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Mechanical Creativity in the Shift from the Absolute of German Idealism to *Real* Thinking: Towards a Transcendental Materialism of Film-Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The tendency of film-philosophy to dissolve the boundary between subject and object, materiality and ideality of the sensible and the intelligible, repeats the moment in German Idealism when these boundaries were collapsed in thinking of the Absolute as the *real* of thinking itself – an incomprehension posited within it – invoking “transcendental materialism, as, in large part, an account of the emergence of self-determining, auto-reflexive transcendental subjectivity out of a subjective substance” (Johnston 18). The *real* of this incomprehension was initially proposed by J. G. Fichte in his 1794 *Wissenschaftslehre* as an alien element lodged within the closed loop of self-identity ($I = I$), which, in his 1804 *Wissenschaftslehre*, becomes the generative principle of oneness mediated by pure light, the incomprehension of which is resolved *in principle* while remaining *in fact* as unresolved openness of an *I-We* realizing itself in communal life. By acknowledging the source of generative difference in the self-constitution of the *I-We* as *Grundreflex* – an originary reflex action – we open the apperceiving eye in its potential for creative freedom in engagement with films, which, when taking into account the memorizing of organic machines through which light must pass, becomes mechanical creativity. In practical terms, the genetic principle of pure light must be accounted for from within the cinematic system operating through technical memory materializing the ideations of films in non-cinematic life as the moral imperative of a “should” (*Soll*). Employing Bernard Stiegler’s ciné-mnemotechnical thinking of organic machines, I apply Fichtean insights to one film: Antonioni’s *L’Eclisse* grasped in *real* thinking as a matrix of superpositional relations spreading through the cinematic system in which the film’s memory structure is enmeshed, generating entwinements of local and non-local interactions unfolding in the gap between ideation and materialization through quantum doubling. My aim in invoking the German Idealist moment is to demonstrate that philosophical problems underlying many of the issues facing scholarship in current film-philosophy find their roots within its complex structure. Through careful explication, Idealist concepts and analytical strategies can be applied in contemporary contexts to gain a stronger grasp of the idealist imperative underlying any attempt to undertake a materialist philosophy of film.

KEYWORDS

Film-philosophy, post-Kantian philosophy, Fichte, Stiegler, Simondon, quantum thinking.

Introduction

[1] Presented in the panel “The Idealism of Contemporary Film Theory” at the Screen Studies Association of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand 2022 conference “The Materials of Screen Media,” held online through Massey University, 30th November to 2nd December.
https://www.academia.edu/117250383/The_Idealism_of_Contemporary_Film_Theory_Panel.
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[2] The *Grundreflex* was proposed by J. G. Fichte in 1801-02 correspondence with F. W. J. Schelling (Fichte and Schelling, *Philosophical Rupture* 72).

[3] For the passing of perceptions in the synthesis of subjectivity, see Fichte (F 435-36). For Fichte, perception is not a modal essence *à la* Leibniz but a mode of acting in the world (476, note 68).

[4] For the phenomenal self, see Metzinger (1). Metzinger’s self-model is a one-sided version of the structure of self-consciousness (36-37). In a formal sense, it lacks an “observing” *I*-function (Žižek, *Less* 729) – a noumenal self with capacity to make infinite judgments – for whom the perceiver perceives. It should be noted that the observer function is not omniscient but self-prescient: it observes *itself* as its phenomenal other. For self-observing prescience of the noumenal/phenomenal self dyad, see Fichte (FTP 105-06).

I begin by taking up the challenge set by the conference panel in which a brief version of this paper was presented. [1] The panel set itself the task of investigating how recent tendencies in film and screen media theory call for a film-philosophical materialism concerning the “sensorial rapport or correspondence between the human and non-human bodies which appear on-screen and those found in front of it” (panel abstract). My concern will be to show how the “rapport” arising in-between bodies appearing onscreen and those situated in front of it is a *perception* shared between them, that, when taken independently of either of them, constitutes the ground of what Adrian Johnston calls “transcendental materialism, . . . an account of the emergence of self-determining, auto-reflexive transcendental subjectivity out of a subjective substance” (18). Key here is the status of perception in film experience.

Perception

What is perception? In German Idealist terms, perceptions are modalized distortions of the dynamic flux of non-being conceived as a fundamental reflex of absolute being: a *Grundreflex* [2] generating points of view or stances in the world as *right* – corrected views in light of the “‘self-grounding’ of reason” (Pippin, *Hegel’s Realm* 20), as called for by the Idea realizing itself in finite existence – for instance Fichte’s “radical freedom,” Schelling’s “indivisible remainder,” Hegel’s “concrete universal.” Perceptions pass from one to another in a synthesizing process of inter- or trans- subjectivity [3]: a subject in-the-making self-correcting in the righting of distortions, multi-faceted versions of the truth individuals are called to adopt in free communality with others, without which I could not have an experience as my own in the *contest of reasons* that characterizes right-seeking in the modern world (20-21).

Perceptions are reflexes of *perceptibility*: a functional capacity to see in being seen, requiring a screen apparatus through which the distorting effect of the reflex action can be refracted; that is, corrected by the apparatus, for instance the retinal-complex of the eye or the lens-function of the camera device. As the self-reciprocating capacity to see in being seen, perceptibility entails the “constitutive elements of identity” (Weber 6) in the experience of mediated memory-life, requiring complementary selves: a *phenomenal self* as the perceiver and a *noumenal self* as the observer for whom the perceiver perceives in the act of making something intelligible; that is, meaningful for a rational being. [4] The phenomenal self projects a noumenal self into a *view from nowhere*, and vice versa, the noumenal self projects a phenomenal self into a *view from somewhere* as complementary actions seeking self-completion of *who* this perceiving subject could be. From the position of the phenomenal self, the noumenal self is *felt* as awareness of otherness, while from the position of the noumenal self, the phenomenal self is *observed* as figural activity of the Idea through which right-seeking reason finds its sufficiency of expression. On

these terms, perceptibility is proposed as the functional property of a *trans-sensory body* placed in globalized relations of transindividuation to make the process of being and being seen intelligible to a phenomenal self through a self-correcting screen apparatus in which right-seeking finds points of focus in figurations of the noumenal Idea.

The German Idealist philosophers developed their respective projects out of Kant's Transcendental Deduction and its fundamental principle, the "transcendental unity of apperception" (CPR A 108) as a self-conscious act: an act reflecting on itself in its otherwise possibilities in the perception of objects in which an "intuition of alteration" in their position in time is apperceived (B 292). For Kant, apperception – the spontaneity of the *cogito* as I-think in self-consciousness (B 132) – draws on an already given unity as means for synthesizing disparate perceptions into a unified state, which, in general terms, is the act of "rendering the possibility of a community – of substances as appearances – perfectly comprehensible" (B 293). In transcendental terms, a "community of substances" is self-consciousness generated by an *I-We* dyad coupling inserted into the flux of non-being at a certain point in time, apperceived by individuals as possible members of a trans-sensory communal body metastabilizing through time in a process of self-unification guided by *quid juris* (the question of right) while restrained by *quid facti* (the question of fact) (A 84). The German Idealists took this model of self-righting transindividuation of apperceptions, *contra* Kant who restricted right to formal possibility determined by already given categorical schema, to be a *synthetic process* of self-realization in the world as critical self-perception: the *I* reflecting on itself in an absolute sense, in the nothingness of indeterminate being in which possibility of categorical being must be found on newly discovered ground opened up in ongoing self-reflection as a *continuum* of self-consciously motivated free acts becoming *real*.

Technophany

In following this line of "absolute idealist" reasoning, the transcendental materialism under consideration here seeks self-realization in the ground of *free being*, which, for post-Kantian philosophy, was conceived in its first instance as unconditionally contingent (i.e. without the aid of schematic support), whereas what is called for in reflective thinking in which a screen apparatus is required to refract it, is a grasp of the contingency of free being as *already* conditioned through the technical prosthesis of the *cogito* as an organic machine – a mixture of organic and mechanical laws – where to be human is to have "technical existence" (Hui, *Recursivity* 30). The reality of technics in the existence of human being understood as a *prosthetized* organic machine raises the following question: how to account for the synthesizing capacity of an apperceiving *I* in a transcendental materialist sense when the ground of free being is refracted through the prosthesis of a technical apparatus? To answer this question, we turn briefly to the work of Gilbert Simondon.

Yuk Hui has provided us with supplementary detail on Simondon's thesis on the mode of existence of technical objects with the latter's employment of

the term “technophany,” referring to perceptibility as “the manifestation of technicity” (“*Apropos*” 3). Accordingly, we will say that films, when refracted through the prosthesis of a screen apparatus, are *technophanic objects*: technical objects shining with cinematic *lumen* (technically mediated light) as observed by an *apperceiving* eye inserted into it. Here, we need to distinguish between two kinds of coding: phaneotechnical and cryptotechnical, requiring different models of observation: the former perceptual, the latter mathematical. As cinematized technophanic objects, films are technically informed by hidden code, rendering cryptotechnics non-observable (2). In this paper we will be concerned only with what can be observed *as perceivable* – the phaneotechnical appearance of phantasms (figures) on the screen observed by an apperceiving eye; that is, a *noetic eye* switched to critical self-perception. Schematism (the development of models of reason) thus takes place by way of phaneotechnics (rather than cryptotechnics) as a propaedeutic for clarifying transcendental illusions – false appearances as Kantian things-in-themselves (A 297).

Simondon notes that technophany is “the path through which the technical object regains a place in a culture that ostracizes it” (Hui, “*Apropos*” 3). We take this to mean that, as technophanic objects, films are the cure for false appearance they bear within themselves in which a tendency towards self-annihilation occurs in the fascinating power of screen simulacra, a point made by philosopher of technics Bernard Stiegler with his proposal of the *pharmakon*: a transitional object with potential for either toxic or curative effects on the possibility of life as *spirit* – creative imagination (*What Makes Life* 5 ff.). These observations call us to respond to the following question: how can films as technophanic objects be apperceived as *pharmakons*, curative for the nihilistic tendency of the current technological age obsessed with screen images, the conceivability of which is grounded in the post-Kantian moment of absolute contingency; that is, in the abyss of *radical freedom*?

Fichte’s Circle

In what follows, I undertake an enquiry into the thought of self-annihilation in a critical-philosophical sense, which I enfold into its ciné-mnemotechnical supplement to uncover the *real* ground of films as technophanic objects, where *real* ground is the absolute of thinking where all pathways open at once in the face of utter incomprehension (the abyss radical freedom). To do this I make an initial turn to the post-Kantian philosophy of J. G. Fichte, whose *Wissenschaftslehre* (science of knowledge) is a radicalization of Kant’s Transcendental Deduction prompted by the post-Kantian philosopher’s *decision* to shift the point of focus of the *I*-function – the subject in its abstract form – from *categorical determinacy* in self-reflection, to exposure to *absolute indeterminacy* (pathways open all-ways-at-once) without proper means of support. Having placed the *I*-function as an apperceiving eye in this radically contingent and hence “improper” position, Fichte then proceeds to correct it by generating a rational model to justify the synthesizing of the *I*-function as $I = I$ into a complete philosophical system.

Fichte discovers that, in the process of building his system, self-identity ($I = I$) is susceptible to infinite regress when I try to take hold of myself in an

act of my own thinking, setting in train an “unavoidable circle” (SK 93-94). For Fichte, the unavoidable circle should not remain as reason’s acknowledged limit in the manner of Kantian scepticism but must be wrenched open to admit a “third thing” (242), the *spectre* of alienation which is part of me, for instance the stranger looking back when, momentarily wrenched out of my natural disposition, I look into a mirror at the appearance of myself as “non-I,” the distorted, self-estranging I-figure image, equivalent to Lacan’s hypothetical mirror stage in the formation of the *I*-function through a viewing device: a technical object designed for reflective seeing, wherein the *I*-figure image in the mirror transmogrifies into recognition in which I see myself as “another me” looking back at me (*Écrits* 75). Fichte calls the shock of seeing myself wrenched out of myself *Anstoß* – the inexplicable non-I of my phenomenal self, a spectral *noumenon* whose shocking appearance simultaneously thwarts and provokes me to complete myself in what I *ought* to be; that is, unified in *myself* as a whole being (when, in our mirror example, the moment of shock passes and I see myself no longer falsely distorted but truly as I am – as I “ought” to be, that is, *me* being *me*).

In Fichte’s radicalization of the Transcendental Deduction, self-constitution does not occur through transition (natural emergence) but by means of a *leap*: a boundary shift from mere life (deathliness) to intelligible life in the *real* of “absolute freedom” in breach of natural law (Fichte, SK 262). In film-phenomenal terms, this leap of freedom can be conceived as a *punctum cut* separating the cold, disembodied deadness of onscreen images and the warm, embodied livingness of offscreen reality, such as Roland Barthes identified in his account of the accidental nature of photographic images which becomes apparent when the poignant cut of the “this has been” checks the flow of the *cinematic way* photographic images are apperceived (90); where “he [the figure in the photographic image] is dead and he is going to die” (95). [5] In its presentation of the memory trace of a once-living-and-now-dead human being to my apperceiving eye momentarily wrenched out of its natural disposition (its alignment with the *studium* of generic views), the “analogico-digital” luminance of the *ciné*-photographic image (Stiegler, “Discrete” 152-3) oscillates between death and life across the cut, generating an *irreality* of the figure in which “I observe the horror of an anterior future of which death is the stake” (96). [6] The leap, which, for Fichte, “is not [undertaken] by any law of nature,” is symptomatic of an irrational impulse: a *Grundreflex* releasing perceptual reflexivity from the *locked circle* of the Idea of I = I into an absolute contingency of free being – the “horror” of an anterior future on the cusp of collapse (i.e. without schematic support). [7]

The leap is not something I do as a self-conscious act; rather, the leap occurs *necessarily* to forestall collapse in the process of self-constitution as its own undoing, without which I could not be here at this place where I presently am to speak of it. The leap grounds and ungrounds itself *at once* such that it cannot be apprehended in flight – it “must have” happened. Here we find ourselves moving in a circle in which the leap is both cause and thwarting of collapse, generating an incessantly forestalled moment in which the circle could be completed; that is, when the *I* coincides with itself, an event which, although conceivable, “is not possible in any time,” insofar as coincidence would result in “the complete annihilation of the individual and the fusion of

[5] The photograph is of Lewis Payne, soon to be executed for his attempted assassination of the US Secretary State at the end of the Civil War.

[6] Barthes’s photographic *punctum* is drawn from Sartre’s early work on the imaginary with distinctive Fichtean overtones. The *punctum* effect disturbs the viewer’s relation to the cine-photographic image in the same way that, for Fichte, imagination is thrown back on itself when challenged by *Anstoss* (SK 194), calling for a new synthesis to resolve the “wavering” of the imagination between life and death phases of being and non-being.

[7] For the irrational impulse as a *real* reflex, see Fichte (*Philosophical Rupture* 116-17). For the “locked circle” in Fichte’s own account of the *I*’s self-reflexivity see Pippin (“Fichte’s Alleged” 152). Following Simondon, the leap can also be conceived in quantum terms as “capable of quantum reorganizations [of the individual]” (Simondon, *Individuation* 273).

the latter into the absolute pure form of reason” (SE 143). Coincidence is possible only in an asymptotic sense: approaching degree zero (infinity) but never reaching it.

Quasi-cause

[8] For quasi-cause, see Deleuze (*Logic* 4-6). In this present work, I propose quasi-cause in the hypothetical sense of an “as if,” which can be stated as “an event that will have never happened,” an anterior future of blocked potential required to explain phase-shifts in the complex structures of psycho-social systems in non-transitional terms as sudden, epochal events.

[9] for the retro-logic of the missed encounter, see Lacan, *Seminar Book XI* (69).

[10] It should be noted that Fichte’s original insight is often ascribed to Hegel, for instance see Finkelde (123). The elision of Fichte’s insight as the arche-principle of absolute idealism is an unfortunate consequence of Hegel’s “overpowering shadow” (Henrich 166), and his (Hegel’s) misreading of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre* in his (Hegel’s) *Differenzschrift* as a one-sided subjectivism (Hegel, 133).

[11] Stiegler describes the ought-to-be of desire as the “locked in” situation of consciousnesses as “programmed consumers” in their *having* to desire in ways already prescribed for them (Stiegler, TT3 4). Locked in desire is desire fascinated by the *simulacra* – the false appearance of the screen image.

The leap is an *effect* of the decision that must have been made as the *quasi-cause* of self-unification, [8] which is my phenomenal self releasing itself from noumenal otherness in one fell swoop as a *free act* of self-determination in the realization that *I am free* – a self-reflexive action attempting to get behind itself in which its failure to do so *is* its success. Avoiding self-annihilation simply means finding myself finitely free but incompletely so (since lacking self-completion in the fusion of I = I) with the burden of *having to be* in the infinite demand that I *ought to be*. In its status as “failed success,” the quasi-cause – the free act of an autonomous self – must be an event that happens in not happening: an event that *will have never happened* (an anterior future of otherwise possibility), projected in the gap between the phenomenality of its failure and the noumenality of its success as a *missed encounter*. [9] As Dieter Henrich has said in his seminal exposition of Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness, in realizing that I am free, “a gap, perhaps an abyss, opens up between the ‘Self’ and what makes the self intelligible. From now on philosophy’s task is to traverse this gap” (23). The task is to traverse this gap. Yes, but for what purpose? In answer: to reveal the quasi-cause: the reason for my free existence as something that must have happened in not happening and, in so doing, make it real as something “intelligible.” Realizing the quasi-causal status of the split self as the retro-activated ground condition of self-consciousness is the kernel-thought of Fichte’s original insight, the arche-principle of absolute idealism and possibly of modern philosophy itself. [10]

Retraction

How might the self-instituting quasi-cause work in phaneotechnical film experience: the experience of a perceiving subject? To answer this question we turn to Stiegler’s critique of cinematic consciousness which includes a phaneotechnical analysis of the *I-function* *perceiving itself* in a process of becoming cinematic (TT3 61): a self-retracting negativity set to work in the apperception of film phenomena. For Stiegler, becoming cinematic is a two-way process in which I am drawn into the phantasmic world of onscreen images as the “ought-to-be” of my fascinated desire for false appearance [11] while simultaneously *retracting* who I am becoming in the spectral nothingness that these onscreen images turn out to be, reclaiming my living embodied self for whom I would be *otherwise*. What is retraction? I propose retraction to be a form of disavowal where, in a single gesture, something of myself is offered and taken back as means of communicating its denial (Freud). As disavowal, retraction destabilizes the dialectics at work in the exchange between giving and taking back, opening up *possibility otherwise* in which the *I-function* operates to preserve itself for the perceiving eye to see something offered as intelligible. In a retractive gesture, an exchange does and does not take place,

the *irreality* of which must be observed by switching from my “natural” disposition to what I see to my apperceptive alter-capacity to see otherwise; that is, by leaping to the other side of myself in a “non-transitional displacement” (Bersani and Dutoit 4), to see myself seeing otherwise.

To put this in Fichtean materialist terms: the positing of the *I*-function as $I = I$ (self-complete in who I ought to be) is retracted by wrenching my bodily self free from the grip of the ought-to-be, [12] “not through a *transition*, but by means of a *leap*” (SK 262); that is, by leaping into the alter-prospect of a hypothetical “should” (SKN 125) as otherwise possibility. In having leapt into the otherwiseness of an alter-prospect, I find myself having already heeded the call to reason of a *noumenal self*: the ideal of who I should be as other to the *spurious who* – the who I ought to be – seen in the false image of its spectral reality (i.e. when seen through the “switched” view of apperceptive insight). To retract myself from the ought-to-be of the spurious who is to “de-liquidate” its false *Schein* – its illusion of authority – to make concrete what had been liquidated in film’s reproductive techniques, which is, in Walter Benjamin’s terms, the value of real, material life (104). [13] When viewed from the abstract position of the noumenal self, retraction has the effect of de-liquidating the illusion of desire, and, vice versa, when viewed from the concrete stance of the phenomenal self, retraction has the rebound effect of projecting a quasi-cause as symptom of what lies behind desire as liquidated nothingness. To gain the full effect of their self-affirming complementary actions, these two ways of seeing must be apperceived *at once*, in which case the worrying symptom dissolves in the *real* of the problem thus arising in the concrete situation, one set right by the retroactivation of the quasi-cause rendered intelligible in real, material life.

Fichte’s moral principle of *should* (*Soll*) as the summons to reason “otherwise” in the face of a categorical ought-to-be (SKN 125) is motivated by a *refusal* – a retraction from – the dead hand of the drive mechanism of noetic self-determination, which, in his *ethics* is called “material freedom” (SE 132) conceived in terms of a counter-drive, and which in his *aesthetics* is called the “aesthetic” drive (“Spirit” 81). The aesthetic drive is the counter-drive to the “natural” drive of the mechanism (the drive to determinacy in habits and conventions) in which an apperceiving eye is inserted into “images flowing from all sides” (80). [14] In its counter-wise action, the aesthetic drive is an unproductive excess seeking only to satisfy itself in the free play of images projected outwardly in a *poietic* line of flight restrained by, yet exceeding, the natural drive, as “purposeless feeling” (83). In a Simondonian twist, we can conceive the complementary actions of drive/counter drive in terms of *morphogenesis* in which “interperceptive tension” (*Individuation* 271) of pre-individual being generates an arrhythmic “falling out of step with itself” (“Genesis” 300). In these terms, Fichte’s drive-counter/drive becomes the generative power of *auto-affecting intermittence* in which the apperceiving eye continually flickers in and out of phase with itself in incessant self-correction as its ecstatic way of seeing.

[12] “All sensory pleasure relates to the body as an organization. The body as articulation *as* such, as in *instrument of freedom*” (Fichte, SE 124).

[13] Liquidation is the absorption of the material values of uniquely traditional ways of life into the cinematic formats of “mass existence” (Benjamin 104). To de-liquidate is to reclaim the potential of material values out of their liquidated forms in technical reproduction.

[14] In his 1801 *Wissenschaftslehre*, Fichte proposes self-consciousness as “an activity in which an eye is inserted” (Henrich 31).

Mnemotechnesis

In thermodynamic terms, the aesthetic drive is the resistive force of *negentropy* set to work in the metastabilizing processes of desire, where, as Fichte has said, “life floats on the surging waves of aesthetic feeling” (“Spirit” 84). The aesthetic surge is the outreaching of the “*creative power of imagination*” (F 193): a primary function of *noesis* (noetic reflexivity) as self-creativity (*autopoiesis*). In this present work, what I am calling *mechanical creativity* is the aesthetic surge of auto-affective intermittence carried by a phanotechnically induced, apperceiving *noetic eye* inserted into the flow of images, which, in view of the mnemotechnical processes through which the complex of drives operates in the memory structure of films, becomes a capacity for *looking awry*. Looking-awry is the otherwise way of seeing enabled by unproductive excess, which is perceptual reflexivity releasing itself from the system-control of *mnemotechnesis* (technical memory-making). In following the poietic line of flight thus projected, the noetic eye leaps in and out of phase (falls in and out of sync) with its technical support as the *ecstasis* of release thwarting the drive mechanism without which phanotechnicized screen memories could not come to life.

Mnemotechnesis is proposed by Stiegler in his “organology” of technical reason, drawn from Canguilhem’s biologically informed proposal of an *organic machine* (Canguilhem 76): a technicized mode of noetic being in pursuit of life to be lived by non-technical means, requiring new ways of being human as “non-inhuman being” (Stiegler, TN 64). This new form of non-inhuman noetic life, which Stiegler calls “neganthropy” (92), is a resistive-creative mode of being retracting itself from becoming enframed in mnemotechnical systems in which *anamnesis* (endosomatic noetic memory) is threatened with liquidation in *hypomnesis* (exosomatic technical memory). In cinematic terms and keeping in mind the Fichtean leap as phase-shifting retraction (tearing away, release) of the quasi-cause from its forgotten reality as a missed encounter – an event that will have never happened – I propose perceptual reflexivity of neganthropy as looking awry of an exosomatized, apperceiving eye inserted into a cinematized image flow (TT3 9-10): a metastabilizing process of self-correction in which the noetic reflex sustains itself (avoids self-annihilating memory loss) by leaping across the gap between *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis* in the free play of *poiesis* as neganthropic creativity.

Generally speaking, our concern will be with how neganthropic life – the noetic individual’s capacity to refuse the *ought-to-be* of the organic machine’s functional efficiency – is sustained in becoming cinematic of its quasi-cause as free-play creativity of *noesis* guided by a *should*: the perceiving eye switched to apperceiving right-seeking in the drive complex of films. The should is an alter-prospect released from the ought-to-be of the drive to efficiency in the film’s capacity to effect fluent story-telling as *negative capability* without which nothing positive could come to light on the blank screen in its pure potential. In a creative sense, the should becomes a challenge to the ought-to-be in free play as a *sovereign event* of the film’s right to be (to be discussed in section 3).

Sections

The question to be considered in these sections relates to the problem we have set for a transcendental materialist theory of film experience, which, in light of Fichte's insight, must be renamed *quasi-transcendental* inasmuch as the failure of the *I* to transcend its own finitude *is* its success. As a transcendental failure, consciousness remains incomplete and divided in itself: a negative capability which we find in Stiegler's discussion of cinematic time in Chapter 2 of *Technics and Time, 3* where I find *myself* reading the following statement: "I negate myself in making myself cinematic" (TT3 61). Here, the self-negating "saying" of the *I*-function invokes a paradox: in making myself cinematic, that is, by allowing myself to fall in step with the memory structure of a film, I must also fall out of step with myself in what I am becoming (auto-affecting intermittence). This means that, to continue to be *who I need to be* – myself as a thinking, judging, reasoning individual – I must thwart becoming cinematic by retracting myself from *who I am becoming*: myself as part of the ciné-mnemotechnical system through which the memory structure of the film operates, with no capacity to individuate (i.e. to think for myself). Falling in and out of step with myself is a symptom of *retraction* – a reflex action built into the cinematic recurrence of film as means of transcending it while remaining inside its flow of memory-images. In the *arrhythmic* process of retraction (falling in and out of step with myself), I am also gaining sufficient insight into the self-enframing mechanism of the film's memory structure, its power to liquidate real memory in the false memory of *technesis*, to retract myself from it. It follows that retraction *is itself* the task of critique as defence against memory liquidation in becoming cinematic. In the following sections, I employ this critical-retractive operation of apperceptive thinking-seeing otherwise in the film's negative potential in terms of three focal points: *real* thinking, the quantum dimension and material freedom, each of which is drawn from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*: a dialectical synthesis or "synthetic procedure" (SK 111), generating structural relations of self-consciousness through self-instituting retro-acts of thinking (*Tathandlung*); in practical terms, a deconstructive attempt to unlock the locked circle of $I = I$ while remaining within the boundaries of transcendental idealism set by the philosopher him/herself in retro-acts of decisiveness; that is, by way of a *philosophical decision* in the face of the *real* as absolute incomprehension. The final section will apply concepts derived from these three focal points to a critical analysis of Antonioni's *L'Eclisse* (1962) guided by the transcendental materialist principle of non-coincidence installed into the memory-structure of films as a series of missed encounters.

1: *Real* Thinking

The question of becoming cinematic calls for an account of who the individual must be to thwart the lure of the screen phantasm. In answer, this individual must be one capable of critical insight gained by thinking both with the drive towards becoming cinematic and against it to effect a release from the double bind of the drive's reciprocating actions. Such a capacity is required for noetic beings to form ideations of their own in practical life,

without which thinking would become dogmatic (capable of thinking no other way but the way one *ought* to think: according to normative principles). In this section, I develop an account of this two-way thinking in transcendental philosophical terms, initiated by Fichte in his 1794 *Wissenschaftslehre* in relation to the double bind constituted in the shift from $A = A$ to $I = I$ in the process of self-identification: a self-reciprocating superposition phase-shifting between the *a priori* of formal reason and the *a posteriori* of its practical application; between the *noumena* of possible being and the *phenomena* of actual existence, constituting a dialectical synthesis “that is at once *a priori* . . . and *real*” (Breazeale 52).

This kind of “real thinking” (49) was first proposed by Salomon Maimon in his sceptical response to Kant’s categorical critique of human thinking, where, as Daniel Smith has argued, “the value of knowledge and morality are never placed in question” (29). Instead, Maimon provides a “*genetic* account of knowledge and morality,” employing Leibnizian differential relations arising in the imagination as, in Maimon’s words, ideal objects “flowing [out of] *a priori* ideas of reason,” where “the particular [law] by which an object arises, or its type of differential, makes it into a particular object” (Maimon 22). Fichte adopts Maimon’s tactic of real thinking as *real* thinking to think the categories and their object not one after the other but both *at once* (EPW 288), thereby avoiding invocation of a transcendental illusion: a noumenal reality remaining unaccounted for in the thinking process itself. *Real* thinking is real thinking shifted into its supplemental condition as “real thinking,” where the quotation marks announce thinking as self-deluded: a sleight-of-hand harbouring a deceptive truth – the *noumenon* as a true/false figure-image (Maimon 81).

To grasp what is at stake in Fichte’s *real* thinking, we need to frame his self-positing $I = I$ in terms of what I propose to call *genetic supplementation*, where, as Kant had argued in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 132), the apperceptive *I think* is always accompanied by an “I am” – a “primordial fact occurring in [the *a priori* of] our mind” (Fichte, SK 196) and at the same time in the *a posteriori* of our material existence as moral beings responding to an ought-to-be (the categorical imperative). In practical terms, *real* thinking is the gesture of retraction built into one’s own “saying” of an ought-to-be – that I ought to be in having said I am, generating supplemental logic triggered by the use of actual or implied quotation marks: I am as “I am” (99). In summary, *real* thinking is a self-retracting performance of the *I*-function which Fichte calls *Tathandlung* – the deed and the deed enacted grasped at once [SK 97] – disavowing the absolutist consequences of positing $A = A$ as $I = I$ in the Idea as an *a priori* law, “for how can there be present in the human mind a mere law without any application?” (EPW 289). Self-retraction calls into question the ought-to-be as an obligation we must refuse, a corrective to the delusional thinking of dogmatism, which, in absolute idealism, is called *right* (*Recht*). In Fichtean terms, relations of right are irreducible to ethical norms that may arise from them. Rather, right as *Recht* takes the character of “proto-rights” (Bernstein 185): practical exigencies generated by the self-realization of an *I-We* summoned by reason into “free reciprocal efficacy” with others (FNR 33) in “creating a community of rational beings standing in relations of right” (Wood 256). Proto-rights operate as a praxis for correcting deluded

thinking to ensure rightful standing on *real* ground in which communality in free being can take effect in the contest of reasons where right could also be wrong.

Fichte's demonstration of the genetic supplementation of $I = I$ in relations of proto-rights circumvents Kant's self-reflective model of apperception which takes for granted its unity as a fact of self-consciousness, proposing instead a performative model of the I-function as *Tathandlung*: an auto-positional act which is simultaneously a *doing* and a *deed*. *Tathandlung* embraces *itself* in complementarity between the act of positing and the state-of-being enacted in which "we cannot yet say precisely whether this is an act or a state" (FTP 192). [15] The act of auto-positioning superposes I on I, generating quantum indeterminacy – a non-state of *irreality* – in which act and state are said to *consist* in dyadic coupling. By invoking the condition of quantum indeterminacy with regard to the I's *irreal* status (is it an act or a state?), Fichte dissolves the noumenal mind into its dyadic potential as a problem to be resolved in *real* thinking, acted out in its self-realization *as if* I were thinking, thus avoiding dogmatic imposition of consciousness as a "thing-in-itself" (SK 12-13), but in so doing, leaves his *Wissenschaftslehre* suspended in an abyss of non-being with no ground other than itself for support. This insufficiency is, however, corrected in the 1804 Berlin *Wissenschaftslehre* in which ground missing in Jena period versions is found in the fourth lecture, where Fichte introduces the concept of pure light: an immanence manifesting everything I see as self-generating *throughness* which, in its archaic originariness, becomes the "sole principle of both being and the concept" (SKN 43). [16] Pure light is absolute immanence in which the insightful truth-seeing of an apperceiving eye – the "subjective eye" – is enfolded (117).

[15] In quantum physics terms, the relation between act and state is defined by "complementarity," a founding principle of the Copenhagen Interpretation, which, as its preeminent founder Niels Bohr had said, "bears a deep-going analogy to the general difficulty in the formation of human ideas, inherent in the distinction between subject and object' . . . concerning complementarity within the history of post-Kantian philosophy" (Plotnitsky, *Epistemology* 29, section in single quotes attributed to Bohr).

[16] Pure light is not to be understood as something carried by a material substrate but is itself the *quale* (quality) of that which is known in its immediate manifestness (SK 149).

Pure light pre-exists the self-positing of the $I = I$ as emanating "oneness" (41) in the Heraclitean "lightning flash" of everything I see (48), manifesting appearance through which the dyadic structure of $I = I$ as *Tathandlung* must pass in finding its true ground. Here we are shifting from a monism in which being-originarily-one is said in many different ways, to an antimonism: "a structure of intricately related *co-original* moments that collaborate in the constitution of subjectivity" (Zöller 73). On this score, *real* thinking becomes the I-function's *saying* of genetic supplementation as a manifold of "I's" in "self-differentiating oneness" (Fichte, SKN 57), where saying retracts as it participates in our collective sayings from a particular point of view; where retraction is self-critical potential built into a dynamic *I-We* apparition: the figure-image of a Yes-No Janus Face becoming real in which the Yes-face and the No-face as "co-original moments" of the apparition's being what it could be are played out as true/false in *life death* switching; an intermittent action projected into an abyss of freedom which Fichte calls "death's lair" or "death at the root" (SKN 111-12). In Fichte's own telling of the oneness of being which he "says" in terms of the hypothetical "should" (125) – to be distinguished from the categorical "ought" of his earlier telling in the 1794 *Wissenschaftslehre* – oneness is said to generate itself in a dyadic structure in which unification is sustained by the multiplication of dividuated ones (a^1, a^2, a^3, \dots) in the amplification of a "through" (87). For Fichte, "through" (*Durch*) is a mediating immanence of *quale* in the *quanta* of self-differentiating being, switching between the light of reason and dark of unreason as life is to death.

2: The Quantum Dimension

A productive outcome of Fichte's "strong correlationism" (Meillassoux 37) in which the transcendental *I* superposes *on itself* is that it is both cause of and solution to the problem of circularity in transcendental thinking: *cause* insofar as it triggers a locked circle; *solution* in that it passes through this circle, unlocking its phases "into the living exhibition of the concept" (SKN 74); that is, by making itself *real* in the concept of the individual who is thinking it as a certain quality of being – a veritable existence that exists *at once* both here *in me* and also elsewhere *in others*. By superposing on itself, the *I* becomes both unified and divided in its being: a dyad couple doubling itself "through" (*Durch*) the principle of pure light (a^1, a^2, a^3, \dots), the arche-origin manifesting everything I see radiating the quality of "oneness" (*quiddity*) in various quantities of self-differentiation. At once – in the illuminating strike of a lightning flash – a state is said to exist in dyadic relation with all the states it could be, located in the undulating folds of a quantum field thus projected: a transcendental field of future anteriorly *possible* states of being where "what might have happened continues to echo in what actually happens as its virtual background" (Žižek, *Disparities* 49).

In quantum terms, the spreading of the *I*-principle in dyad doubling occurs in non-local interaction: the capacity of a being to be "here" at one place (h^1), and "here" at another place (h^2), as positings superposed on one another: simultaneous moments of being-together-apart which could also be in other places as well (h^3, h^4, h^5, \dots). The act of drawing attention to such moments collapses the quantum field in an event manifesting a *remnant state* of one of its many ways of being as *right* on this occasion with regard to the becoming all ways at once of the dyad couple as ontologically incomplete. To account for the rationality of non-local interaction in such *quantum events*, Euclidian logic – the logic of the excluded middle – will not do. We need a special kind of non-Euclidian logic in which the excluded middle remains as exception to the law of non-contradiction, as if the collapse had and had not happened: a paradoxical *real* retroactivating itself into existence as quasi-cause. Retro-activation induces quantum doubling in which the *quanta* h^1 and h^2 are placed in complementarity with one another in a quantum event amplifying itself through the *quale* of a quantum field which in transitions of multiple phasings "says" the oneness of being. Following François Laruelle, whose notion of dyad doubling as two "in-One" (*Principles* 32) is drawn directly from Fichte's *Tathandlung* as superposition of $I = I$ (*Anti-Badiou* 120), film-philosopher John Ó Maoilearca proposes that non-Euclidian or "paraconsistent" logic can be employed to make sense of the saying of the oneness of being in *real* states without succumbing to logical explosiveness in a trivial logic "where *everything* said is true" (128).

To make his case, Ó Maoilearca distinguishes between two modes of being of any given substance: being coherent and being consistent in which the former refers to the unity of form, whereas the latter relates to the para-consistency of substance, the way the substance "holds itself together – its thickness or viscosity. Cinema too has a variable consistency, how it edits together ("stands still, together"), holding itself together in the immanence of quantum affectivity as *anti-substance* – the dyadic otherness of the *quale* of a

[17] In Ó Maoilearca's Bergsonian account of cinematic substance as non-dialectical motion (130), the consistency of substance must also effect its counter-tendency as a "monism with dual tendencies" (Jankélévitch 2015: 144, trans. mod.) – an anti-substance in which the negativity of the positive is mixed into the *durational time* of any given being including that of cinematic objects such as films, without which the film would freeze into pure substance as a motionless dead thing. It should be noted that Bergson's concept of durational time is not Hegelian but Fichtean. As Kolkman has argued, Bergson applied Fichte's principle of *Tatbestandlung* to his idea of duration (*durée*) to get around the problem of determination in the sciences (194). Thus, paraconsistent logic, as applied to films by Ó Maoilearca, while explicitly Bergsonian, is implicitly Fichtean.

[18] For projection through a gap, see Fichte (SKN 119). For Fichte, projection through a gap is an irrational leap, generating incessant phase-change in the apperceiving eye's mode of perceiving objects as knowing's pathway to inner truth (insight).

quantum field on the cusp of collapse. [17] In its *fictionalizing* of the world of objects and action, cinema "edits together" heterogeneous elements by superposing the act of fictionalizing onto the fictional event, thereby generating phase-change between the inner domain of objects and its exteriorization in figures appearing on the screen, *rendered paraconsistent by the editing process itself*. In synthetic *a priori* terms, film editing can be understood as disjunctive synthesis in the exercise of practical reason: film praxis conceptualized in terms of consistency of filmic anti-substance in the meta-stabilization of image flow rather than in the coherence of form, as the illusory reality of film acted out *a posteriori*, which, for Stiegler, is the "cinematic effect" generated by the Kuleshov Experiment as the "very principle of cinema" (IT3 15).

In terms of Stieglerian *ciné-mnemotechnesis* (the cinematized memory structure of films), being consistent (as distinct from being coherent) means sustaining paraconsistency in a *matrix* of local and non-local relations mixed together in the *play* between the endosomatic innerness of anamnestic memory and its hypomnesic exosomatization manifesting onscreen in cascading quantum events in which technophanic figures appear and disappear as incomplete traits of a oneness that, in its manifold ways of being, remains elusively *irreal* (real and not real; being and non-being; true and false). Analysis proceeds by following poietic lines of flight (vector lines) playing themselves out in waves of creativity through the disjunctive enmeshment of *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis* as a cinematic machine falling out of sync with itself in a gap that refuses to close. Projection through the gap generates *autopoiesis*: looped movements of spacetime becoming in ideational thought-acts figured out by the negative capability of an apperceiving eye inserted into a film's memory structure, as if the film were *thinking for itself*. [18]

3: Material Freedom

For Fichte, material freedom is a question of proto-rights stemming from the trans-sensory body affected by a reciprocating drive complex in which a self-determining subject in-the-making acts out free being through the drives. The ethical dimension of this process is proposed in his *System of Ethics* as a refusal arising in the "natural drive" of formalized mechanisms for producing identity structures (SE 132) – the drive to self-completion that obliges us to think *coercively* through the categorical command that I *ought* to be. As refusal of the coercive ought-to-be, material freedom is "torn away from the power of the drive – that is, by assuming that it could also not obey the drive but resist it" (134). In not obeying the drive's demand that I be as I ought to be, material freedom enacts thinking otherwise of *noesis* calling for a sufficiency of reason for what *should* appear: the "implicit truth" (SKN 91) of infinite life manifesting in a *finite living image* that "holds and sustains itself," and which, in quantum thinking terms, would be the remnant state of a quantum field on the cusp of collapse. In the aesthetic dimension of the drives, the refusal of the natural drive releases *poiesis*: the free play of images apperceived by a noetic eye flickering in and out of phase with its prosthesis while restrained by the ethical demand of what should be, appearing to the eye in a process of right-seeking self-correction as a finite living image in-the-making. Through

restraint, free play steadies the remnant state in its tendency to collapse, in a metastabilizing image flow as speculative reason *in flight*.

Fichteian right to think for oneself (*Recht*) as refusal of coercive right correlates with Lyotard's idea of *sovereign film* as the film's affirmation of its right to be by refusing the formal ordering of narration ("Sovereign Film"): a condition of material freedom which he calls *acinema*. Acinema manifests in the thwarting effect of "mnemic instances" ("Acinema" 358), momentary hesitations in the flow of narrational time in which action is checked (*Anstoß*), opening up other times as times not told in this film ("Sovereign Film" 66): the film's anterior future blocked by its current temporal reality. In the quantum dimension of acinema, the negativity of these others times is a projection otherwise – a vector of becoming surging in the undulations of a quantum field of all times awaiting discretization into one of its states in an image *held fast by the camera*, its "intervention" in the flow of narration having triggered the field's collapse in what stubbornly remains ("holds and sustains itself"): a *persistence* of the film's imagistic anti-substance holding fast the current situation which is simply what I am seeing on the screen. In having survived the collapse, the film remains in a remnant state of one of its many ways of being as sovereign to itself: a *gift* to the future in which the Idea of film persists, "continually call[ing] for new films" (70).

In the *durational time* of the film's immaterial persistence, paraconsistency is sustained through *visual linkage* (Balázs 68): the "interpolation" of local and non-local interaction mixed together in crossed lines of action intersecting at *acinematic moments* in which one of many possible moments is actualized – quickened with auto-affectivity – in a quantum field of spacetime becoming. By intervening in the system that sustains such moments in their randomized possibility, the *act* of interpolation opens a new pathway in which a quantum event, the one happening now, becomes real *for me* in the forces at work in all of them in a *Grundreflex* generating quantum doubling.

4: Doublings

In this section we bring our considerations to a close by applying the concepts discussed in the previous sections in a symptomatic demonstration of dyad doubling in Antonioni's *L'Eclisse* (1962). The demonstration will be guided by an apperceiving eye: my own observation of the film's figural ideations (onscreen actions guided by slippage in the character/automation split), [19] where observation is switched from objective to *real* thinking: critical insight gained by seeing-thinking these actions both ways at once (as character actions and as figural gestures) in my becoming cinematic; that is, as I *retract* myself from what I am seeing-becoming unfolding on the screen. Symptomatic demonstration is analysis that, by way of retraction, participates in the ideation of the *phenomenon* under analysis, where the quantum doubling under consideration is reproduced in the analysis itself as the quasi-cause of what must have happened given these conditions of possibility, set forth in my explanatory discourse; that is, rendered intelligible in this article you are presently reading in the hope of making concretely *real* (open to your critical judgment) what is otherwise conceptually abstract.

[19] The character/automation split is the split between the inner life of the characters (*anamnesis*) and its exteriorization in the automation of onscreen action as figural gestures carried by technical support (*hypomnesis*). Slippage is the play between character and automation guiding onscreen action through visual connections stitched together in the *cut of technique* as interpolating film-craft (Mules 129).

In quantum thinking terms, a symptomatic demonstration is an account of the quantum field in which the *accounting* of the account generates the field's values relative to the point of view taken at the moment of taking it, in the same way that in quantum physics experiments a quantum event is triggered by an act of measuring as “interference” at which point the system collapses (decoheres) into one of its states and “remembers” all the other states the system could be at “any other time” (Smolin 19, 31). However, it should be noted that an act of remembering is already the memory of something forgotten: the repression of dyadic otherness in the event of having a point of view. It necessarily follows that the quantum event in which I have a point of view must also be a repression of the otherness of what I am remembering insofar as it allows me to have this point of view at the expense of all other possible views, as an “irreversible change” in the quantum field's randomized state of being (156). That is, a quantum event is an *unconscious* in which *self-consciousness* arises in the *durational time* of the act of observation in which a point of view is had as *my* view.

L'Eclisse has been chosen for its prominence in Stiegler's own “interference” in the transcendental field of cinematic time, when he decides to locate his analysis at a certain point in the first stock exchange scene in which a public announcement calls for a halt to trading in memory of the death of one of its members. In this moment of “death-time . . . inserted into condensed cinematic time like an eclipse” (TT3 30-31), *hypomnesis* eclipses *anamnesis* at memory degree zero such that all onscreen activity ceases, at which point the film's mechanism for generating cinematic memory collapses in a death-time seizure, indicating “that without this coincidence there is cinema, and that cinema, which brings many such coincidences into juxtaposition, has no need of them” (31). In Lyotard's terms, in such “acinematic” moments, the film is retracting what it offers, becoming sovereign to itself in a founding gesture – the *real* ground of the cinematic effect as its arche-principle.

Following the arche-principle as symptom of collapse in a retractive event in which the film persists as sovereign to itself, I propose an account of the event Stiegler describes as follows. By forcing *hypomnesis* to eclipse (coincide with) *anamnesis* through the interpolating effect of film-craft (visual linkage), the director has triggered a phase-shift in the film's mode of being insofar as I have observed it happening which is also a phase-change *in my point of view*, switching from seeing onscreen action as direct narration in which the juxtaposition of such coincidences is simply routine, to the state of an exception in which the expected coincidence fails due to its “structural impossibility” (Tupinambá and Yao 53). Here we are dealing with what Gabriel Tupinambá following Lacan calls the “law of non-coincidence” in which the structural impossibility of coincidence is factored into the memory structure of the film as its self-generating arche-principle. In other words, Antonioni is showing us that attempts to make story-telling (*hypomnesis*) eclipse story-told (*anamnesis*) will *necessarily* fail, the proof of which is the fact of the film in remaining there on the screen as evidence of this failure *as I perceive it to be*. Had coincidence actually happened, there would be nothing to see since *anamnesis*, having no free time of its own to be what it needs to be, would annihilate itself in the very instance of its appearing. And since I do see something on the screen,

the coincidence must not have happened in a “missed encounter” (Lacan, *Seminar Book XI* 69). The fact that something remains of what ought not be, had there been true coincidence, suggests that there must always be a gap between *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis* to allow events recalled from the past to spring forth in a false coincidence *as if* inner memory and technical support had coincided. That which springs forth – the phantasmic reality of an on-screen hallucination projected through the gap – is symptom or quasi-cause of the ciné-mnemotechnical system remembering a *falsely* created past: a past that “will have never happened” echoing quantum connectivity in the “unconscious” of the film – its many ways of being, blocked by decoherence (collapse) into this way of being, the one operating now, as I perceive it to be.

In the following analysis I will identify acinematic moments of death-time as instances of dyad doubling in which a mixture of local and non-local interactivity binds itself into the relation between two characters – Piero and Vittoria – constituting a dyad couple whose still-born romance is acted out in a series of encounters in which their blissful union as the romantic couple of film melodrama fails to happen in the gap between *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis*; a gap in which the arche-principle of non-coincidence effects all onscreen action. The forces of attraction and repulsion at work in the film are made manifest by the transformation of the characters’ inner lives (*anamnesis*) into onscreen audio-visual gestures (*hypomnesis*), such that it can be said that actions of one character effect actions of the other character whether apart or together “in the absence of an underlying causal order” (Plotnitsky, “Demons” par. 6). The commingling of action and counter-action generates “correlations *echoing* quantum correlations” in the memory structure of the film. If apart, the forces working through them draw each character together; if together, the forces push each character apart.

An example of the “apart” type occurs when both characters, independently of each other, perform an unexpected reverse movement: when Piero, seized by an impulse to change his life’s direction, starts driving his car backwards at breakneck speed, disappearing into the awaiting void of offscreen space, and when Vittoria, gripped by apprehension in the face of a threatening void when on a night-time stroll, starts walking backwards to avoid its deadly embrace. His projection into the void is countered by her avoidance of it: a non-causal interaction echoing quantum relations through the film. An example of the “together” type occurs when the two characters meet at Vittoria’s apartment block in a Romeo and Juliet style scene: he standing on the street below looking up at the window of her apartment, and she at her apartment window looking down at him, both engaging in courtship banter as a prelude to the romantic union they both desire but will never achieve (insofar as the forces drawing them together are also pulling them apart). In the film’s gift to us of an event that will have never been, a state of romantic bliss *has and has not happened*.

Let us now turn our attention from forces to actions to establish how they act out the force effecting them (i.e. how they are figured on the screen). Take the first type of action: the backward motion of the two characters that bears no causal relation to either action but to a non-causal relation in the

dyad structure of an ideational couple they are simultaneously becoming (drawn together) and unbecoming (pulled apart) in the quantum time of the film. Here we should see this backward motion not simply as something that did not need to happen but rather as a *movement of release*: a recoil action inserted into the film to communicate negativity in the drive to order, where negativity is rooted in the *Grundreflex* of ideations phase-switching between life and death, a self-erasing figure-ground alterity through which all onscreen action springs forth. The *Grundreflex* of the film's negativity is its anti-substance doubling back across itself in a quantum field where non-local interaction is localized in the film's causal reality as figure/ground switching according to the positional logic of "life death" (Derrida, *Life Death* 2).

Now, let us take the second type of action: the action of characters in local interaction as a *movement of capture* in which a causal relation between them binds them together. In terms of the complementarity between these two forces, we can say that non-local interaction "completes" local interaction by mixing forces of capture and release through interpolating film-craft (visual linkage), forming a knot of causal and non-causal actions holding the film together in the torsion thus produced as the genetic principle of cinematic life, which, in Fichte's terms, is "projection through a gap" (SKN 119), and which, in Stieglerian terminology, becomes the gap opened up between *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis* to sustain the "should be" of the film: its refusal of its ought-to-be in non-coinciding with its own memory structure (TT3 31). The should be of the film is its right-to-be as sovereign to itself acted out in the remnant state of its onscreen presence, which we proposed here in terms of Bergsonian *durational time*: time passing through a quantum event of multiple times compressed into a time-image of the past as "a past that *begins to have been always possible*" (Bergson 82, emphasis added).

In my symptomatic demonstration which, as an act of intervention in the quantum field, retro-acts (retracts) what must have happened in an explanatory account of the film's memory structure, I take the perspective of *real* thinking – thinking both with and against the drive to order – by locating myself in the gap between *hypomnesis* and *anamnesis*; that is, in the disjuncture between backward-resistive and forward-directed motion in which an uncoupling is taking place, seeking reconnection in the future anterior of potential time sustaining itself by borrowing from a past that has and has not happened; in Bergson's terms, a past that "begins to have been always possible" to which these movements are indebted to avoid system collapse. Reconnection is effected by synthesizing actions in the durational time of the film such that the slide into entropic death-time is thwarted, thus buying sufficient time in neganthropic release for future onscreen action without which the mnemonic system sustaining cinematic life would collapse on itself in catastrophic self-seizure. In durational time, the moment of "beginning to have been always possible" branches out all ways at once except this way, where "this way" depends on my decision to take one path rather than another, for instance by following the uncoupling of the car-driver dyad presented to me when I see Piero driving his car backwards, then later when local circumstances tell me that the car has been stolen by a drunken man. The dyad is uncoupled and then recoupled in a Simondonian magical moment (*On the Mode* 178) with the appearance of the drunken man stepping

forth from behind a tree whose trunk is far too narrow to hide his body, a sleight-of-hand of the Kuleshov Effect manifesting a *false appearance of death*. The man – who may or may not have been the man who steals Piero’s car, driving it past him at breakneck speed into the river where he drowns (an event withheld from us) – is Piero’s phantasmic non-self arising in the death-time of the film, whose false death (false insofar as it is nothing more than an apparition appearing on a screen) precedes his “true” death – mortal death as death that cannot be shown except in its on-screen immortality; a death which will have happened at some other time, never onscreen. Arriving at the scene the next day, Piero is confronted with the dead man’s hand protruding out of the car as it is winched out of the water, as if bearing witness to his own death, the dead hand reaching out to him as a reminder of death-that-awaits, which Piero, as the one for whom this death is fated, fails to recognize: *his* death in its Barthesian ciné-photographic irreality, where “he is dead and he is going to die.”

Visual linkage reaches across the scenes to stitch the dyad car-driver couple back together according to the paraconsistency of its linkages, guided by the disjunctive synthesis of diverse shots afforded by the Kuleshov Effect and which Balázs calls “interpolated images” (68), insertions into the image flow creating a false sequence of events that hang together in a *chiasm* – a recursive “crossing-over” – which, in the obscurity of its doubled-over doublings, raises questions. Where did the drunken man come from? Who stole Piero’s car? Why was it driven into the river? These linkages are crossed by other linkages, for instance, as Piero arrives at his destination, the apartment block where Vittoria resides, he is met by another woman bearing a striking resemblance to his would-be lover leaving the building from its ground-floor entrance; as their paths cross she fails to acknowledge him as he would have expected in a thwarted act of misrecognition. As a consequence, he becomes confused as if he had come to the wrong address. At this point, we switch to a shot from Vittoria’s first floor apartment, where she looks down to where Piero is standing in a state of confusion as the other woman enters her car and drives off. Vittoria sees Piero but he cannot see her as she hides behind curtains, as if playing a game of peekaboo. At this point the drunken man makes his impossible entrance from behind the tree. Walking unsteadily past Piero still in a state of confusion, he looks up to see Vittoria looking down at him with Piero having walked offscreen; she greets him and he greets her in a mock exchange in which he momentarily becomes Piero’s double, standing in for the real Piero who, having since recovered from his confusion, walks back into the scene to replace the imposter he would otherwise be – the soon-to-be dead Piero (his dyadic other) wandering offscreen.

Here, we have found ourselves in an *acinematic moment* filled with quantized negative potential in which a figure of death leaps out of the *real* ground of the film; living Piero is doubled with dead Piero he *is* and *is not* becoming. The moment switches between life and death in local/non-local interaction echoing quantum correlations triggered by a thwarted act of misrecognition as a missed encounter. While the living Piero remains onscreen to make love to Vittoria, the dead Piero drives off at breakneck speed into the distance and into the river where he drowns as a doubly false “death of death,” in which, to invoke Blanchot’s idea of death in the last instant, “I do not die [but] *they*

die” (155). The film is affirming itself otherwise in the *revealed truth* that I in my offscreen reality do not die but they – the non-I figure-images bound to nothing but screened appearances – die; a revelation of the paradoxical *life death* reality of screen phantasms as quasi-immortal beings, accompanied by insight into the negativity by means of which filmic anti-substance appears and disappears in a dynamic *figure-matrix* of quantized spacetime becoming, which Stiegler calls an “idiotext” (“Technics, 4” 189). [20] In the Janus-faced play of *life death* switching enacted in this scene, we come face-to-face with the negativity of quantum doubling manifesting in the film’s phase-changing actions: the expected union of the two would-be lovers is thwarted in the quantized moment when the doubling of the woman crosses over the doubling of the man: a Lacanian *point de capiton* or “quilting point” (*Seminar III* 268) stitching their trajectories into a Death Event echoing through the memory structure of the film, driven by an out-of-sync “immanent rhythmic force” (Lyotard, *Discourse* 245).

[20] For the quasi-immortal status of onscreen figures, see Stiegler’s analysis of the film actor Anita Eckberg’s screen image in Fellini’s *Intervista* and *La Dolce Vita* (IT3, 22). The figure-matrix, proposed by Lyotard in *Discourse/Figure* (244-45), is a dynamic interweaving of figural relations metastabilized through the body of a perceiver as a dance possessed of “immanent rhythmic force.”

The Death Event echoes through other scenes, for instance in two lengthy stock exchange scenes in which we see share traders including Piero – Vittoria’s future lover – engrossed in a share market run in full swing. The frenzied activity of buying and selling in the trading pit turns into a black hole sucking energy out of the traders’ “inner willfulness” expressed outwardly in urgent bidding actions to create monetary value seemingly out of thin air; where the lure of gain is lost in the exhaustion of collective will and where desire vanishes in despair for some in having lost to others in a cycle of hyper-capitalistic greed. In Stiegler’s terms, these scenes of all-too-human, anthropic excess are juxtaposed with their counter-action as neganthropic malaise in Vittoria’s romantic liaison with Piero, where we find dyad superposition at work in a matrix of negativized gestures: his fast-moving direct style in which he seeks to gain life in love for her is counteracted by her slow-moving indirect style in which she refuses life in her love for him as an enveloping threat. To put this another way, his desire to be loved by her is thwarted by the confusion of her desire for his love and her counter-desire to avoid being loved by him *too much* – a self-cancelling negativity incessantly repeating itself in the “black hole” of desire as an insatiable death drive. The result is a stillborn romance forever failing to consummate in the death-time of the film, spreading generalized meaninglessness in self-neutralizing values, where, as Vittoria muses, “a piece of cloth, a needle, a thread, or a book . . . or a man is the same thing,” an oblique reference to the filmmaking process of fabricating images as false appearances of an elusive truth that is nevertheless worth pursuing: the Idea of film’s sovereignty in its right-to-be as an event that need not have happened. In the contingency of needing not to have happened, the film becomes a cinematic gift in which meaninglessness remains as vital ingredient animating memory-life unfolding on the screen.

Conclusion

In this article I have invoked the German Idealist moment to demonstrate the problem of perception in film experience as mechanical creativity – a certain capacity for free play within mnemotechnical systems which, in terms

of Stiegler's ciné-mnemotechnical thinking, is set to work in the memory structure of films as technophanic objects – perceptually mediated technical objects vested with auto-reflexive vitality: a capacity for generating cinematic life as negative capability. Fichtean *real* thinking has been employed in my intervention as a reflex action for thinking-seeing both ways at once in the gap between *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis* – a retraction or movement of release in which auto-reflexivity leaps into an anterior reality that has and has not happened conceived as *quantum futurity*. An absolute limit arises in my thinking when I insert myself into this reality such that all the ways the film-object could be regress to show this way as *right* (i.e. from my point of view). Employing Fichte's strategy of *real* thinking, the question of right in film can be addressed by exposing the simulated falseness of the phantasmic appearance of figures to its truth conditions as a state of being *real* in all of its forgotten possibilities in a quantum event triggered by observing it from the switched position of *real* thinking. When uncovered in *real* thinking, the acinematic moment releases forgotten otherness held fast in the regressed negativity of the film as *symptom* of a quantum state caught on the cusp of collapse. In this moment, free play between the inner memory of the film (*anamnesis*) and its technical externalization (*hypomnesis*) is set to work to keep the film on track to avoid collapsing into the void of non-being (nothingness): the abyssal *real* forever lying in wait as *death's lair* (death-that-awaits) in the entropic slide of order into disorder. In this moment, the film is also releasing me insofar as I can see other ways the film could be. It follows that the right way must also be the wrong way in the bifurcating logic of *life death*. It all depends on how I *decide* to see it in a particular view – a view which remains sovereign *to itself* in my knowing that it can also be refused, where refusal persists in the Idea of film calling for new views and new ways of seeing films. [21]

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Title Acronyms

Kant

CPR *Critique of Pure Reason*

Fichte

EPW *Early Philosophical Writings*

F *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*

FNR *Foundations of Natural Right*

FTP *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy*

SE *The System of Ethics*

SK *Science of Knowledge* (1794 *Wissenschaftslehre*)

SKN *Science of Knowing* (1804 *Wissenschaftslehre*)

Stiegler

TN *The Neganthropocene*

TT3 *Technics and Time, 3*