u>"3rd Rock from the Sun"</u> (1996)	<u>"Monty Python's Flying Circus"</u> (1969)
<u>"A Bit of Fry and Laurie"</u> (1987)	<u>"Mr. Bean"</u> (1990)
<u>"Absolutely Fabulous"</u> (1992)	<u>"Oz"</u> (1997)
<u>"Agatha Christie: Poirot"</u> (1989)	<u>"Police Squad!"</u> (1982)
<u>"Alfred J. Kwak"</u> (1989)	<u>"Popeye the Sailor"</u> (1960)
<u>"Ally McBeal"</u> (1997)	<u>"Quantum Leap"</u> (1989)
<u>"American Dad!"</u> (2005)	<u>"Sabrina, the Teenage Witch"</u> (1996)
<u>"American Idol"</u> (2002)	<u>"Samurai Champloo"</u> (2004)
<u>"Angel"</u> (1999)	<u>"Seinfeld"</u> (1990)
<u>"Band of Brothers"</u> (2001)	<u>"Sex and the City"</u> (1998)
<u>"Batman"</u> (1966)	<u>"Smack the Pony"</u> (1999)
<u>"Battlestar Galactica"</u> (2004)	<u>"South Park"</u> (1997)
<u>"Baywatch"</u> (1989)	<u>"Spider-Man"</u> (1994)
<u>"Buffy the Vampire Slayer"</u> (1997)	<u>"Star Trek: The Next Generation"</u> (1987)
<u>"Charlie's Angels"</u> (1976)	<u>"Stargate SG-1"</u> (1997)
<u>"Charmed"</u> (1998)	<u>"Studio Julmahuvi"</u> (1998)
<u>"Columbo"</u> (1971)	<u>"Tenacious D"</u> (1999)
<u>"Dark Angel"</u> (2000)	<u>"That '70s Show"</u> (1998)
<u>"Dawson's Creek"</u> (1998)	<u>"The Adventures of Brisco County Jr."</u> (1993)
<u>"Der Alte"</u> (1977)	<u>"The Benny Hill Show"</u> (1969)
<u>"Derrick"</u> (1974)	<u>"The Big Bang Theory"</u> (2007)
<u>"Diagnosis Murder"</u> (1993)	<u>"The Black Adder"</u> (1983)
<u>"DuckTales"</u> (1987)	<u>"The Colbert Report"</u> (2005)
<u>"A Case for Two"</u> (1981)	<u>"The Daily Show with Jon Stewart"</u> (1996)
<u>"ER"</u> (1994)	<u>"The Fast Show"</u> (1994)
<u>"Family Guy"</u> (1999)	<u>"The Flight of the Conchords"</u> (2007)
<u>"Frasier"</u> (1993)	<u>"The Jetsons"</u> (1962)
<u>"Freakazoid!"</u> (1995)	<u>"The League of Gentlemen"</u> (1999)
<u>"Friends"</u> (1994)	<u>"The Love Boat"</u> (1977)
<u>"Futurama"</u> (1999)	<u>"The Office"</u> (2001)
<u>"Garfield and Friends"</u> (1988)	<u>"The Ren & Stimpy Show"</u> (1991)
<u>"Happy Days"</u> (1974)	<u>"The Simpsons"</u> (1989)
<u>"Hercules: The Legendary Journeys"</u> (1995)	<u>"The Sopranos"</u> (1999)
<u>"Heroes"</u> (2006/II)	<u>"The Tonight Show with Jay Leno"</u> (1992)
<u>"Jeeves and Wooster"</u> (1990)	<u>"The X-Files"</u> (1993)
<u>"Cowboy Bebop"</u> (1998)	<u>"The Yogi Bear Show"</u> (1961)
<u>"Keeping Up Appearances"</u> (1990)	<u>"Thunderbirds"</u> (1965)
<u>"Knight Rider"</u> (1982)	<u>"Trigger Happy TV"</u> (2000)
<u>"Kummeli"</u> (1991)	<u>"True Blood"</u> (2008)
<u>"Late Night with Conan O'Brien"</u> (1993)	<u>"Twin Peaks"</u> (1990)
<u>"Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman"</u> (1993)	<u>"Whose Line Is It Anyway?"</u> (1988)
<u>"MacGyver"</u> (1985)	<u>"Xena: Warrior Princess"</u> (1995)
<u>"Married with Children"</u> (1987)	<u>"Yes Minister"</u> (1980)
	<u>"Yes, Prime Minister"</u> (1986)