introduction

In the summer of 1896 Maxim Gorky attended a screening of the Lumière Cinematograph in Nizhi-Novgorod, Russia, and famously recorded his experience of this early silent black and white projection for a local newspaper:

> Last night I was in the Kingdom of Shadows. If you only knew how strange it is to be there. It is a world without sound, without colour. Everything there – the earth, the trees, the people, the water and the air – is dipped in monotonous grey. Grey rays of the sun across the grey sky, grey eyes in grey faces, and the leaves of the trees are ashen grey. It is not life but its shadow, it is not motion but its soundless spectre.[1]

A hundred years later, on the DVD of *Contact*, Jodie Foster offers her own commentary on the making of the film, and at one point talks about a simple conversation scene between her character and her love interest, played by Matthew McConaughey. Foster points out, with not a little shock, the fact that the director, Robert Zemekis, had digitally readjusted her facial expression at one point. Zemekis had removed her eyebrow movement in a way to make her character react differently to McConaughey. Foster seemed obviously annoyed – not only that her original performance was deemed unsuitable, but that her person had almost been violated by a digital effect: 'Stop fooling with my face!' she says.

Both Gorky and Foster are illustrating a simple fact about cinema: that it has never been, and is definitely becoming less and less, a simple and direct reproduction of reality. Cinema is a world of its own – whether a grey soundless shadowy world, or a fluidly manipulatable one. This film-world is a flat, ordered, compressed world; a world that is subtly, almost invisibly organised. A world that is a *cousin* of reality. And the multiplicity of moving-image media in the twenty-first century means that this film-world has become the second world we live in. A second world that feeds and shapes our perception and understanding of reality. So it seems especially important that we get to grips with the moving image, that we come up with a sufficient range

of conceptual frameworks by which to understand it. Because before we can confi-
dently argue a sociology of the cinema we must have an adequate range of moving
image philosophies. That is, before we can talk confidently about the social *effects*
of film we first must study the personal *affects* of film – how film affects us directly,
emotionally. And both philosophers and film theorists have been doing this since
cinema was invented. They have realised that how we engage with film informs and
reflects how we engage with reality – and that the nature of aesthetic experience,
as a form of knowledge, is as valid as rational thought. For Immanuel Kant aesthetic
judgement is not a conceptual, intellectual judgement: we are necessarily aesthetic
beings with a natural aesthetic emotion and a practical appetite, a rational need, for
emotions such as wonder and pleasure. The brain is mobilised by the eye; beauty lies
in the eye of the beholder; therefore if beauty is removed, we are removed – that is
how important aesthetics is to philosophy. We are not aesthetic beings only during
some sort of 'contemplation' in front of art works; we are thinking aesthetically all
the time – framing our friends, meditating on vistas, even while watching television.
And the validity of this aesthetic thinking is being proved ever more important in
this visually saturated age.

But forget culture and theories and philosophies for just for a moment, and think
of film, just film – think simply of the personal experience of film: what does it pres-
ent that we find interesting and thoughtful? What kind of world does it show? Why
is it both strange and familiar? What does its separateness and its closeness reveal?
We all enjoy film fictions – these unmessy, streamlined stories – partly because we
live a bad wondering script that seems to take a lifetime to get going (perhaps we all
secretly want to live a film-life). And I am quite happy to admit that going to the
cinema can be a classic wish for escape – a daydream drug. The expectation as you
arrive and take your seat is part of the pleasure: it is an expectation of enjoyment,
of gaining knowledge, of aesthetic rejuvenation, of spectacle and forgetting. And
the cinema's darkness seems very necessary for the full encounter between film and
filmgoer: we lose our bodies and our minds take over, working alone, locked to the
film-world.

And when I leave the cinema I personally often feel drained and confused, almost
disconnected, if only for a few moments. Reality now appears random, structureless,
chaotic. This blinking return from another world is an experience in itself – bearings
are found and sustenance is sought (usually at the nearest pub). It takes time for the
film to leave my head; and it takes time for reality to become real again – time for
my mind and body to re-adjust. But some films have a longer, lingering effect: not
always an altering, transfiguration of reality, but a gentle continuing inhabitation of
our perceptions. Life outside the cinema is released, illuminated, freed-up. Time is

elongated and movements magnified – my perceptions become images: my eyes
become cameras, unafraid to lock onto faces or scenes or moments. Film reveals
reality, exactly by showing a distorted mirror of it. Film transforms the recognisable
(in a small or large way), and this immediate transfiguration provokes the idea that
our thinking can transform our world. The feeling when you step out of the cinema
can result in a new realisation, a change, 'a little knowledge'. Why do we feel this way?
What does film do to create this feeling? It appears that film, in some of its forms,
can rejig our encounter with life, and perhaps even heighten our perceptual powers.
Cinema allows us to re-see reality, expanding our perceptions, and showing us a new
reality. Film challenges our view of reality, forcing a phenomenological realisation
about how reality is perceived by our minds.

It is the unique way that film takes and refigures reality that seems to be behind
this effect on the filmgoer. But do we always need to start with questions about
cinema's 'relationship to reality' in order to understand film? Writers always pose the
relationship, but then find they need to stretch it out of all recognition. For example,
for the mysterious early French theorist Yhcam, writing in 1912, film presents 'an im-
probable realism'.[2] Writing six years later, Emile Vuillermoz, a French music critic by
profession, noted that cinema seems to produce a 'superreality' which may be 'more
intense than the truth'.[3] Just because cinema usually shows us a recognisable world
does not mean we have to work out 'why it isn't a copy of reality', but how it is a
new reality, *a new world*. The epistemological difference is the key here – and, for
a filmmaker like Vsevolod Pudovkin, the key to understanding film as art: 'Between
the natural event and its appearance on the screen there is a marked difference. It is
exactly this difference that makes the film an art.'[4] In one sense the world 'taken' by
film is immediately transfigured, but it might also be argued that it is only a certain
cinematic slice of the world that appears, that when the camera is turned-over a
certain kind of reality pushes its way to the front, like a star-struck wannabe. This
cinematic reality was noted by the German theorist Walter Benjamin, who saw that 'a
different nature opens itself to the camera than opens to the naked eye'.[5]

In his 1971 book *The World Viewed* the American philosopher Stanley Cavell re-
minds us that part of the reason we enjoy cinema so much is simply because we
have a natural wish to see the world recreated and retold in its own image. For Cavell,
cinema is about artists reorganising pictures of reality as best they can: film is a suc-
cession of 'automatic world projections' given significance by 'artistic discoveries of
form and genre and type and technique'; the film-artist simply masters and deploys
these 'automatisms' as creatively as they can.[6] The poetry of film, for Cavell, is 'what
it is that happens to figures and objects and places as they are variously moulded
and displaced by a motion-picture camera and then projected and screened'.[7] This

remoulded world exists beyond us (and perhaps reflects our estrangement from our own world): 'The "sense of reality" provided on film is the sense of *that* reality, one from which we already sense a distance.'[8] Cavell's film-world is a distant copy of reality, a reality that is reorganised by the artist. He continues by asking whether film is a recording of a past performance, or a performance of an always present recording. Are we seeing things that are not 'present'? How can this be if we accept that the film itself is present? Cavell's first conclusion is that the reality in film '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 … is a world past'.[9] It is only a hundred or so pages later that he reconsiders this position: 'the world created is neither a world just past nor a world of make-believe. It is a world of an immediate future.'[10] It is in this sense that Cavell seems to find a world existing in passing, a world neither now nor then, but new.

An author with a similar outlook to Cavell is the English film theorist V. F. Perkins. For Perkins, film subtly alters the reality it records, changing time and space relations, yet the end product is a 'solid world which exists in its own right'.[11] But Perkins argues that many early theorists were unable to assign recorded action any artistic worth, and that film can only shape what it first must record. The obvious point to make here is that nowadays it is hard to find a film that *does not* include some images of places or people that were never in front of the camera (digital stand-ins, imaginary backdrops, computer-designed buildings). Film is no longer a question of automatic photography – even without considering the classic artistry of the simple choice of angle, exposure, and so forth – and to *generalise* that the film-world is a simple copy of reality seems limiting. Modern computer-generated imagery not only makes Perkins' statement from 1972 that everything that happens on the screen in a live-action picture 'has happened in front of the camera' historical, but also demands of us a great re-thinking of the cinematic image.[12] It is exactly this possible fluidity of the film image – this new digitally manipulatable film image – that might make us realise that we need (and in fact have always needed) a new conception of film.

Yes film *uses* the real; but it takes it and immediately moulds it and then refigures it and puts it back in front of the filmgoer as interpretation, as re-perception. Film recording technology automatically changes reality, and the filmmaker artistically refigures reality. For a start, film flattens reality, a notion Cavell characterises as 'the ontological equality of objects and human subjects in photographs'.[13] Characters and buildings and vistas and objects are no longer real, no longer part of nature, but part of cinema. Locking all film to reality disenfranchises the possibilities of film poetry by *conceptually* limiting the routes of film style and world. To get the most

out of film, we might acknowledge that film is not *of* the world, film *is* a world (a new world). Film is not simply a reproduction of reality, it is its own world with its own intentions and creativities. Cinema is the projection, screening, showing, of *thoughts of the real*.

The argument of this book is premised upon the idea that film presents a unique world, almost a future-world (not least because the film's 'experience' of its people and objects feels 'new'). Film is its own world with its own rules (and philosophy should certainly learn from its fluid re-situating of experience and knowledge). This creation of a new (immaterial, possible) world is even acknowledged by some fictions: *The Usual Suspects*, the film itself, seems to immediately 'think' the precise worlds recounted by the character Verbal.[14] Part of the project of this book is to question the *conceptual* link between cinema and reality (while simultaneously pushing the transfiguring effect cinema can have on our understanding and perception of reality). There is no doubt that most cinema starts with a recording of reality, but the argument here is that the filmgoer would be impoverished by understanding cinema only in relation to the reality it records. It will surely become more and more tiring to continually compare and contrast the increasingly fluid world of cinema to our own reality.

Film might now be understood as creating its *own* world, *free* to bring us any scene or object it wishes. Film becomes less a reproduction of reality than a *new* reality, that merely sometimes looks like our reality (can be different like film noir, or different like the other world of *Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace*). Film is not transparent, but dependent on the film's *beliefs* as regards the things it portrays. The continual comparison to 'the real' has handicapped film studies, has disallowed a radical reconceptualisation of film-being. Contemporary cinema has given us an endlessly animatable film-world that can be whatever it likes, go anywhere, think anything – 'gigantic visions of mankind crushed by the juggernaut of war and then blessed by the angel of peace may arise before our eyes with all their spiritual meaning', as Hugo Münsterberg noted in 1916.[15] This powerful film-world reveals itself in any form – and so the spiritual metaphors can go on: maybe there is a God and she is busily thinking our world. Perhaps our enjoyment of the experience of film stems from our wish to be part of a perfect world, created by an 'absolute mind'? Film's different reality (film's re-thinking of reality-like objects) creates it own (more formal) question of subjectivity and objectivity. For instance, while Münsterberg argued that film is pre-eminently *a medium of subjectivity*, André Bazin understood cinema as 'objectivity in time'.[16] There may be no possible objective view of the real world, but the view of the film-world is the only one available, and thus 'objective' – yet the images of film also often appear to be 'subjective'.

For Münsterberg the film-world is a complete transfiguration of the real world. Film moves away from reality, and towards the mind. It is the mind that creates this transfiguration, recreating the world in its own form. Film should therefore be seen as its own imagination (*even* when it initially looks normal and realistic). Films have a different space, a space that resembles reality, but flat and bordered. The frame of film makes for a rational space – a decided, intended space – with rational and non-rational thinkings. Film is another world, a new world, an organised world, a constructed world, a world thought-out, and as filmgoers we usually enjoy being swamped by this 'artificial intelligence'. Benjamin intuitively understood the difference between life and cinema: 'an unconsciously penetrated space is substituted for a space consciously explored by man'.[17]
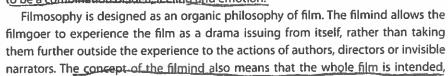
Through cinema man was able to control reality. Film can thus be seen as an incredibly unique and therefore important link between man and world: film becomes the *explanation* of our position in the world – film acts out an interaction with a world, which thus becomes a mirror for us to recognise *our* interaction with our world. This acting out is a kind of intention, a kind of thought. The film-world is an ordered and thought-out world – characters meet and move on and love and die and find themselves, all in about two hours flat. The philosopher Gilles Deleuze found that cinema resembled a higher, spiritual life: 'the domain of cold decision, of absolute determination (*entêtement*), of a choice of existence'.[18] The creation of this film-world is set and immovable and thus untouchable, unchangeable – it is unwavering intention, decision, choice, belief: a filmic kind of thought.

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Filmosophy is a study of film as thinking, and contains a theory of both film-being and film form. The 'filmind' is filmosophy's concept of film-being, the theoretical originator of the images and sounds we experience, and 'film-thinking' is its theory of film form, whereby an action of form is seen as the dramatic thinking of the filmind. In a sense filmosophy can therefore be understood as an extension and integration of theories of both para-narrational 'showing' and mise-en-scène aesthetics. *Filmosophy proposes that seeing film form as thoughtful, as the dramatic decision of the film, helps us understand the many ways film can mean and affect*. There are two aspects to contemporary film that provoked the idea of filmosophy: that both the unreliable narrator and non-subjective 'point of view' shot are becoming more and more common, and that it has become digitally malleable and free to show virtually anything. To *creatively* and *positively* handle these new forms film studies needs a conception of film-world creation, and a descriptive language of film style, that are both adaptable and poetic.

The filmind is not an empirical description of film, but rather a *conceptual* understanding of the origins of film's actions and events. That is, the filmgoer can decide to use it as part of their conceptual apparatus while experiencing a film – they would then see the film *through* this concept. Filmosophy conceptualises film as an organic intelligence; a 'film being' thinking about the characters and subjects in the film. Yet the concepts of the filmind and film-thinking are not intended as replacements for the concepts of 'narrator' and 'narration', but are simply proposals that reflect the limits of the idea of 'the narrator' and the restrictive and literary nature of theories of 'narration' (the former is incapable of accounting for the creation of film-worlds, and the latter is limited in that it traditionally only handles that which cannot be attributed to character-narrators). The filmind is not an 'external' force, nor is it a mystical being or invisible other, it is 'in' the film itself, it is *the film* that is steering its own (dis)course. The filmind is 'the film itself'.

There are two aspects to the filmind: the creation of the basic film-world of recognisable people and objects, and the designing and refiguring this film-world. This re-creational designing and refiguring is here called 'film-thinking'. One particular sentence in Deleuze's *Cinema* is helpful in understanding film-thinking: 'It is the camera, and not a dialogue, which *explains* why the hero of *Rear Window* has a broken leg (photos of the racing car, in his room, broken camera).'[19] The film surveys the tenement courtyard before returning to Jeffries, asleep in his chair, his leg in a cast, at which point it then moves through his apartment to show the photo of a crashing racing car and a smashed camera. Film-thinking is thus the action of film form in dramatising the intention of the filmind. Importantly, filmosophy does not make a direct analogy between human thought and film, because film is simply different to our ways of thinking and perceiving: as we have noted, film seems at once subjective and objective in its actions of form. Rather there is a functional analogy: film's constant, never-ending 'intent' and attitude to its characters and spaces is here conceptualised as a (new kind of) 'thinking'. Phenomenological metaphors of human perception would limit the meaning possibilities of film (the camera would then be 'another character', and any non-human-like actions of the camera would be signs of excessiveness or reflexivity). Film-thinking resembles no one single kind of human thought, but perhaps the functional spine of human thinking – film-thinking seems to be a combination of idea, feeling and emotion.

Filmosophy is designed as an organic philosophy of film. The filmind allows the filmgoer to experience the film as a drama issuing from itself, rather than taking them further outside the experience to the actions of authors, directors or invisible narrators. The concept of the filmind also means that the whole film is intended, making all formal moves important or possibly meaningful, enlarging the experi-

ence of film, and helping the filmgoer *relate* to the formal twists and turns of film. And the concept of film-thinking is organic in two further senses: that it binds form to content, and that it also evolves smoothly into a language of describing film that positively affects the experience of the filmgoer. An organic relation of concept to film to language to experience (to philosophy). The concept of film-thinking bonds form to content by making style part of the action: the experience of film becomes in some sense 'organic' because style is tied to the story with natural, thoughtful, humanistic terms of intention that make film forms dramatic rather than technical. In filmosophy form is not an appendix to content, but simply more content itself (just of a different nature).

How a person is 'shot' can now be seen not just as 'relating' to that person in an indirect, metaphorical way, but a *becoming* of that person's character, or perhaps a thinking of the film's idea of that person. When a film frames a person that act of framing creates a way of seeing that person (as central or peripheral or close-up). The filmgoer sees that person via the film's thinking of that person – this thinking is simply the action of form as dramatic intention. This effect is enhanced by the filmgoer's understanding of film's actions as emotional thinkings – through this engagement they merge with the film a little more fully, because their natural aesthetic thinking links more directly with the film. The filmgoer experiences film more intuitively, not via technology or external authorship, but directly, as a thinking thing. In making 'style' integral to the film's thinking (and not an addendum to its 'main content work'), filmosophy hopes to widen and deepen the experience of the filmgoer. Film form is always there, and thus necessarily part of the actions and events, and filmosophy simply, holistically, bonds film's actions to dramatically thoughtful motives and intentions. Film style is now seen to be the dramatic intention of the film itself.

The most obvious result of reconceptualising film as thinking is a change in how we talk about film. First of all it does a necessary job of highlighting the worth and importance of image and sound, something simply missing, in direct terms, from a lot of film writing. The concepts of filmosophy advance on this 'match' between film and filmgoer by providing a more 'suitable' rhetoric derived from the concept of film-thinking. One of the heartfelt aims of the book is to popularise the possibilities of film (of all moving sound-images) by reinventing the language of its description. Too little is written about the power and impact of images – the writing on film that reaches the public is almost exclusively led by plot and acting and cultural references. My argument is that reconceptualising film as thinking will hopefully allow a more poetic entry to the intelligence of film. Filmosophy does not just offer a *linking* of thinking to film (not just an interest in making the comparison), but an analysis of

film as its own kind of thought. It is not merely a question of resolving the puzzle of what makes film be, because it is just as important how we construct its theory, its *language of image description*, and its role for interpretation.

Perhaps the study of film and philosophy should die in order to be reborn. It is the linking 'and' that not just separates the two disciplines but disfigures the balance. Like literary theorists in the 1970s, philosophers are turning from Socrates to fiddling about with a video player (and probably not getting a picture). And all that many of them really want to do is simply brighten up a lecture by showing a few scenes from a classic movie or two. These philosophers are simply concerned with how some films *contain* stories and characterisations that helpfully *illustrate* well-known philosophical ideas. But cinema is more than a handy catalogue of philosophical problems, and to say that film can only present ideas in terms of story and dialogue is a narrow, literary view of film's possible force and impact. If the starting point for these philosophers is 'what can film do *for philosophy*?', how long will it take for them to realise what film *offers* philosophy?

So much writing within the area of 'film and philosophy' simply ignores cinematics and concentrates on stories and character motivations. It only takes one character to say 'man is not an island' for somebody to jump up and declare the film philosophical (if someone were to recount a moral fable while doing a jig, then that could be claimed to be 'dance as philosophy'). These are writings that rely much too heavily on the set subjects of academic philosophy, adding the two disciplines together like oil and water: film 'plus' philosophy. Much of this writing takes the form of philosophy offering its services to film, that is, taking a paternal, patronising, condescending stance: the film does not realise what philosophical problem lies within it, philosophy shall show the real, hidden worth of film (to help philosophy). Like academic SAS squads they come in to sort out the mess left by film studies. This is an infecting of film by philosophy. These writers are very simply and effectively *using* film to teach philosophy courses – using film to illustrate philosophy's classic problems and questions. Their attention is only on the story of the film (dialogue and plot outlines and character motivations), and the film is then quickly left behind while they elaborate on the problem. These classical problems of dried-up philosophy departments are *forced* onto film stories – they may as well simply make up a story of a friend of a friend instead of making some readers believe they are *actually telling us something about film*. In a sense they encourage yet another wave of film students to ignore the moving sound-image and concentrate on characters and story.

But the survival of a new-born interdisciplinary subject depends on how well it does actually create a *new* type of study (one that can then continue the revolution by being nomadic in *its* future travels). There is no doubt that film offers dramas

that can play as putty in the hands of philosophers. Some film stories do play-out well-known philosophical ideas, and it is most probably philosophers that are best suited to understanding them, but films are more than this, and carry more than dialogue and plot. Some of these writers also still use staid, literary terms, borrowed from those 1970s literature departments, and these exterior (non-site-specific) concepts steer analyses away from the forms of film – whereas studying film for its own (site-specific, cinematic) philosophical worth should open interesting future questions. Philosophy needs to work *for* film studies to re-balance the weight of writings that search films for philosophical illustrations. Working *through* film philosophically, rather than applying philosophy to film, reveals film to be much more 'philosophical' than the latter method could ever produce. As Deleuze writes: 'I was able to write on cinema, not by right of reflection, but when philosophical problems led me to seek answers in cinema, which itself then relaunched other problems.'[20]

So part of the argument of this book is that the questions film philosophy has posed – about how film transfigures its subjects, how it communicates ideas, how it resembles memory and dream and poetry, how it beautifully and gracefully mingles with our minds – can find direction and illumination in the work of filmosophy, and its two main concepts: the filmind and film-thinking. With this incursion of film-thinking into the subject of film philosophy we have new forms of philosophical film to discuss. Where before some were content to write about films that 'contained' philosophical musings or problems, now certain films can been understood as 'thinking philosophically'. Then we can ask: how *Ulysses' Gaze* thinks about landscape and humanity; how *Fight Club* thinks about the self and psychosis; how *The Scent of Green Papaya* thinks about love.

Focusing, editing, camera movement, sound, framing – all 'think' a certain relation to the story being told. Of course there are no shapes and colours to *specific* ideas, or else film would be reduced to language. Philosophy produces ideas in the precise sense, and film is a poetical thinking that achieves a different kind of philosophicalness; a languageless thinking that Wittgenstein saw as impossible in everyday talk. And it is we who complete the thoughts of film, who decide, if we so wish, on the ideas to be gained from a film. Filmosophy ultimately aims to release the image from its secondary position in human interaction – by realising the thoughtful capacity of film. In moving towards an understanding of just what can be thoughtfully achieved cinematically, filmosophy attempts to find the *philosophical* in the movements and forms of film. If this is a new kind of thinking, what does it mean for our thinking, and what can film philosophically imagine? What are the philosophical implications of understanding film in this way? How has philosophy attempted to think with images? How might we practically apply film-thinking to current philosophical problems

and discussions? How might we utilise this nonconceptual thinking for philosophy? Philosophy should thus make of film a companion in concept-creation. Film possibly contains a whole new system of thought, a new episteme – perhaps the new concepts of philosophy might even find their paradigms in cinema. Philosophy is not just a subject, but a practice, a creative practice, and film provides a philosopher such as Deleuze with as much conceptual creation as science and philosophy itself: 'Cinema is one type of image. Between different types of aesthetic image, scientific functions and philosophical concepts, there are currents of mutual exchange, with no overall primacy of any one field.'[21] We need to recognise that film can add a new kind of thought to philosophy, which can be helped by the full understanding of imagistic thinking. In turn, philosophy then becomes *another kind of film.*

Filmosophy does not aim to be a solution to film studies, but should be used and changed and adapted alongside other perspectives and interpretive schemas – a purely filmosophical reading of a film is only a partial reading, one to be added to other insights and approaches. This book is consciously designed as a provocation, a manifesto almost: hopefully it should create questions, but also possibilities of application. In this sense it aims to open a new conversation (about film as thinking), one to be argued with, and discussed, and extended where necessary. 'Filmosophy' is not a difficult word to arrive at, and echoes the neologisms of the 1920s – as Ricciotto Canudo wrote in 1923: 'Cinegraphy, cineology, cinemania, cinephilia and cinephobia, cinepoetry and cinoedia, cinematurgy, cinechromism – the list goes on. Only time and chance will tell what terminology will stay with us.'[22]

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Finally, a note on the layout of the following chapters. Part One is a four-chapter investigation into the linking of film and thinking in the twentieth century, beginning with 'Film Minds', which looks at how film has been variously understood as a visualisation of our thoughts, memories or subconscious, and asks whether film is itself a 'subjective' or 'objective' medium, or perhaps even another kind of thought, a future form of thinking. Chapter two surveys the different film-beings explored by writers: film as camera 'I' or virtual creator, as ghostly or absent author, or as some kind of narratological or post-narratological being. Chapter three considers the impact of phenomenology, and discusses Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Vivian Sobchack and the question of the film's 'experience' of the film-world. Chapter four looks at more nuanced theories of film as thinking, such as Antonin Artaud's pure cinema, Jean Epstein's lyrosophy, Roger Gilbert-Lecomte's future cinema, Sergei Eisenstein's theories of montage and Jean Louis Schefer's experimental dummy, but concentrates on Deleuze's concepts of the mental image and the relation-image.

Part Two concerns the ideas and arguments of filmosophy, and starts by setting out the central concepts of the filmind and film-thinking, looking at how the filmind both creates and re-creates the film-world, and how film-thinking intends through film forms in a transsubjective and postphenomenological way. Chapter six then compares and contrasts the activity of the filmind with classic theories of narration, and chapter seven continues the explication of film-thinking through a multitude of film examples, considering various formal categories: image, colour, sound, focus, speed, framing, movement and edit shifts. Chapter eight discusses cognitivist and phenomenological theories of the filmgoer, before outlining the make-up of a filmosophical filmgoer who actively merges with the affective thinking of film. Chapter nine critiques the technicist rhetoric of much film writing, and argues that the concept of film-thinking provides a more poetic and dramatic rhetoric for film interpretation. And the final chapter, 'Filmosophy', considers the movement in philosophy towards the metaphorical imaging of problems and ideas, and argues that film enacts a kind of 'post-metaphysical thinking' that creates pure concepts within a nonphilosophy.

part **one**

eight | **filmgoer**

Let's go into a cinema where the perforated celluloid is purring in the darkness. On entering, our gaze is guided by the luminous ray to the screen where for two hours it will remain fixed. Life in the street outside no longer exists. Our problems evaporate, our neighbours disappear. Our body itself submits to a sort of temporary depersonalisation which takes away the feeling of its own existence. We are nothing but two eyes riveted to ten square metres of white sheet.

– Jean Goudal (1925)[1]

Watching a film is like having a daydream. It operates on portions of your mind that are only reached by dreams or dramas, and there you can explore things without any responsibility of conscious ego or conscience.

– Stanley Kubrick (1971)[2]

In this artificial solitude a part of us is porous to the effects of meaning without ever being able to be born into signification through language.

– Jean Louis Schefer (1981)[3]

In this chapter I will discuss how the concepts of the filmind and film-thinking might reconfigure our understanding of the encounter between film and filmgoer,[4] and look at how the language and rhetoric of the concepts can shape the experience of the filmgoer. Because this chapter is devoted to a philosophical investigation of the encounter between film and filmgoer, its usefulness lies somewhat *before* more 'interpretive' theories of the 'spectator'. For a start, many of those theories concentrate on our connection (emotional, imaginative) with characters within the film, and are less concerned with the power of the 'purer', formal image. In a sense we need to understand the basic encounter before we can confidently talk about, say, voyeurism or identification or desire or pleasure (and other undeniable facets of filmgoing). Though at points in the chapter I will relate my finding to these ideas and concerns,

the attentions here will mainly be of *assistance* to those interested in theorising such filmgoer positions. So what I shall not be attempting is an understanding of every possible (careless; attentive; sloppy; academic; open; blind; dumb; intelligent; trainspotter; passive; romantic; lustful) filmgoer. Thus I shall not be discussing any hypothetical 'weak' filmgoers, nor when a filmgoer is removed from the film, for instance when they suddenly realise they are watching actors and sets. How can a person who experiences a film be any less than people we all know: complex, active, passionate, but also melancholic, romantic, swamped by sounds and images. After outlining the basic, personal and cognitivist experiences of filmgoing, I shall start to discuss how understanding film as thinking reveals an intimate relationship between film and filmgoer. My philosophy of the filmgoer leads us to a phenomenological 'mix' of thinkings: the film and filmgoer join in thought, and the process of that encounter provides immediate meaning and knowledge.

Filmosophy is about proposing a new way of understanding and experiencing film, and in the next chapter I will attempt to argue that the concept of film-thinking provides a better language of description, and thus secures a much more suitable encounter between film and filmgoer. The filmgoer who experiences a film with this language in their knowledge, with this more organic linguistic backbone, will have a more suitable *mode of attention*, and thus *experience more*, and thus have *more meaning possibilities* to steer their interpretations. The experience of film becomes in some sense 'organic' because style is tied to meaning with natural, thoughtful, humanistic terms of intention (by the filmind). This is the makeup of a filmosophical filmgoer.

But first, to understand how filmgoers experience film we must note what normal experience is marked by. Experience, through sight and hearing, is a mode of thought, filtered through context and personality and language (and probably much more). And we all experience things differently – do the clouds waft past the moon or does the moon glide through the clouds? We gain a coherent representation of the world from partial views, and we cope with this because we are in control, and because we are continually, naturally, giving ourselves longer establishing views – 'master shots' as it were. But the (natural or active) choices we make in attending to things is crucial. Simple experience is always a thinking action – picking out images, seeking recognisable sounds from a noise, watching one person while listening to another. Then we put our 'experiencing' in front of films. V. F. Perkins called it a kind of 'public privacy',[5] that anonymity we feel during a (usually) communal experience. And the exact position for the experience is important – I first saw *A Short Film About Killing* at the London Film Festival in a seat at the front right-hand corner of the cinema. The screen appeared distorted and depth was to a certain extent flattened,

adding especially to the experience of colour. The filmgoer can prefer to be right at the front, thus engulfing the field of vision so much that you might have to turn your head to see events at either side of the screen. Or sit at the back, putting the rest of the audience and the whole frame of the film in view. Personally, I like to sit a couple of rows from the front, allowing the film to pleasurably swamp my senses. I believe that to achieve a more aesthetic and truthful interpretation one must receive the meanings of a film in this fully *involved* position – sitting at the back to maximise your critical faculties can produce a mistaken and cold interpretation. *Experience the film, then interpret the meanings you felt*.

Cognitivism

Because films engage mental processes, cognitivist film theorists have looked to theories of normal human cognition and emotional response to help account for the experience of cinema. In what way do we experience film? Does it have an illusory effect? How do we understand actions and characters and emotions on film? What *kind* of emotions (horror, empathy) do we experience? Are they the same as or significantly different to our normal experiences? These cognitivists are also in part reacting to the dominant reading of the filmgoer by continental theory: that the resemblance films bear to everyday life confounds the filmgoer (that cinema produces an illusion of reality, and so the filmgoer is duped by what they see and hear, is passively tutored by the film); and further that the filmgoer engages in an irrational activity of attention. Thus cognitivists oppose their conscious rational filmgoer activity with the subconscious irrational activity of the continentals.[6] For cognitivists film is not a language (for Lacanian film theorists, the subconscious is structured like a language), and films should be understood using folk psychology and commonsense, not grand theory or subconscious operations. Within filmgoer cognitivism there are three main theses: the natural understanding thesis; the rational problem-solving thesis; and the commonsense interpretation thesis. In other words: the filmgoer uses real-world thought-processes to understand the film; the filmgoer is there to make sense of the film; and interpretation should rely on commonsense conclusions about the drama (as opposed to, for example, psychoanalytical readings). We looked at the rational and commonsense nature of narrative comprehension and interpretation in chapter six, so let us look at the first thesis.

According to the natural understanding thesis the filmgoer is a rational agent, using naturalistic processes of mental representation to understand film's drama and forms. Physiological and cognitive systems are 'hard-wired' within us – universal systems, prior to culture and personal identity, that allow us to understand the world

(our three-dimensional world, how light falls on objects, and so on). For instance, Paul Messaris's book *Visual 'Literacy'* attempts to almost set in stone a language of film that can be taught – to solidify the 'communication'. Messaris simply accepts that a person's normal experience is sufficient to allow them to understand the compositional forms of film. (Perhaps a larger question might be whether a better film is one whose composition is normal-experience related, or completely, strangely, filmic?) Messaris argues that each filmic device 'can be said to acquire its meaning by approximating some feature of real-world experience'.[7]

On the one hand it seems perfectly fine to say that our ability to understand film is derived from hard-wired perceptual habits – but this is not much more than saying we experience film using the same brain that we use to experience reality. The interesting questions lie well beyond these points. Basically, the reason why a strict analogy between our thinking and film's thinking is unacceptable is the same reason why we should steer away from simply accepting that we understand film like we understand reality: film-thinking is not mappable by the terms of human thinking. As George Wilson notes, we do not see 'tracking or panning shots as corresponding to the continuous reorientation in space of the visual field of people such as ourselves ... we do not see a straight cut, even within a scene, as representing the phenomenology of a shift in a perceiver's visual attention'.[8] Thus it seems somehow wrong to try and always equate film with real-life experience – the film experience is not strictly analogous to real-world audio-visual experience, and films are most certainly creating new ways of thinking and 'perceiving' above and beyond those of our real-life experiences. We understand film *fully*, not by 'likeness to real life', but by our adaptation to a new kind of thinking.

Film experience is presented by cognitivists as being totally understandable as a continuation of normal experience, and it does seem to be a form of communication we all understand – though perhaps not quite a 'visual Esperanto', as Stuart Liebman calls it.[9] V. F. Perkins argues that we make sense of cinema by relating it to real-world knowledge. Seems reasonable, but just what is this 'relating'? And just how much relating is going on, now that film creates its own unique worlds so often? It seems fine to say we understand film so easily because it is so similar to real life, but the bigger question is how *should* we understand film, how can we *advance* our understanding of film. Film experience is different to, but also draws on, our normal experience – in the cinema we are perhaps scanning *across* the view presented, whereas in life we perhaps scan *into* as much as across. If we are talking about the thinking film then it seems *we adapt* to its thinking, we adjust ourselves. The crux is that just because we can recognise images on film because they are almost identical to reality does not mean that we understand or relate to film exactly as we understand and relate to real-

events. We can easily feel we are 'there', *but that 'there' is not a copy of our world*. The very fact that we so easily understand (most) film relates to its powerful capacity to create meaning and knowledge. Film seems to have no delay in its understandability, in its *effect*. Interpretation may well come after a 'delay', but we seem to take-in film and feel meaning immediately.

In *The Philosophy of Horror*, Noël Carroll describes three theories of film experience: the illusion theory, the pretend theory and the 'thought' theory. Each of these theories respond to the 'paradox of emotional response to fiction': the problem of why and how we respond emotionally to fictional characters and events even though we (may – see illusion theory) know that the characters and events portrayed are not real. The question here is whether 'existence' beliefs are a necessary condition of emotional response?

Theorists such as Jean-Louis Baudry used the presumed illusionism of film to call for avant-garde and Brechtian filmmaking. If the filmgoer is fooled into thinking they see objects directly then realistic films could have no artistic power! Thus, following this through, we are fooled by films just as we are fooled by the world. There are no things in themselves – we have appearance, and theories of reality. Hugo Münsterberg writes: 'If the pictures are well taken and the projection is sharp and we sit at the right distance from the picture, we must have the same *impression* as if we looked through a glass plate into real space.'[10] For illusion theorists the film image is not a sign of an object or scene, but an analogue or double of the very object or scene itself – film transparently gives us an immediate perception of the world. Filmgoers entertain epistemically benign illusions, and themselves are basically passive, or at best, stimulus-response machines. Thus in illusion theory film reproduces reality, and we see the objects themselves. Or perhaps we watch film like we watch reality – the experience is the same. Or perhaps film just makes the filmgoer *think* they are seeing real present people and events. But there are a greater number of cognitivists who argue that film is *not* essentially illusory, representations do *not* cause us to believe that what they represent is real.

In the 'pretend' thesis it is not *literally* true that we fear cinematic monsters – it is only 'make-believedly' true that we fear them. What we actually experience in such cases are only 'quasi-emotions', emotions made by 'second-order' beliefs.[11] Can the filmgoer thus decide not to be scared by a film? Can we turn off and on our 'make-believe' emotions? Are our emotions not sometimes too strong to be simply make-believe? And just because we are not aware of playing a make-believe game, does that mean we cannot be in a subconsciously make-believe state? Carroll comments: 'Surely a game of make-believe requires the intention to pretend. But on the face of it, consumers of horror do not appear to have such an intention.'[12] And if it is make-

believe, why am I sweating at the end of a dramatic scene? Our belief in the events, and our desires for certain things to happen or not to happen, do not seem to be pretend (imagined) beliefs and desires – they are part of a *new* relationship.

Similar to the 'pretend' theory is the 'counterpart' theory of emotional response to fiction. We cry at the end of the afternoon television movie because dramatic emotions displayed on the screen are often playing out scenarios that we have been in, or might one day find ourselves in (a loved-one dying, an emotional reunion). Our emotions are real (real tears) – because it makes us think of real-world emotional events. The fictional events have a *plausibility* that provokes our emotions. We might not believe a monster is actual and existing, but we think it is possible it might exist in the future (though would we say we 'believe' in a non-existent, 'possible' object?).

In the 'thought' theory of emotional response to fiction, Murray Smith and Noël Carroll argue that filmgoers can be moved emotionally by imaginatively entertaining thoughts, without necessarily believing in their truthfulness. They distinguish between thought and belief – for Carroll, we believe something when we 'entertain a proposition assertively', but in the cinema we can be moved by thoughts we do not necessarily believe, stating that 'thought contents we entertain without believing them can genuinely move us emotionally'.[13] For the analytical film philosopher Gregory Currie filmgoers use their imagination, at times, to fill in gaps, to see the unseen, to think about a character's actions. Imagining is part of the evolutionary adaptive functioning of the mind – filmgoers imagine beliefs, simulate terror, and so on. Currie finds no actual belief in the 'reality' of the events in films – yet while filmgoers may not actively believe that the events are real, they do believe that the baddie is very close to the good guy, and we want the good guy to get out of there, quick. (For Currie our experience of film is also mostly impersonal – the filmgoer does not feel as though they are 'in' the film, nor do they identify with the 'camera', or the point of view of the film.) We may believe that vampires do not exist, but in the cinema we may *allow ourselves* to think they exist (and scare and horrify). On arriving at our cinema seat we switch to a mode of thinking that is receptive to these fictional effects. This thesis begs the obvious question: how can a monster scare us if we do not believe in it? Are we merely frightened by (fictional) thoughts? Are we scared by our mental imaginings? Does this not take us back to square one? Why do we not say we are scared by the image? Karen Bardsley has recently argued that some cognitivists rely too heavily on the notion of the imagination. How do kids enjoy films so much when they are yet to develop the capacity to simulate beliefs in their imagination? For Bardsley, to say that a filmgoer constantly uses their imagination in order to understand film fiction seems to be stretching the concept of imagination too far.[14]

It would seem that, in following the narrative, the filmgoer does not *necessarily* need their conscious active imagination, only their audio-visual perceptual capacities. The filmgoer's experience seems primarily perceptual rather than imaginative. A film such as *Moulin Rouge* almost completely overwhelms the audience, leaving almost no time or space to imagine anything. Richard Allen talks of the way that films both exercise and limit our natural visual capacities. Perception is an ability, a capacity, not a material process, and, for Allen, the psychologist confuses this 'ability' with an investigation into mental processes. We do not see something, then recognise it, because as Allen writes: 'If visual perception was framed by schemata in the manner characterised by [cognitivists], then one could never step outside the schemata to match the template with data provided from the sensory array.'[15] We do not access schemata to recognise a bird, we simply see a bird. How could we first project a category of a bird before first seeing a bird? We must see a bird first, then maybe add its image as a category. Similarly, the film is 'in' the filmgoer's mind – there is not an image and then our mental representation of that image. There is not an emotion in the image, and then an emotion in the filmgoer's mind – they are one and the same. Though we mix 'two thinkings', our thinking with the film's thinking, there is only ever one mix. There is no 'intermediate' thought or imagination. In order to simply understand the film we do not need to divert it through our imagination.

What we might do is contrast the imaginative leap we take at the beginning of the filmgoing experience, with the then non-imaginative engagement with the film. Filmgoers very quickly assess their situation when they enter the cinema – they understand that the emotions displayed are of a fictional nature, but decide to *engage* the film on that level. The filmgoer normally then assesses the characters and events on that fictional level. For instance, we might see an actor expressing an emotion, but we would understand that it is a person crying – it is true for us that a person is crying and grieving 'in the fiction'. We know it is a film, but nevertheless we (wish to) experience it as a world.[16] Filmosophers want to believe the film, want to be swept into the film, want to engage with the drama as fully as possible. We *want* the horror to scare us, the comedy to make us laugh, the drama to make us cry. (In this sense filmosophers are closer to day-to-day filmgoers than many a film theorist.) This is the only sense in which I believe we might say that the filmgoer imaginatively engages the film – but the conscious imaginative switch happens at the beginning, and from then on we feel the emotions directly.

One problem of these cognitivist enquiries is their wish to understand the realism of film. These theses of illusion and make-believe and imagination are hampered by their reliance on film just showing real-looking people and objects, and we know that cinema does not do that all the time. In using realism as a touchstone they are

blind to the possibility that film is the creation of a *whole new world*, a whole new 'realism'. Significant is the fact that cinema, especially modern cinema, is less and less based on 'reality'. Films that fluidly mix digital and real-like events are stretching our understanding of film drama. Notably, questions of what was actually recorded become redundant – half of *The Matrix* never actually took place in front of the camera; as Bazin wrote: 'The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it.'[17]

What is significant about film is that it shows us a new reality, and thus engenders new thinking, new experiences, new emotions. It may be true our real-world thought-systems allow us basic entry into the film, but from then on we are thinking rather differently, modifying our thoughts and meeting the film in kind as it were. We still 'experience' feelings as we would in real life, but the experiences do not occur in the same places – being face to face with someone is a *different* experience to a film closing in, tightening in on a character's face. To rely on 'analogy' for all interpretation is mistaken and limiting. Films give us new emotions, new thoughts, *and engenders its own type of responses*. And by engaging with the film the filmgoer helps this engendering of new responses – we go to the cinema to see new things, learn about new things and get new experiences. For Heidegger, art suspends the viewer's 'usual doing and valuing, knowing and looking'[18] – films suspend our *normal* beliefs and desires, filmgoing becoming an ecstatic arrival into an openness, changing our view of the world. Cinema seems to engender a new kind of belief – we recognise its reality as being like ours, but we do not expect its reality to always act like ours (in fact we like it to differ quite a bit).

All this leads to the question of how we comprehend narratives (not just the understanding of 'film' *per se*), and whether we use our conscious or subconscious mind. For David Bordwell the filmgoer's experience of the film is actively constructive; narrative comprehension thus requires conscious thinking, working out, inference-making. But for Allen, Bordwell's theory is flawed in that he argues that the filmgoer is *active* in constructing the drama, but relies on a psychology which posits this activity as *subconscious*, not conscious.[19] Allen asks when exactly might the filmgoer become conscious of these subconscious processes? Therefore he denies that there are any subconscious inferential processes going on in comprehension of narrative – asserting that we do not necessarily *need* to 'make inferences' to understand films. For Allen, film comprehension is an effortless *conscious* understanding; we do not have to 'think', we immediately perceive and understand the drama. Does this then mean that the film holds the 'conventions' not the filmgoer? What is the filmgoer doing? How much story *do* we construct? And if we consciously understand film, what *is* our subconscious doing during the film experience?

To posit all film understanding at a conscious level does seem to ignore the wealth of information that film gives out – is our subconscious not taking some of that information in? And just because we are not consciously aware of constructing of the drama, it does not mean it is not 'active'. Thus this division between active and subconscious seems forced. Why can we not say that a filmgoer's mind will at times be both active in working out the film, and subconsciously receptive to the film? A filmgoer that is active in thinking with and against the film, but who is also open to the film, ready (conceptually) to receive its subtle thinkings in their subconscious. A filmgoer that thinks image and conventions and hypotheses as one, in each moment of perception and cognition. It also might seem quite reasonable to say that dialogue and events and action and gestures meet with the filmgoer's active consciousness, and movements and colours and edit shifts meet with their receptive subconsciousness. But it is not a simple division of thinking: 'content' is not solely handled by consciousness, and 'form' is not solely received by the subconscious. Gestures and actions can subtly affect our subconscious understanding of the drama, and colour and movement can easily catch our eye and ask of us to relate it consciously to the plot at hand.

Filmosophy is not only interested in one or the other; it is not just interested in the 'subconscious' feeling of film-thinking; not just interested in film-thinking that just affects our subconscious; as each concern would cut out much interesting film-thinking. Good film-thinking is not just that which affects our subconscious. Film-thinking can be obvious or subtle, loud or quiet, can speak to our conscious or subconscious mind. The most interesting film-thinking is that which affects both our consciousness and our subconscious. In order to remove this fluid division, we might talk simply of the filmgoer 'feeling' the thinking of the film – a feeling that might be subconscious or conscious, depending on the filmgoer (perhaps depending on what sorts of concepts they have at the back of their mind). A particular film-thinking (a movement or framing) will not reach the same part of the mind of each of the audience – not everyone will consciously see the same things.

Phenomenology

As we have seen, cognitivism sets out a constructivist, epistemologically idealist account of the filmgoer: we are confronted only with images and sounds and have to imaginatively 'construct' fictional entities and comprehend narratives through inference-making. But contrary to 'inference' theories of film comprehension, phenomenology holds that film is an object with *inherent* meanings, representations, and aesthetic features. For example, Allan Casebier in his 1991 book *Film and Phe-*

nomenology holds an epistemologically realist theory of cinematic representation (phenomenological realism, not stylistic realism), arguing that the filmgoer directly sees independent fictional entities. Film holds recognisable people and objects that exist independently of our mental operations. The fictional events of film exist independently – and thus there is no 'fabula' (story) or 'diegesis' (all fictional events), but an integrated whole film. Therefore narrative comprehension ought to be recognised as perceptually intuitive.

There are perhaps two areas for the phenomenological study of the filmgoer: the phenomenology of the cinema experience, and the phenomenology of the film experience. In the former, as was touched on in the introduction and at the beginning of this chapter, the whole of the filmgoing experience is open to investigation and interpretation: distance of filmgoer to screen, type of projection, amount of other people in the cinema, the brightness of the exit signs, and so on. For instance, Münsterberg wrote:

> if the eye falls upon a woman playing the piano directly below the picture, the illusion is destroyed. He sees on the screen enormous giants whose hands are as large as half the piano player, and the normal reactions which are the spring for the enjoyment of the play are suppressed.[20]

But here I shall be mostly concerned with the latter area of study, where phenomenology leads us to realise how mutual and organic the relationship between film and filmgoer is. In phenomenology subject and object are seen as inseparable, and meaning is always *experienced*. This does not entail a *transparent* theory of film experience, but rather a mediated cinematic realism – filmgoers see people and objects *via* the film's thinking. Filmgoers see people the way that the film wants them to be seen (as good or bad, up close or far away) – *the filmgoer feels this thinking in their experience of the film-person*. There is thus an immediacy of thinking and meaning (one in the other). As Merleau-Ponty wrote: 'The meaning of a film is incorporated into its rhythm just as the meaning of a gesture may immediately be read in that gesture: the film does not mean anything but itself ... A movie is not thought; it is perceived.'[21]

Film, because it is so closely related to our modes of thinking, becomes, not so much a mirror, but a companion, a cousin or *friend* of our thinking. For Artaud, 'the cinema is an amazing stimulant. It acts directly on the grey matter of the brain.'[22] The distance between film and filmgoer is eliminated for Artaud, and the film plugs straight into the filmgoer. When Deleuze notes that cinema's 'mental image' necessarily has a direct relationship with thought, he is indicating not only a 'relationship'

that is internal to the image, but also active in relation to the filmgoer. But generally, our response to the visual is the most natural of all our mental reactions. Thus the meanings we gain from the visual can be more easily swayed by the formative, imprinting experiences of our youth. The case of the low-angle film-thought is normally understood via the similar human-thought, namely the role that it actually played in our 'learning from taller people' stage of life (pace Messaris). But, the film-thought has as many relationships as the human-thought – there is nothing wrong with this analogous application of meaning, but it could point to a limiting of our visual literacy – we should be learning new possibilities of the visual, not just subsuming film to human experience.

Coming back to Messaris, for him film is understood because it is built using normal perceptual skills. Again, this creates the possibility for the special 'direct link' between film and filmgoer. For Messaris film does not mean via its own conventions, rather we understand film via our normal experiences. Messaris finds that 'film and television conventions appear to be constructed on the basis of pre-existing cognitive principles for the perception of our physical and social environment'.[23] The 'constructed on' is the most important bit here – how is this movement, this constructing, developed? Messaris argues that we do not 'read' everything we see: 'images are not merely another form of arbitrary signification. Learning to understand images does not require the lengthy period of initiation characteristic of language learning, and permeability of cultural boundaries is much greater for images than it is for language.'[24] We easily grasp film because our basic perceptual capabilities allows us to grant the magic of film composition a realistic appearance. We may feel film directly, but a fuller understanding of film does not automatically come from normal experience. We can understand film better with a certain kind of knowledge (concepts) of film's actions, resulting in a certain type of linguistic direction (rhetoric).

When Merleau-Ponty says that a film 'is not thought; it is perceived', he is pointing out the immediacy with which we understand images. As filmgoers we do not have to 're-think' film, but immediately perceive and understand film. Understanding this direct link is thus the first stage in a consideration of the filmgoer. Film attaches itself to our minds and refuses to let go. The natural link between filmgoer and film turns into a pact, a mesh of 'minds'. We may initially understand film-thinking because it is so close to real-life situations, but that does not mean that film is not making us think new things. By the fact that we experience first-hand the decisions of the filmind, we are linked most closely to it. The filmind is calling out to the filmgoer directly, it is trying to talk to the filmgoer's mind. I say 'calling' and 'trying' because the link is not one that filmgoers are practised at recognising (that sense of coming out of the cinema having felt some 'meaning' without knowing how). The filmind's

colours and movements and focusings are working at the level of natural (subconscious) thought, but that does not mean all filmgoers respond to or connect with or encounter them.

For Béla Balázs 'film art has a greater influence on the minds of the general public than any other art'[25] – and though this sounds like a sociological comment, his writings steer us to a more psychological interpretation. Eisenstein created films that almost force certain thoughts on filmgoers, and this 'influence', especially the measure of this influence, has been a preoccupation of film studies. Gerard Fort Buckle was concerned with the effect film has on our 'thought movement', and found cinema to be effecting 'a continual awakening and diverting of the thought waves', while only allowing the filmgoer 'a very small amount of retrospection'.[26] More ambiguously, Cavell finds that film has 'absolute control of our attention', and relates our differing relationships with the other arts:

> Music also exercises an absolute control of our attention; it justifies this by continuously rewarding it. Painting allows attention an absolute freedom; nothing will happen that is not before our eyes. The novel can neither command absolute control nor afford absolute freedom; it operates in the weave between them, as lives do. Its permanent responsibility is to the act of conversing with us.[27]

In the cinema are we completely removed from the real world? Does film not only provide relaxation and entertainment, but also an overcoming of the causal world? Thus, the question is how much film replaces our thinking. Does a bad film leave us no room for 'retrospection', or spark us no thought, and a good film shock us to thinking and meditation? Or the other way round – a bad film leaving our mind to wonder, perhaps critically back onto the film? The extreme is the idea that film overpowers our thought – George Duhamel put it brilliantly in 1930: 'I can no longer think what I want, the moving images are substituted for my own thoughts.'[28] This is like saying that the filmind covers our senses so well that there is no room left for our thought – that we need do no thinking, as the film is taking care of us, holding us close and relieving us of the bother of thought. For Artaud, above all, the cinema is 'like an innocuous and direct poison, a subcutaneous injection of morphine',[29] and this extreme, passive picture of the filmgoer (especially with the addition of almost sickly metaphors) has led many to theorise film as a dark force, drawing the poor unknowing and powerless filmgoer into its thinking.

Vivian Sobchack elucidates the event of filmgoing by seeing it as the activities of two bodies: the filmgoer's body and the film's body, which has its own perception of a world. As Merleau-Ponty writes, other bodies become 'the theatre of a certain pro-

cess of elaboration ... a certain view of the world',[30] of which Sobchack comments: 'How better to pose the experience of visually engaging the nature of the film's visible visual behaviour.'[31] But unlike our perception of other people, the film's 'body' is almost as invisible to us as our own body (this is why our mind and the filmind become so easily mixed). As Sobchack puts it, the film's vision is 'lived though intentionally, introceptively, visually as "mine" ... the film's visual conduct is given to me as homologous to my own visual conduct in watching it'.[32] For Sobchack, the filmgoer perceives the film *within* their own lived body. The film's existence is lived as the filmgoer's body. And filmosophy would agree, though not put so much stress on the sense of body. Filmosophy sees a mix of *minds* rather than bodies – our bodies remain with us, merely forgotten, redundant. We are the film, the mixed active minds of film and filmgoer. It is not so much our thinking that we leave behind, but our 'being', our body. Until we glance at our watch, or we need to go to the toilet, film succeeds in cloaking our body – we simply pay no attention to our selves. (This is perhaps why theories of voyeurism have had such an impact on film studies.) In a sense the filmgoer's body dies, and the mind fully takes over. But, in another sense, are we saying that we forget our own thinking, in that the thinking that the film asks us to do is specifically 'different'? In a 1971 piece fittingly called 'The Extra-terrestrial', J. M. G. Le Clezio called cinema 'a science of visual impressions, forcing us to forget our own logic and retinal habits'.[33] Le Clezio beautifully indicates the way film moves us to construct new ways of thinking in order to accompany the film on its para-thoughtful journey. It is in this sense that we *forget* our own being, our own habitual ways of thinking, and take part in the creation of a new being (the new third thought that is the encounter between film and filmgoer).

Filmosophical filmgoer

Part of the function of the filmosophical concepts of the filmind and film-thinking is to engender an active and creative attitude to film. This attitude develops out of the basic experience in the cinema, which is always markedly different to our daily sensations, with different expectations, and needs. Taking our seats we are expectant and thus attentive in the cinema – we are thinking with and against it, but we are thinking towards it, not passively positioned (in life we usually think *from* our experiences). If we go to the cinema for the sole reason of gaining some pleasurable experiences, then we have our 'pleasure thinking' at the ready, as it were, sifting out only those film-thoughts that supply this feeling, these pleasures of an impossible life.[34] Most important here are questions of how active the relationship between film and filmgoer is. In a very simple sense the filmgoer is active towards the film. The flat im-

age is given peaks of importance as the filmgoer's attention shifts around the image, and differing parts of the image (faces, scenery, clues, guns) are brought 'forward' by the filmgoer. These variable peaks are part of the complex relationship between film and filmgoer. For Münsterberg film engenders 'a unique inner experience, which ... brings our mind into a peculiar complex state'.[35] To say that film swamps our thinking is to misunderstand and underestimate the part played by the filmgoer's thinking (again, we are not discussing some hypothetical 'weak' filmgoer, nor some inattentive one).[36] Some (cultural) theorists have attempted to attend to the complete audience – when the filmgoer notices their popcorn, or their companion. But this seems less important (for our purposes) than attempting to understand just what is possible in the meeting of film and mind. At the other extreme, Münsterberg argues that the human mind still holds sway over any force the film might have – that is, our language and inherent theories and feelings and ideologies steer the film to the meaning we anticipate, expect or create – 'every shade of feeling and emotion which fills the spectator's mind can mould the scenes in the photoplay until they appear the embodiment of our feelings'.[37]

As with filmosophy, in Sobchack's embodied phenomenology the filmgoer's vision is a constitutive *activity*; the filmgoer projectively and prospectively engages with the film in an *act of becoming*.[38] This is thus a mutual sharing of the film-world, not biased subjection or passive identification. Sobchack recalls the words of Merleau-Ponty on the act of dialogue, where two minds are woven into a common ground or single fabric, 'a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. We have here a dual being'.[39] The filmgoer engages in a virtual dialogue with the film – each thinks a certain way, and that collision results in a unique mix of thinkings. Sobchack writes illuminatingly on this mix:

> I am able to engage the visible in a dialogue that results from the marked similarities and re-marked differences between *what I see* and *what is seen by another* even as I see it ... It is in this convergence and divergence of perception that the hermeneutic relation to cinematic technology arises in the spectator's experience.[40]

The filmgoer and film may have similar or dissimilar routes of thinking: we may converge with the thinkings of an action film (we want to see the explosion, and the film gives it to us), or diverge from the thinkings of a mystery thriller (we want to see who the killer is, but the film will not let us).

Whether converging or diverging, the filmgoer *feels* the film's thinking *directly*, *affectively* – they see and understand the objects of film *through* the film-thinking. Sobchack argues that the filmgoer can see what the film simply wants them to see,

or can see the film intentions, see the film actively wanting us to see what it sees. But that seems to assert a separation of film-thinking and film-object. How can we see a character without seeing them through or via the film-thinking? It is only technicist rhetoric that creates a separation of object and style – a filmgoer holding a language of cameras and dollies could quite purposefully concentrate on the mechanics of the film. The filmgoer should not (be made to) experience technology (camera, zoom), but a dramatically intended film-world. Those who 'see' a 'camera' (moving, framing) are only seeing it via a technicist conceptualisation and rhetoric of film. Filmosophy is concerned to *organicise* and so remove the separation of film-object and film-thinking. Filmosophy argues that, with the concept of 'film-thinking' in their knowledge, the filmgoer can be simultaneously aware of both the object of the film's intention (the character) *and* the intention (framing, movement) itself. The filmosophical filmgoer immediately feels the character *through* their thinking and the film-thinking.

What I am developing here is an understanding of the encounter between film and filmgoer as a *mix of thinkings*. The film and the filmgoer combine their thinkings in a very special way – and theorising film as thinking helps us understand the powerful and special relationship that does exist. The filmgoer does not so much 'identify' with the film (or its characters) as 'join' it in the creation of a third thinking. Simply put, the encounter between film and filmgoer is so enjoyable and easy and powerful *because film is also thinking*. For Cavell (recalling Merleau-Ponty's words above), when reading a novel or simply experiencing life, our attention 'operates in the weave between them'.[41] We, as filmgoers, naturally weave our thinking into the films we experience. Not only do we naturally see different things, but our language and prior understanding may make us see some things above others. Münsterberg writes: 'Whatever is focused by our attention wins emphasis and irradiates meaning over the course of events.'[42] There becomes no such thing as one way vision: everything I look at looks at me.

At the level of cognitive processing, each of us has a unique subconscious and conscious strategy. We all look for certain things in movies, we all attend to and respond to different aspects of film. Theorising that multiplicity is almost impossible, other than pointing out that the variables are there. The filmgoing experience is one of constrained freedom – an endless push-pull mix of thinkings. Each filmgoer is invested in the film drama in their own particular (ideological, narcissistic, emotional) way. Their way of thinking attends to particular peaks of the image, particular elements of the narrative. But this undeniable aspect of all filmgoers *cannot be theorised*. We should thus be concerned with how filmgoers might *more fruitfully* interact with films, that is, to re-understand this engagement through a recognition of film's

capabilities of thinking, and also *propose* (not just try to discover) a new way of encountering film.

Because we are all attentive in slightly differing ways, and because every film is thinking many possible aesthetic and kinetic and conceptual moments, the encounter between film and filmgoer produces a *unique* third thought, a unique mix. Film is constructed perfectly for our mind – we join our filmgoer-thinking with the film-thinking, and therefore include the film in our thoughts. *In* our mind. (This is why others have mistaken the filmgoing experience for a replacement of our thinking – relative immersion in a film does not mean that we are not still being selective and active in our experience.) It can sometimes feel like we are thinking the film ourselves. The experience of the film, our 'thinking' of the film (the attendings we make throughout the film), is the 'mix', the third thought, and our personal 'version' of the film. As Münsterberg wrote: 'The objective world is molded by the interests of the mind.'[43] Both filmgoer and film mould the film-world. Not least, the natural saccadic motion of the filmgoer's eyes makes for a kind of constant searching. The mixing of film and filmgoer is always an original journey – the filmgoer adds the filmind's film-thinking to their own, naturally or subconsciously reconfiguring it in the process. Even when we are 'losing ourselves' in the film, we are still thinking with and against the film. The relationship between film and filmgoer in filmosophy is thus an energy, a vital mix of thinkings. The filmgoer and the film affect each other, are correlated with one another. Our vision is not separate to our bodies, our being: we remake the film via our concepts, and the film remakes our vision. In the cinema we thus have a particularly filmic mode of attention – we begin to see 'filmically'.

Again, what is important is recognising how active the filmgoer can be, and what this activeness consists of.[44] We are always selecting and choosing – whether parts of an image to concentrate on, or parts of a narrative line. We select from those film-thoughts in any way we choose. The film appears to us, we are positioned in some respect to it, our thinking chooses a way of joining the film, the background to our being informs this choosing, and we (consciously and subconsciously) select parts of the film to attend to.[45] The filmgoer is never thoughtless – there is always content. A theory of thought is a theory of its content. Thinking is, conventionally, an activity: thinking is always 'about' something. So in the cinema we continue, but differently. As our mind meets the filmind so the collision produces a third thought (which is our thought of the film). But this is a third thought without there being a first and second. We could not identify or isolate the two thoughts of film and filmgoer, only experience (as a filmgoer) the third. (A film has no one concrete field of thinking – so one cannot say that the filmgoer necessarily only experiences a 'percentage' of the film's 'actual', or complete range of thoughts.)

The film plus the filmgoer's environment of experience, cultural inclinations, historical position and general needs and desires (time and background), all combine to create the meaning experienced. Yet it is hardly worth stating that there is no meaning in a film in itself ('all it can do is *block* a number of possible investments of meaning', as Roger Odin wrote[46]). Thus we have a conception of the filmgoer as active participant in the film, often instinctively selecting unique fields and swathes of film-thoughts. A ghostly participant, outside the film, yet integral (essential) to its thinking, the filmgoer can be deeply involved, and pragmatically evolves a meaning structure for the film (based on the concepts the filmgoer brings to the cinema, as we shall see below). For example, when we see a character on film, we do seem to feel we are just 'seeing' that person, *but we are seeing that person through another (kind of) mind*; we are seeing that person (with the help of) how the filmind wants us to see that person (soft, or looming, or close, and so on). We see via the filmind, but it is still up to us how much we accept the filmind's viewpoint. Our thinking *plus* film-thinking designs this coalesced, third thinking. It is an encounter, a joining, a dialogical connection. So the next question concerns what kind or sorts of experience and possible knowledge does the film/filmgoer encounter produce?

Affective film-thinking

Considering the route we have taken in noting the direct and unique connection between film and filmgoer, just what kind of thinking *is* going on? What is the sense we have of films? At this level of formal film-thinking (before dialogue and the references of objects), it seems that the base (formal) sound-image-thinking of film is an 'affective thinking' that communicates directly with a non-linguistic (perhaps subconscious) part of our minds. Stanley Kubrick once said that films

present the opportunity to convey complex concepts and abstractions without the traditional reliance on words … *2001*, like music, succeeds in short-circuiting the rigid surface cultural blocks that shackle our consciousness to narrowly limited areas of experience and is able to cut directly through to areas of emotional comprehension.[47]

Affects we might call emotions or feelings that are part of or attached to ideas or concepts. *We understand and receive meaning as we experience the film*. The film prompts feelings, and thus affective knowledge, in the filmgoer. By mixing our thinking with the film's thinking we can allow ourselves an amount of relaxation *exactly in order to truly grasp the affective meanings of the film*. As V. F. Perkins notes: 'We are

not aware of "reading" the image. No act of interpretation, no effort of imagination or comprehension seems needed.'[48] The filmgoer 'feels' the formal thinking of film as a direct impression. For Jean Louis Schefer film is an eye without a memory – cinema can only produce the effects of memory. Schefer is actually saying that, without real thought, cinema can only imitate thinking, and that film communicates directly with a non-linguistic side of our minds:

the illusion proper to the cinema is that this experience and this memory are solitary, hidden, secretly individual, since they make an immediate pact (story, pictures, affective colours) with a part of ourselves that lives without expression; a part given over to silence and to a relative aphasia, as if it were the ultimate secret of our lives – while perhaps it really constitutes our ultimate subjecthood. It seems that in this artificial solitude *a part of us is porous to the effects of meaning without ever being able to be born into signification through language*.[49]

Film bleeds ideas. The rupturing or violence of complex film-thinking creates spaces for ideas to appear. Thus some knowledge gained by the filmgoer can be conceptual. This kind of knowledge arrives by way of different types of moving sound-images – different complexes and movements of film-thinking – whether it is a shift from one image to another, or the description of a space by the film. These film-concepts are both new and direct; as Godard once said (in *La Chinoise*), 'we must replace vague thoughts with clear images'. The ending of *The Scent of Green Papaya* becomes a *thinking of* the relationship of the two lovers; it encompasses and feels their situation; and in a sense the image becomes a concept of their state, and thus possibly (can be *felt to be*) an idea of mutual love. The arrival of concepts is helped by the fact that film 'means' in a way that is much more human than, say, painting. In life we naturally frame a scene to suit our feeling of it – say, keeping one person in our view while talking to someone else. If we see this action in film we are more suited to experiencing the meaning of it than colour or form in painting. (In this sense film is a life thought-out – just a different artificial life and a new kind of thought.) For Artaud film is 'an inorganic language which moves the mind by osmosis and with no sort of transposition in words'.[50] The thinking that film does (with the filmgoer) has exactly this non-linguistic newness: in experiencing a film we are respondent to new, *different*, specially created values of pleasure and knowledge and entertainment. We are creating these fields of reception as we engage in the film. (Furthermore, it is important to recognise that images are part of our knowledge. As we shall see in the final chapter, a theory of thinking needs to take into account our continual aesthetic attention.)

In the face of film's thinking, we may recognise the relative 'impower' of the film-goer's thinking, not in terms of the relationship between film and filmgoer (the film does not totally swamp the mind of the filmgoer), but in terms of the power of film-thinking to create and show new ideas and concepts through the moving sound-image. Our impower lies in being unable to think images (or image-concepts) as clearly as film. Deleuze called this gap in our ability the unthought in thought, and Cavell found a similarly disabled filmgoer: the filmgoer's thinking seems invisible, and yet it is *joined* with the film (it is silent yet active: choosing and selecting from the film). This sense of invisibility is seen by Cavell as 'an expression of modern privacy or anonymity ... as though the world's projection explains our forms of unknownness and of our inability to know'.[51] What Deleuze further argued was that a certain kind of cinema attempted to fill this gap in the filmgoer's thinking by effecting a 'shock to thought'. As noted earlier, there are two overlapping areas to Deleuze's thought-cin-ema: that film causes thought in the filmgoer; and that film is a kind of thought itself. (Deleuze arrives at this latter conception of thought-cinema *through* his account of images that produce thought in the feeler.) There are thus *two* shocks, from the im-age to conscious thought, then our image-thinking takes us back to the film images. Similarly, for Walter Benjamin, film can produce a 'shock effect', forcing the mind to cushion them with a 'heightened presence of mind'.[52] With the automatic movement of film, Deleuze writes, 'the artistic essence of the image is realised: *producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*'.[53] (This movement produces a kind of spiritual automaton in the filmgoer.) The essence of the image for Deleuze is thought-cinema, which for him is when movement becomes *automatic*, when time and movement exist for them-selves, forcing the filmgoer to think *through* (against/with) this new construction of time and movement. Film here produces a 'nooshock': not only the forcing of think-ing, but the forcing of a new kind of thinking. The noosign produces a nooshock and new thinking, and this shock to thinking is automatic.

Deleuze acknowledges Heidegger when he notes the difference between the pos-sibility of thinking and the doing of thinking – in communicating the shock cinema gives us thinking (makes us think *and* shows thinking). Deleuze casts this relation-ship as direct and physiological, using the Artaudian/Eisensteinian terms 'shock' and 'sensation' to underline his view that thinking is an unavoidable result of film – an effect on the cortex. We *feel* the film much more than we see or hear it. *This is sensory thought; affective intelligence.* Deleuze sees Eisenstein's decomposition of the 'shock' in cinema as 'the very form of communication of movement in images ... from the image to thought, from the percept to the concept'.[54] Montage creates or leads to a thinking of the Whole, via the effect of images on the cerebral cortex; we 'feel' the

images, there is a total physiological sensation. Here Deleuze becomes prescriptive, arguing that the image (to be rightly termed 'thinking') must force us to think. For all this Deleuze still sees cinema as a primitive '*internal monologue*, a drunken mono-logue, working through figures, metonymies, synecdoches, metaphors, inversions, attractions...',[55] a cinema of resonance but not linguistic palpability or certainty of expression.

For Eisenstein film produces physiological sensations – as regards sound he writes, 'the term "I hear" is no longer strictly appropriate. Nor "I see" for the visual. For both we introduce a new formula: "I feel".'[56] Deleuze uses this formula, and sees a 'movement-image developing its vibrations in a moving sequence which *embeds itself within us*'.[57] Film, and its vibrations of thought, fuses with the filmgoer, and produces 'suprasensory relations ... this is the shock wave or the nervous vibration, which means we can no longer say "I see, I hear", but I FEEL'.[58] *To be 'followed' by I THINK*: 'The cinematographic image must have a shock effect on thought, and force thought to think itself as much as thinking the whole. This is the very definition of the sublime.'[59] For Deleuze, when films start thinking, *we feel* a rupturing of thought (and a rupturing of our filmgoing experience), and this automatically results in a do-ing of thinking.

Following on from Deleuze then, the filmgoer can be said to be taking part in the creation of thought – which may be of an uninteresting sort with boring films, and powerful and prolonging with good ones. This is an intuitive relationship (even though later we may decide to add interpretation and writing). *These are thinkings we understand intuitively rather than metaphorically.* Currie says we 'interpret the visual images on screen by imagining that we actually see before us the fictional events they represent'.[60] Yet there is no need for an 'interpreting' via an 'imagining', it is possible to see and understand immediately. Take two people in a cinema, both with an understanding of how film can be thoughtful: one (perhaps sat at the back, with the screen's frame and other filmgoers in clear sight) sees an action of form and appreciates the thinking, and derives an interpretation; the other (perhaps near the front) is completely involved in the film, and *feels* a meaning for those moments when they appear – and only afterwards may remember the feeling and set about relating those moments through interpretation.

Meaning thus has a beginning (immediately in the experience), a middle (through reflection and interpretation during and after the film), and seemingly never an end. The film's moving sound-image thinking has the *possibility* of meaning – we hold the only capacity to give meaning to film, by experiencing it.[61] And the concept of the filmind does not presume a 'message': everything is intended but there is no message to be missed or misunderstood or completely, exhaustively understood.[62]

There are certainly 'conventions' in film (via other films), but they are never atoms of meaning as in language – they are conventions which affect meaning, rather than determine meaning. The affective meanings of film-thoughts are gained, pragmatically, through use; through the filmgoer's changing, adaptive, contextual response to them.

The specifically *formal* film-thought initially stimulates us to an affective meaning; the meaning is in the experience. This is not the same sort of 'meaning' that we achieve through interpretation, or that we might gain from identifiable (meaningful) gestures and actions and objects 'in' the film. This (formal-thinking) meaning is what we *feel* when watching the thing, and that immediate feeling is our useful (and hopefully interesting) truth of the film. When other writers note that 'meaning' is only one result of film-thinking, they are arguing along similar lines (but with differing semantics: sensation/sense/meaning, and so on) – that a profound and impressive impact is being made at a more immediate, affective level (and furthermore that not all films need be resolved into meanings – that they can be experiences beyond' or before meaning).

The thoughtful, formal actions of film produce this immediate meaning – think of a film circling its hero: we get a sense, a feeling of his situation directly. But perhaps the most important thing to say about the kind of thinking film-thinking is is that it is indistinct, almost vague. An act of the image (say focusing) is not reducible to a succinct meaning, making the type of knowledge that film produces a 'rough' knowledge. The *affects* of film produce immediate, pure meaning – fluid, changing, ill-defined. These meanings we feel are tentative, gut-like ones, shaky in their location – the filmgoer may not know exactly where she 'received' a meaning from. Filmosophical (affective) 'meaning' is therefore that which arises directly from experiencing the film – we are given meaning. The thinking of film (its actions of form) is the primary source of these hazy meanings and distinct feelings. These are basic meanings which coalesce invisibly, inseparably, with the meanings we gain from actions and dialogue to become the whole thought of the moment. How (linguistically) ready we are to receive those meanings, and what we do with them in post-film writing, is the concern of the next chapter.

nine | film writing

> You will see that this little clicking contraption with the revolving handle will make a revolution in our life – in the life of writers. It is a direct attack on the old methods of literary art. We shall have to adapt ourselves to the shadowy screen and to the cold machine. A new form of writing will be necessary.
>
> – Leo Tolstoy (1908)[1]

Film studies has struggled to verbalise *how* an action of form seems to convey a feeling or a meaning. Films are praised for their 'tracking shots' or innovative framing, but seldom are these forms revealed in more fruitful ways. A fair amount of film theory impoverishes our experience of film by using a language (a descriptive terminology) that is removed and unsuitable to the very actions and movements of film form – *we should not be taught to see 'zooms' and 'tracking shots', but led to understand intensities and movements of feeling and thinking*. And even if style *is* granted meaning or 'intention' it is usually in a metaphorical or symptomatic way: the tracking shot 'symbolises' the link between two spaces, an strange framing 'reflects' the character's psychological state. In these kinds of analyses form and content are still resolutely separated[2] (even though the writer may think they are bringing them together) – the form acts on or responds to the content, *like two railway tracks that criss-cross each other every so often*. Form has still been seen as separate, usually brought in only when its actions *confirm* an interpretation of the film's story. This last point is important, as the route to interpretation should always be via the whole film, not biasing form or content. Of course a character is *separate* from a movement of the film, but the thinking of the film at that moment encompasses both. Using the concept of film-thinking the character and room and framing and movements become one (the thought of the filmind).

In this chapter I will thus be concerned with how the language and rhetoric of the concepts of the filmind and film-thinking might shape the filmgoer's routes of interpretation. Filmosophy here approaches the key question of the description and

understanding of the formal make-up of film. What is important here, and what will be the subjects of the next few sections, are the relationship between thought and language, the current language and rhetoric of film studies, how form and meaning are bonded together by the concept of film-thinking, the language used to reveal and revel in film-thinking, how this new language changes our experience of film, the encouragement of a more open and personal style of interpretation, the encouragement of a performative writing style, and how these writings on film should positively affect the experience of film for others.

Language

My premise is low-level: that how we think, how we perceive, is dependent (to some extent) on the knowledge and experience we bring to the event of seeing and hearing, and that much of that knowledge and experience is stored in language. As Yvette Bíró writes, 'we do not know what we see, but rather the opposite is true: we see what we know'.[3] We think with images *and* language. Our mental images are always changing and darting around, usually rough and hazy. At a certain age we learn the words for some images, and thought becomes partially linguistified. We start to 'interpret' things with our particular set of terms and concepts. We think using many different cognitive processes, and we use language to grab at some of them – either to communicate to others, or to resolve a thought for ourselves.[4]

We all think via language: we unconsciously use terms to handle, to mould experience and knowledge. Language attempts to translate thought – *concepts learnt and absorbed begin to direct our thinking*. How we see is dependent on how we understand what we see, which arrives through our linguistic capacity. It is not that we think entirely *in* language, but that a significant mark of our engagement with and understanding of what we experience is the sort of language we have. Eskimos 'see' more in snow because they have so many differing terms for it (while we only have slushy, crunchy, dirty, and one or two others). Our language of thought *reveals* itself in perceiving, in organising our visual and auditory fields. This is why we can say that the Eskimo really does 'see' more in snow, and not just that they can interpret snow in more varied ways (for even to do that they must be perceiving more, and not simply looking with more concentration).

A consequence of this is that we may only 'net' from an image what our language trawls in; we come to regard images through words (and translate importantly felt images into interpretations), but that is not to say that we automatically translate all images into language, that images are composed by language, reducible to language, or completely indebted to language for all their possible meanings. We just

may not be able to recover and verbalise the *meaning we felt* – perhaps because our language (and whatever theoretics organising it) is pulling us to another kind of interpretation. Therefore my main argument is that the filmgoer's experience of film can be enhanced by more suitable and poetic reference terms for moving sound-image actions of form, and that these terms can come from understanding film as a new mode of thought. If the film circles the hero, and our language consists of technical and metaphorical terms, then our understanding of that scene will be steered by that language. An analogy can be made with how differing soundtracks can influence the meaning of images: *our descriptive language (of moving sound-images) is the musical mood of our audio-visual experience.*

The possession of words and categories affects our experience of film. The filmgoer almost matches their concepts to the film: an actor watching a film will hold concepts of drive and performance, and will latch onto those moments in the film; a railwayman's concepts will steer a different experience of *Europa*; an architect's concepts will pull certain affects from *Blade Runner*, etc. And we are not talking about interpretation yet, but the concepts that drive attention and knowledge and perception. Michael Baxandall has written beautifully on this area in regard to the history of Italian painting: 'Fifteenth-century medicine trained a physician to observe the relations of member to member of the human body as a means to diagnosis, and a doctor was alert and equipped to notice matters of proportion in painting too.'[5] Comprehension may not *require* previous experience or training, but it can be enhanced by a more suitable language and rhetoric (words and word arrangements). The encounter between film and filmgoer produces much meaning, but our capacity to receive those affective film-thinkings is somewhat dependent on whether we are 'ready' linguistically. If our minds do organise images to conform to the logic and meaning and capacity of its language, *then reconfiguring (renaming) forms of film with thoughtful poetics (the feelings of thinkings) will change the experience of film for the filmgoer*. This hopefully leads to a new organisation of the whole – a new mode of attention for the filmgoer.

So what is the current language of film studies?[6] How does it handle film style? The removed, metaphorical nature of some film writers' attempts to bring form and style into their interpretations will be discussed in a moment. But at source much writing is technicist – being grounded (and steered) by the language of filmmaking. It is as though we were to interpret books using the technical language of printing presses, ink resolutions and copy-editing symbols, instead of the affective power of story worlds. Some film theorists who get a taste of filmmaking revel in that language – talking of lenses and technical shots – to show off their knowledge (and almost infer that they could be making films too). An analogy can be made with

film critics' use of actors' names instead of character names: for example, Donald Skoller persists in calling the characters in *Vertigo* Kim and Jimmy! In cultural theory and popcorn criticism this can be illuminating and fun, but most films deserve more than this. Technical terms – such as panning, tracking, zoom-in, close-up, off-camera, shot/reverse shot, long take, hand-held, medium shot, filter, deep focus, asynchronous sound – litter the texts of much writing. *This lumpen technological terminology obscures the possible poetic experience of film.* Speaking of books full of filmmaking terms Parker Tyler compares them to 'anatomy lectures over human corpses that explain how a living man, in general, "works", how this or that of his organs functions'.[7]

Film writing was technical in the beginning because quotation was impossible and writers so dearly wanted to get across what they were talking about, and no other way of description existed. But after a hundred years can we not move on? For example, even though it is low-impact rhetoric, and we all seem to accept its usage, where exactly is the 'camera' in films? The camera does this, responds to that, moves in on a character. I can see the film moving round a room, searching for clues, but no camera. I use this example because most film theorists would find this nit-picky and pedantic, and it is always nice to start with the borderline rather than the obvious. *Filmosophy aims for the complete re-understanding of film as possible poetic thinking* – not just the general elucidation of interesting and active 'film-thinking' in essayistic and abstract film, but the attempt to re-situate (and resuscitate) all film as affective thinking. Therefore, the first task is to philosophically reconceptualise its actions of form – not something done once and then used, but something pragmatically growing from the emergence of forms in world cinema (look at *Sonatine's* rethinking of the time-space of action and gun-play, with its many waitings and silences).

What are our terms for the horizontal-moving shot? The 'tracking shot'! Is that it? When V. F. Perkins finds movements *conveying* 'confusion' or 'exhilaration',[8] it is not that he is wrong in his assessments, only somewhat clunky in his relaying of those assessments. An action of form does not convey meaning, it inhabits thinking – there is no gap between action and meaning. The filmind can reconfigure it as a thought, as a feeling, and a dramatic way of understanding the characters it is attending to, or sounds that accompany it. Think of the movements of *Distant Voices, Still Lives* – to only call these 'tracking shots' is an insult to the power of the film: they are movements 'of' time, bringing us through the time of the characters, thinking a passage of life. Elsewhere these movements might be a thinking of connection, or of the centrality of a character in a transient world (when the film keeps a character central in a passing world).

Technicist descriptive terms for moving sound-image forms obstruct the possible. They ground (limit) the meaning of forms in their technical make-up – the technical term pushes a certain understanding of the meaning of that particular form. A 'zoom-in', called as such, gives a limited framework for understanding its use, and constructs a certain response from the filmgoer. As Deleuze said, in a conversation published in 1985, 'technique only makes sense in relation to ends which it presupposes but doesn't explain'.[9] The ends are the concepts of cinema – and technical terms are empty compared to suitable concepts of poetry and form. We see colour, we do not (need to) see filters; we see a glide from pavement to heavens, we do not (need to) see a crane shot; we just see the top half of a person, we do not see a mid-shot. With these three forms we might say the film is feeling a certain tone, a kind of flight, and an amount of respect, perhaps. Stanley Cavell recounts one of his first seminars on film wherein the students were asked to describe the films they had seen:

> words flowed about every thing from low-angle shots to filters to timings and numbers of set-ups to deep focus and fast cutting, etc., etc. But all this in turn lost its sense ... the only technical matters we found ourselves invoking, so far as they were relevant to the *experience* of particular films, which was our only business, are in front of your eyes. You can see when a shot begins and ends and whether it's long, middle or close; you know whether a camera is moving back or forth or sideways ... Then what is the reality behind the idea that there is always a technical something you don't know that would provide the key to the experience.[10]

Why do writers think that by telling us exactly how a 'shot' was done we will understand or experience the moment any better? The point is that even though most writers are not this technical they still overwhelmingly employ technical terminology – not terminology that matches what we 'see', but terminology that (uselessly) tells us how someone made what we see. Know-how provides no-why – rather, it can make the reader/filmgoer forget to ask *why* the film did such-and-such. The logistics of film should be left to the creators.

This heavy rhetoric attempts to steer the filmgoer to see things that are not even there: we do not (need to) see a medium shot, or deep focus – we just see (simply) a certain impression of a character, or we see clearly two characters who are some distance apart. Again, this lumpen technological terminology *obscures* the possible poetic experience of film. Daniel Dayan argues that the filmgoer needs to discover the 'frame' in order to realise that the film is controlling what we see and hear, but this too is just technical reflexivity. Even a writer as good as George Wilson falls back

on terms such as 'dolly' and 'camera tracks',[11] but perhaps only because no other basic 'descriptive' terms exist. Again, Wilson can still elucidate a great interpretation using these terms, but they sting in the text like glimpses of the microphone boom straying into shot – breaking the spell, if only for a moment.

Filmosophical language

The filmosophical filmgoer engages the film with their personality, backed by concepts that tie form to thinking, to build an interpretation of the film that responds to the whole film, colour and dialogue, shifts and plots. Even though filmosophy confines itself to 'composition', this itself affects any larger interpretation, meaning that if you start with a filmosophical attention then your interpretation, your writing about the film, will progress in a certain kind of way. Filmosophy aims to fuel interpretations with a better understanding of how colour and movement and framing are integral to a film's meaning. The question here is not so much whether there can be final and complete interpretations, but what basis any interpretation uses for its work – the argument being that much interpretation either ignores sound-image forms, or else only teleologically brings in examples when they conform to the interpretation gained from the raw action or plot. As indicated earlier, much film writing not only uses technicist terminology but also stumbles through crude metaphors when it attempts to link form to meaning. One of the wrong turns taken was the prioritising of the real. Especially now that film is as malleable as animation we need to understand it differently – conceive of its possibilities, and create a suitable language to meet it even half-way. The art of realism is still there, but *within* the possibilities of film, as *one way of thinking*.

The concepts of the filmind and film-thinking naturally give birth to humanistic terms of intention (belief, empathy, etc.). These terms then 'organically' steer the filmgoer to see film forms as dramatic rather than technical. Form becomes just more content. *Film-thinking organicises the 'link' between form and content*. In making 'style' integral to content, filmosophy hopes to enhance and emancipate the experience of the filmgoer. Realising film as thinking we can now understand moments more rhetorically: the film (through its affective forms) might be said to be crying in empathy, sweating out loud, feeling pain for the character. (The concept of the filmind should provoke these kinds of interpretations.) Even the most normal, invisible form is thinking – if only with that intention in mind: to let us see the drama clearly and unobtrusively. Responding to regular films only in terms of narration we would be paying attention to events and themes; thinking about film in terms of an active, intending filmind, we would also be paying attention to shape and fluidity and light

and sound: *the complete film*. The concept of film-thinking leads to writing that describes ('images', almost) a whole thoughtful event, infinitely malleable (as opposed to writing that alternates crudely between a misperceived 'form and content').

The concept of the filmind allows us to understand a film's formal actions as emanating from the *heart* of the film, bringing us closer to the film, thus making our experience grow and mature, via an interpretation that prolongs and dwells in the experience. *Where technicist writings open a back-door to the film, conceptual-ising the film as thinking opens the front-door*. Experiencing a film as thinking produces a more meditative, contemplative filmgoer – unprogrammed and unpositioned, imaginative and open. The more 'human' concept of *thinking* allows our whole self to attend to the film—we then might think *with* it, instead of via stuttering terminology and against it. Filmosophy encourages this (un)thought, intuitive, flexible, original experience – an *extension*, less patronising perhaps, of what Perkins calls 'naïve'[12] and Cavell 'native'.[13] Film-thinking levels the playing field for film style. Previously, if the narrative of a film was found to be privileged against the characters then the film might have been called, derisively, 'metalanguage dominant'. Now, with a greater sense of the thinking that film can do without 'shouting' we can see all sorts of subversive meanings without resort to calling them Brechtian devices. These writings on film, these examples of thought, are working practices that, through their attempt to *close the gap* between phenomena and terms, simply encourage people to *see more* in the moving sound-image. *The filmgoer is encouraged to see thinking (thoughtful intention) rather than technique*.

If, as Jean Epstein noted, 'the words are lacking, the words have not been found', and the words we do have 'slither like wet cakes of soap around what we try to say',[14] what form should a new language take? We do not need instruction in how to 'read' film, we only need a better language *of* those moving sound-images – we are already well suited to understanding film. Filmosophy is concerned with the film *as it appears* – its movements and attentions. And, for filmosophy, the rhetoric of its various forms can be sliced from the languages of thinking (questioning, comparing, belief, passion, reasoning, love, empathy, imagining). A descriptive term should not wound the film, should not cut the film's surface to reveal its technological workings, but should open-up the image to reveal its thinking, *its belief about the people and objects it has gained*. Such terms would represent an understanding of film that relates to us, to our knowledge of space and objects, rather than to any hidden structures or filmmaker mechanics. We have a natural engagement with film, so it seems strange that much film writing obsesses on non-natural aspects. To advance and inform this natural connection is the purpose of filmosophical terminology, a language of film-thinking that sits easily with the filmgoer's thought (rather than grabbing the wheel

and steering it into a brick wall of technology). These new concepts should flood the filmgoer's thoughts, providing a mode of attention upon future films.

In writing about a film, a new or newly-applied word immediately creates a new understanding, a new way of attending to the film for the person who reads that writing. The words give birth to a new aspect to the film, and visiting the film with those concepts can change the film. As the film feeds itself though the gate of the projector, the filmgoer feeds the film through their language – sees what their language allows them to see – then takes that experience and further whittles the film down into language-ideas in post-film writing. So, that first experience, itself mediated by language, is again reduced into conscious, communicable language. *We reduce its thinking to our thinking, and how suitable our thinking is depends on our knowledge and language*. Deleuze understood this:

> Cinema is not a universal or primitive language system [*langue*], nor a language [*langage*]. It brings to light an intelligible content which is like a presupposition, a condition, a necessary correlate *through which language constructs its own 'objects' (signifying units and operations)*. But this correlate, though inseparable, is specific: it consists of movements and thought-processes (pre-linguistic images), and of points of view on these movements and processes (pre-signifying signs). It constitutes a whole 'psychomechanics', the spiritual automaton, the utterable of a language system which has its own logic. The language system takes utterances of language, with signifying units and operations from it, but the utterable itself, its images and signs, are of another nature.[15]

Ontologically, film contains no language, but the filmgoer constructs linguistic objects from the moving sound-image (the utterable itself). Language helps us live our lives by ordering and clarifying phenomena, and in doing so necessarily generalises. In experiencing everything through language we break down and structure what we see in concert with our linguistifying of the images. Seeing becomes almost a speaking in and through images.

Film happens – it is an event in time – and we experience the meaning of film via an unconscious language system that is so far not suited to the moving image – not prepared for the possible thoughtful poetics of film. As I have argued, our thinking mixes with the film's thinking, and the range and depth of our attentions is steered by our linguistic capacity – which mirrors the language we employ when writing or discussing the experience of the film. New forms of cinema, whether in *Fight Club* or *The Thin Red Line*, create spaces for new thoughtful rhetorics, of colours and silences, and subjective flights and relations. (With *The Thin Red Line* I remember drinking-

in the thread of character thoughts – the filmind passing through the heads of its characters like a metaphysical bird.) New films demand new vocabularies in order to understand (and communicate) their thinkings; new words that create better, more creative knowledge. This attempt to say the ineffable may require a certain hyper-metaphoricity, or catachresis (the deliberate misapplication of a word or straining of a metaphor – compare with Epstein's singing of knowledge, 'lyrosophy'). But first of all must be found the words, *the words that relate film to feeling, to imagination, to love or justice*, rather than to imported theory or filmmaker mechanics. To bring a new pressure on, and release of, the single word (Roland Barthes' *Writing Degree Zero* beautifully brings this out with regard to modernist poetry). Fragments can come to the fore – singled-out text; lonely questions. With these words the performative rhetoric of filmosophical film writing starts to take shape.

Concepts of film-thinking serve the multi-form that is film – as Bíró notes, 'thought contains simultaneously what in speech occurs consecutively, should we not pay more attention to this simultaneity and examine more closely *the language best suited to record this dynamic simultaneity?*'[16] Just as our thought is ill-served by language, so the current language of much film writing either separates forms too much, or simply collates them and uses them wherever they confirm a meaning gained from the film's story. The subject here is the words for the experience, not a complete structure for larger interpretations. The route to this new vocabulary is via translating film forms (and filmgoer feelings) into thoughtful poetics. That is, recognising the thoughtful attentions of film to be emotive and affective. Filmosophy embraces the film and attempts a poetic translation of the third thought (those joined 'thinkings' of film and filmgoer). The rudiments of this writing can be ordinary words in differing contexts (poetry); ordinary words in different unions (compounds); and original words (neologisms). For someone like Heidegger, language can merely be a communication of what we know, or it can be a 'projective saying',[17] an innovative naming of things and concepts, helping us communicate further. But doubting old jargon is an early step on the route to rediscovering film. A simple example of film-thinking occurs near the beginning of *The Matrix* – Neo is introduced to Morpheus to be told what the Matrix is, and the film *empathises* with Neo's lack of knowledge, keeping half the film (literally) in darkness (using Morpheus's coat, or a chair). The filmind *feels* Neo's position, his knowledge of only half the story, and the filmgoer feels a sense of lack and anticipation too, especially when Morpheus begins to answer his question and the filmind *feels this revelation* by revealing the whole image again.

The words for this kind of experience can only come from the encounter between film and filmgoer. This encounter is a movement of film to filmgoer and filmgoer towards film, and thus forces the filmgoer to adapt (somewhat, not totally) to the film

– to think on their toes (and many other kinds of texts produce this 'encounter', but never in this way). The post-film writing is a recording, a relaying of that encounter, that adaptation, that alliance. As Deleuze writes: 'What the philosopher brings back from the chaos are variations … reconnections through a zone of indistinction in a concept'.[18] The filmosopher enters the chaos, the multitude of meanings and images of film, and brings back variations – and to be able to grab the best variations they must hold the best concepts available. Filmosophy regards a film's direct meanings (its forms of thinking) as the well-spring of its larger possible meanings. *What we feel on initial encounter becomes the path of suitable interpretation*. A game of cat and mouse, we chase film with words, with (hopefully) poetry.[19] The force of great writing comes from a *fully involved* initial experience, and the recognition of the effect the film has had on us – the interrogation of that after-effect: the feelings we had in the cinema, and the change (if any) in our body and thought as a result. What, for example, is your immediate desire as you leave? Your truth of the film starts in the affective meaning of that third (mixed) thought, and is finalised in the recognition of any change in yourself after you have left the film.

The concept of film-thinking, and the humanistic rhetoric that accompanies it, makes it easier to reveal and write about the initial encounter with film (our immediate response). Perhaps filmosophy can help reassess those 'difficult great films' that film critics applaud but do not seem to like or enjoy – did you feel its greatness, or work it out afterwards? Some films may seem to be interesting and impressive, but they may not have engaged us – we may not have moved our thinking towards the film. Millions may not go to see a Godard film, but, as he himself says, 'if they do go, they'll give 80% of themselves to the film. If you go and see *Titanic*, you'll only give 10% of your personality. Good films get smaller audiences, but more of the viewer.'[20] Feeling a film, feeling along with its (thoughtful) feeling of its subjects, is almost to be envious of its thinkings; as Lyotard wrote: 'The feeling is the immediate welcoming of what is given.'[21] The filmgoer intuitively welcomes the affective meaning of the film.[22]

Filmosophical interpretation

After bonding form to thoughtful intention via the concept of film-thinking, filmosophy encourages an opinionated and personal form of film interpretation. These filmosophies attempt to express the feelings felt during the film; working towards a humane, but not naïve response to the film – a humanist thoughtful poetics – less spiritual than interpersonal, preferring the emotional to the technological (but still contingent on the filmgoer's personal history and social context,[23] and integral with

other filmgoers' responses). To interpret is to advance on the meanings we *felt*, to new, more considered meanings. But these do not necessarily relate to any 'deep' or 'shallow' meanings, nor line-up with any subject and subtext. The interpretation must simply be *fed* by that experience. Pleasurable, kinetic adventure films are ripe for this kind of personal recounting, as they often deny overly plot-led interpretations. And also with bad films about serious subjects – if the film only provides information and not emotional engagement then a personal recounting will reveal this lack. Filmosophy does not defer meaning (like formalism), but provides an integration of form and (possibilities of) meaning – the writer, in relaying the affective meanings felt, should offer an 'opinion' of the film's meaning. Writing about a film is also a writing about our desires and interests, and each filmgoer offers their feeling of what the thinking meant to them – not to say the film is always thinking 'this', but thinking 'this' *with me*. Our filmosophical interpretation is only our opinion of what the filmind's thoughts mean at any particular point. The filmgoer produces their own truth of the film (eliding objectivity), and our 'opinion' becomes just our *natural* immediate interpretation of the film.

The *arrangement* of words in filmosophical writing is very important. In order to trace, to chase the ineffable, the text has to move, has to strain and reach. Performative devices help to reveal the writer's experience; think of Lawrence Sterne's blank page in *Tristram Shandy*, or the askew typography in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, attempting to reveal a mental state through text. Look at the typographical strategies of magazines like *Raygun*. Look at Gaston Bachelard's loose writing, a flow that weaves discourses together, yet still with rigour and meaning. Look at Mark Danielewski's *House of Leaves*, wherein the text becomes hard to follow (curving round the page in on itself) as the protagonist enters a mystery that he is finding hard to follow. Filmosophy's performative translation of film-thinking should be poetic, fluid, theatrical, using metaphors that transform the reality of appearances. All this can be embellished with opinion, but opinions that are clearly signalled and couched in philosophical openness. Heidegger's poetic language, Kierkegaard's textual voices, Nietzsche's stylistic perspectivalism, Wittgenstein's ordinary language and Derrida's notion of philosophical writing, all lead us to see that film writing, to become filmosophical, needs to recognise its own rhetoric and embrace a performative nature if it is to get as near as possible to the very experience of the moving image.[24] Filmosophy attempts to organically unite 'form and content' in the filmgoer's thought, and the argument concerning film writing is parallel: the form of your writing is also its content. To write with a perception for the sound and look of the words is to allow the sentences and paragraphs to carry more than the literal, and to allow the ideas to be more forcefully released. A rhyming maxim does grow in the mind more than

one without style. The 'text' of modern publishing has stagnated and needs some sort of artificial resuscitation – textual design, such as that in the Danielewski book, is few and far between.

For the words to grow in the reader they must remain loose in meaning, context-dependent and pragmatic (each film has differing thoughts). Film-thinking encourages humanistic terms, and added to indirect, performative discourse, the film will hopefully be re-lit and revealed. *But essentially, all is towards making information and knowledge more suitable to understanding – making experience more communicable.* Each film has so many thinkings, and demands more and more practical ways to disseminate the experience of these thinkings, and filmosophers must amplify their words to respond truthfully to a film that has moved them. The concepts and attentions of filmosophy are not intended to provide complete interpretations, but can be used as a first step, a route to larger interpretations. Filmosophical interpretations simply work towards making the experience of film fuller. In order to allow 'difficult' films to be seen afresh, and to expand on why certain films move us, and make us feel certain ways, the content of the description must *open* rather than close the film. These interpretations should *return* the reader to the film's actions, should defer to them in the writing, and make the reader want to revisit the film.[25] As attempts to relay the ineffable, these writings must always bow to the film's power. Thus, when writing about a film, the idea is to point back to the film to let its whole voice be heard[26] – to always defer to the film, pragmatically, indicating that the reader's encounter *will give its own* mix of thinkings. This also relates to the personal nature of filmosophical writing, on the one hand with regard to the recounting of a personal experience, and on the other setting out this experience as one among many.

Everything in a film may well be interpretable, but not every formal moment has meaning, and arbitrariness is always possible. But a film is always thinking, because no matter how arbitrary the filmmaker's intentions may be, the filmgoer still perceives a relation of film to subject, a style of presenting that leads us somewhere in our thinking (I felt I was seeing the character *like this*). It will always be impossible to theorise the meaning of particular films, but filmosophy is concerned with how film *creates* meaning through form (not what those meanings definitely are). This results in writing that does not smother a film, but allows space for film to breathe, to allow gaps and surprises. Interpretation, in the form of meaning-locating (and creation) is only a *possible* follow-up to the encounter with film – 'meaning' is not paramount, it is not the result of every encounter, but only a possible by-product. Filmosophical writing 'continues' the film by reveling in its thinkings and 'opening' the film for others. Never to fix meaning (as if you could), but to *reveal the ingredients* that made the

meaning you might have felt (to reveal the colourings and sounds that made you understand the film in a certain way). These are writings that should not deconstruct or rip open a film's innards, but attempt to reflect the film in power and passion and feeling – listening to a film's thinking, and *pointing* to the power that it has. The attempt should be to continue the film in words, to prolong its experience for the reader through a resonating excursion of writing. Here the rhetoric of this writing becomes so important, in that it must communicate the feeling without closing the experience: it must resound and illuminate when the reader becomes a filmgoer to the film it refers to, the writing growing and thickening as it comes back into contact with the film it bows to.

Filmosophical interpretation – the opinion within the open writing – concentrates on the affective thinking of the film. Take an image of a hand. Filmosophy is obviously less concerned with any gestural or symbolic meaning of the hand in that situation, than how the hand is shown: from which angle, between what images, for how long, in what shade of dark or light or colour, etc. Thus opinion about that thinking revolves around whether the thinking matched the tone of the situation, or how inventive, or how subtle or flagrant the thinking was. Assessing or valuing a film may become a question of integrity: how suitable was the thinking within its forms, how much affective thinking was being created? Was the thinking soft or crude, meditative or calculative? Did it come through the film, or stop it dead in its tracks just in order to flash some wild, ironic thinking? For example, Aleksandr Sokurov's *The Second Circle* brings its thinking towards its ostensible subject, the film feeling death and sadness *through* image: a young man prepares his father's body for a funeral, and at points the film cannot focus beyond the close-up, revealing, feeling the tired mourning of the son. The same director's *Moloch*, about Hitler and Eva Braun, feels its subjects through a dead greyness, a sick coldness.

Beyond these writings, critical filmosophy would be a gradual and conversational process. Filmosophy merely announces the possibilities of film-thought and through collective comparison filmosophers announce their most interesting and coherent interpretations. Filmosophies can be supplemented with whatever interpretive strategies a writer wishes to bring to the film. The film writer can use filmosophical concepts of meaning creation and add a psychoanalytical reading, or relate the film to its context or environment, or propose how the film creates a space for ideological critiques (complete with analyses of actions, plots, sets, motives, and so on). The questions resolve again into whether certain films are interesting, good, beautiful, intelligent… Good and bad, admissible and inadmissible interpretations, are simply judged by any community of filmgoers. The (wider) truth of a film is just the one that we find most interesting or invigorating within this community.

But steering filmosophical writings is the thought of the resultant action on the reader. The concept of the filmind, with its feelings and thinkings, is there to leak a rhetoric that gives us more powerful poetic eyes. Writings are there to help the reader (the next filmgoer) see film as thinking not technique. The point of these filmosophies, the point of performative writing, is to *impact* on the reader, to make him or her feel the effect the film had on the writer. Each filmosophy adds to the reader's mode of attention, providing words through which they then experience future films. In writing about a film our descriptions of its thinkings must be *useful* for the reader – they must communicate the impact we felt, record our experience of the film so as to transform it for others – to renew the experience for those others, to *rejuvenate* the film for the reader. Interpreting film via filmosophy creates a new relationship between film and filmgoer for the reader.[27] The reader will then see the film *with* the original filmgoer's writing, and, if the reader *feels* that the film has changed the writer, then they will view that film in the tone of that writing. The filmosopher's writing communicates concepts that create a new mode of attention. The filmosopher's writing becomes an event, an encounter with film – something that changes the reader, and thus changes the film.

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We involve movies in us. They become further fragments of what happens to me, further cards in the shuffle of my memory, with no telling what place in the future. Like childhood memories whose treasure no one else appreciates, whose content is nothing compared with their unspeakable importance for me.

– Stanley Cavell (1979)[1]

In the last century it might be said that philosophy became filmic and film became philosophical – this chapter aims to look into this meeting of image and writing. Filmosophy is the study of film as thinking, and thus extends into the study of 'philosophical' film-thinking, as well as the philosophy of the filmind and film-thinking. Part of the argument of this book has been that in order to philosophise the thought of film, one must first adequately, practically, work through the thinking of film – to spell-out how film actually might be said to be 'thinking'. It is too easy to just use 'film-thinking' as a premise, and not really show or explain exactly *how* film is thinking. Practically working through examples of film-thought means that when we come to the point of making assertions about the philosophical possibilities of film we can understand the event of filmosophy in a much clearer way. Having traced film-thinking through film forms, examples of film-philosophy (filmosophical films) can be rooted in and expanded through these identifiable forms and actions. As a setting to this imagistic philosophy we can look at the way that philosophy, as a written enterprise, has been gradually attempting to escape its own literal confines, and has steered itself towards the 'imaging' of its problems. So, in this chapter, my argument is that we can trace a line from the reflexive, poetic writing of such philosophers as Nietzsche and Derrida, through the meditative thinking of Heidegger, and the image of thought in Deleuze and others, to arrive at the postmetaphysical thinking of film. That is, at the 'end' of philosophy lies film.

What I am suggesting here is that film offers *another future* for philosophy. Filmosophy is not better than philosophy, but another kind of philosophy – an intuitive,