Lost Films as Philosophical Fiction

In this text written for the 2016 UNdocumenta film festival in Gwangju, Anne-Françoise Schmid investigates the relation between film and philosophy, and presents a series of mini film-scripts to explore the method of 'without'. Accompanied by images from Benoît Maire's series <u>Cloud Painting</u>

It is true that nothing costs God anything, even less than it costs a philosopher to build his imaginary worlds out of hypotheses....

Leibniz, *Fragments et Opuscules* extracted from the manuscripts of the Royal Library of Hanover by Louis Couturat (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1903), V, 32

That which fails to arrive will be eternally lacking. A race, an art, a work, a philosophy that is lacking, is eternally lacking. A metaphysics of race and of man, of nature, and of the work which is never achieved, which bears no fruit, which is lacking, fails eternally.

Charles Péguy, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, February 3, 1907

A philosophy that fails to arrive fails man eternally. But since man has no need of any philosophy, either one that arrives or one that does not, man does not lack a philosophy that fails to arrive.

François Laruelle, variation 1.1, *La Décision philosophique* 3 (1987), 122

Introduction: Shadow and Light

Can films be lost in a tradition for which they do not exist? Philosophy produces text, but in doing so it always supposes a light, whether a 'natural light' (Descartes) or a lightning-flash in the dark sky (Deleuze). There is always light in philosophy, from the sun to its specular mirror in the soul of the philosopher, or, as in Rembrandt, just the light of the hearth to enlighten it, while leaving it in the shadow of solitary reflection, as in that beautiful verse of the Aeneid which speaks of lovers rather than of philosophers:

Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram ('Obscured they walked, through the darkness in the desolate night.')[1]

A Philosophy With Neither Colours Nor Fictions

White and Black

Philosophy writes itself in contrasts of shadow and light. Is that enough for it to be able to propose fictions of lost films? Can shadow and light alone be the making of a film, at least a black and white film, lost in the ultimate fate of a philosophical text?

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1. Virgil, *Aeneid*, book VI.

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Philosophy isn't sure whether to take shadow and light as metaphor or as reality. It lives off this ambiguity, never entirely accepting that the light is entirely external to it. Philosophy and film perhaps have something in common: both of them want to report on something that is not themselves, something which gives onto reality; but that doesn't mean that their relation to light is the same. Film wants to be a fiction: even when it tells of a reality, it fabricates its continuities and its cuts, and creates its own light. Film permits more metonymy perhaps; it plays out in the displacements of light.

Life and Death By Fiction

Philosophy has no beginning except perhaps for the obscurity of its epoch, which authorizes philosophy to speak up and enlighten it. Almost all philosophy complains of the disaster of its own times. Inversely, although the end of philosophy is often announced, it never arrives at its end: its sun, the sun of Plato and of all those who followed him, is a given point, immobile and perfect, which is immovable for it. It cannot understand itself as a fiction: this sun enlightens things for it, things as they really are, or so it hopes; it follows at once the order of nature and the order of reasons, being both internal and external to the philosopher.

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To make a film, one must be able to move the light source, something the philosopher is incapable of doing. By virtue of its construction, the film is entitled to a beginning and an end, it can be made to say 'cut!', to roll the credits, whereas the philosopher always harbours a certain scepticism with regard to the beginning and end, a scepticism which, in his tradition, is his salvation; because philosophy is a mixture impossible to separate, a mixture between tradition and invention, between life and death, and no one can interrupt it at some precise and arbitrary moment or write the complete credits for it. Descartes tried to begin again, but his commentators continually revealed his relations to the ideas he had sought to break from. Paradoxically, the destiny of the philosopher is to build circles back to his past and to seek to cut through them. This is his way of beginning, over and over again. But he remains trapped in these circles, because he must preserve both 'his' philosophy and philosophies in their diversity—a hypothesis that the filmmaker, no doubt, has no need of, although no doubt he sometimes uses it, but only as a stylistic figure, not as a necessity. And if he does so, perhaps it leads him to the idea of a lost film.

Thus philosophy can only make partial and local fictions: imagine a space with such and such properties, are numbers real or fictional, and so on…. But it cannot understand *itself* as fiction. Leibniz's text in the epigraph above is an exception in the era of the classics—the notion of hypothesis that he invokes here was judged to have no place except in mathematics, since philosophy advanced on the basis of unsurpassable principles that no hypothesis could relativize.

So we can see that producing a philosophical fiction is a project that touches the heart of philosophy, as if it were denying itself in its essence as philosophy. To construct a philosophy as a film is an illusion: it

ultimately produces local, partial images that hesitate between reflection and metaphor, something that may perhaps inspire film. But as for film itself, it knows very well that it is facture and fiction.

The Light and the Point of Exteriority

So what is the true difference between film and philosophy? Film knows that it requires a black point distinct from it—night, darkroom—in order to come about. Philosophy doesn't know this, and makes this darkness an element internal to it. It does not bring a point of exteriority into play.

Making a philosophical fiction supposes that one fabricates this point of exteriority which makes of philosophy a philosophy without mastery over others—for if there is a point of exteriority, then all philosophies will have the same value for man. Which explains Laruelle's variation on Péguy: man is not in philosophy, any more than he is in film; he is the presupposed point of exteriority that endows the film with value when he is in the darkness, and endows philosophy with value when he is in the troubled light of the hearth. To make a philosophy that accepts its non-mastery of light, one must give it a point of exteriority, make it a philosophy without shadows and without light. It must accept that light traverses it without its being either the object or the center of that light, for the given point, the given sun, are no longer there solely for it (as it once dreamt) but

for man, for poetry, for film, and ultimately for itself if it desires its becoming-fiction. This is philosophy 'without' its usual techniques of the a priori, empirical, and transcendental, but instead with fiction as a device which gives us to see light and colours differently, by multiplying them and modifying their intensities with the use of concepts.

This 'without' is exactly what is in question here. Films and philosophies lose their heroes, who quit the scene and return in the obscurity of the ordinary

To make a film that inscribes itself within philosophical fiction and transforms into philosophical fiction, one must also invent a film without its usual industries and techniques. We have heard much talk of films 'without' heroes, 'without' wise men, 'without' philosophers, 'without' good and evil. But here it is a question of making a film-without-film, or a non-film. We need lost films in order for the philosopher and the filmmaker to become conscious of this. For it affects both of them—it deprives them of their traditional means.

This 'without' is exactly what is in question here. Films and philosophies lose their heroes, who quit the scene and return in the obscurity of the ordinary.

The Performativity of 'Without'

We speak of the 'without', then, which may seem to be nothing, neither thing nor human. And indeed it is neither a thing nor a human that light can render sensible. It is just a method, a method that is not one of privation (as the term 'without' might suggest) but a method of extension, and of the invention and production of the unknown.

This method has a history. It appeared independently in analytic philosophy of mathematics, in non-philosophy or non-standard philosophy, and in a method for the creation of technological objects. It is as if the film-without-film, the lost film, the non-film, found its place almost naturally in multiple contexts, one of the common features of which is that they distance themselves from the relativism that makes human productions lose their taste, their savor, their texture. The film-without-film is not simply what

remains of a film that once was; it is there alongside the film, without destroying it, as a disposition of vision. It is thus the point of exteriority for the film.

In the same way, philosophy-without-philosophy does not destroy philosophy, but only the superiority of one philosophy over another, thus breaking with philosophy's principle of totalization: it is open, partial, it encounters others, combines with them. It knows that it fabricates hypotheses amidst other hypotheses, as Leibniz suggests, emphasizing the painstaking effort that falls to the philosopher in doing so.

How does the method work, then? It is a matter of hypothetically cancelling out one of the most essential properties of that which one studies. The performative effects of this method are unprecedented; and at the same time, it reveals points of exteriority.

Of Mathematics

No one 'sees' mathematics, so how can it be manifested? By cancelling out characteristics that are essential to it: a mathematics without proofs, without objects, without structures…this hypothetical privation makes it necessary to bring in unaccustomed modes of knowledge in order to give a richer account of mathematics.[2] It can be seen in all of its manifestations, even the least evident: pure mathematics, mathematics allied with this or that supposedly more experimental discipline, or with common life, dance, or music—remember how Leibniz understands music as an 'unconscious arithmetic'. In this way we can see mathematics in its most abstract structures as well as in ordinary life or the life of art, without any contradiction arising.

In this case the point of exteriority is ordinary life, a life without mathematics, but whose objects and ideas end up being invested by mathematics, in an intuition which is a 'delicate feeling of order' (Poincaré).

Of Philosophy

The tradition cannot conceive of philosophy as a fictional set-up—at least not without hypothetically depriving itself of its fundamental instrument, the transcendental, which provides it with a continuity between its most abstract ideas and its empirical realm. Let's cut these continuities, as we cut the rushes in a film. Let's admit that we have the transcendental, we have the empirical, and that they can be freely combined, without our worrying about the usual bonds between them; which at the same time will allow the construction of new, richer, more unexpected links between philosophy and other modes of creation: art, technics, science. Philo-fiction, photo-fiction, film-fiction can each extend one another. All that is needed is materials, light, and extensions.[3]

In this case the point of exteriority is the ordinary man, who is no longer a subject of philosophy or of photo-fiction, but is capable of making images drift far from him, and thus capable of creating series.

Of Technology

Following a method invented at the École des Mines in Paris, let's imagine designing a tire, a highly

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2. Some examples of the putting to work of 'fiction' in philosophy of mathematics: *Mathematics without Foundations, Science without Numbers* (Hartry Field, 1908), *Mathematics without Truth* (Field, 1990), 'Mathematics without Numbers' (Geoffrey Hellman, 1989), *Structuralism without Structures* (Hellman, 1996), *Truth and the Absence of Fact* (Field), *Mathematics With No Objects* (Burgess and Gideon), *Foundations without Foundationalism* (Shapiro), etc.…In French: Jean-Pierre Cléro, *Les Raisons de la fiction, les philosophes et les mathématiques* (2004), Armand Colin and Hamdi Mlika, *Quine et l'antiplatonisme* (2007).

3. F. Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard. Générique, quantique, philo-fiction* (Paris: Kimé, 2010).

technological object. Rather than choosing an existing model and adding a new, desirable property, let's analyze the idea of the tire and its most important characteristics. Hypothetically cancel out one of them—for example, take away the properties of rubber, which are usually included in the idea of the tire. Then we will have to bring in new, unexpected modes of knowledge in order to produce a tire that is more simple than this model + a property, but which answers to the desired characteristics.[4]

In this case, the point of exteriority is the impossible object—a tire without rubber—which, just by thinking it, gives rise to series of objects of the technology of our world.

The method of 'without' creates partial orders, fragments of series of images, of ideas, of concepts, of objects. These series have allowed me, in these scripts for lost films, or films-without-films, to create dérives from ideas, concepts, and images that are not usually brought together in this way: bits of philosophy, images, fragments of stories which give us to see both the disappearance of the philosopher, become ordinary man, and the disappearance of film, drowning or lost in the excess of light or darkness. Film died because philosophy provided its light, and it could no longer move it. The philosopher

disappeared because his whole work proved to be fiction, that of the ordinary man, of he who, precisely, was at the origin of the inchoate orders which threw into relief a point of exteriority which philosophy vainly thought it could produce for itself. Here we see how the method described above comes into the writing of these scripts: What happens to film if philosophy is without-philosophy, what happens to philosophy if film is without-film? This is the productive schema of the scripts. But that's not enough, we need some colour, this is a contingency of the story, but above all, as we shall see later, as in all wisdom, it needs a milieu.

The remainder of the text proposes some colour series, and then a place or a milieu that allows for film and philosophy to be combined in scripts.

From 'Without' to the Blood of the Pure Cut

Introduction of a Colour Into Philosophy

Here are two ways of introducing colour into philosophy: Kant's way, represented by Derrida, and Nietzsche's way, represented by Laruelle. As we know, in dreamy visions Kant's great critique of pure reasons became a 'cripure', a cut, black blood, and in doing so red was immediately brought to light.[5] Suppose that these two extracts were themselves mini-scripts for films-without-film.

> As soon as he has closed the tomb again and covered over the place of the dig, Kant puts forward the example of the tulip: "But a flower, for example a tulip, is held to be beautiful because in perceiving it, one encounters a finality which, judged as we judge it, does not relate to any end." The tulip is beautiful only on the edge of this cut without adherence. But in order for the cut to appear—and it can still do so only by its edging—the interrupted finality must show itself, both as finality and as interrupture—as edging. Finality alone is not beautiful, nor is the absence of goal, which we will here distinguish from the absence of the goal. It is finality-without-end which is said to be beautiful (said to be being here, as we have seen, the essential thing).

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4. Armand Hatchuel and Benoît Weil (eds.), *Les Nouveaux Régimes de la conception. Langages, Théories, Métiers* (Paris: Vuibert, 2008, republished Paris: Hermann, 2014).

5. See L. Guilloux, *Le sang noir*, 1935, where Guilloux's friend, the philosopher Georges Palante, a Kant enthusiast, is represented under the name Cripure.

So it is the without that counts for beauty; neither the finality nor the end, neither the lacking goal nor the lack of a goal but the edging in sans of the pure cut [la bordure en 'sans' de la coupure pure], the sans of the finality-sans-end. The tulip is exemplary of the sans of the pure cut on this

sans

which is not a lack, science has nothing to say the sans

of the pure cut emerged in the disused utensil, defunct (*defunctum*), deprived of its functioning, in the hole without a handle of the gadget. Interrupting a finalized functioning but leaving a trace of it, death always has an essential relation to this cut, the hiatus of this abyss where beauty takes us by surprise.[6]

The film heads towards its own death, it is only in the edging, without finality, disaffected, defunct. We have only the character of Kant to show us that it has taken place. But on the other hand, it leaves us the idea of what might be beautiful in a film. (See Script 2: *The Film that Knew Itself*).

This type of knowledge instigated by Derrida, and generalized by François Laruelle in a response to a collective work in which Derrida participated,[7] ends up with a quasi-mathematical abstraction of film:

The structure flux/cut, emission/closure being thus 'generalized', it will flow everywhere in Mimesis, it will drink and medicate, taste and vomit. Intoxication, elixir, and poisoning. Purge, cleansing, and discharge. The threat of a flow of shit whose evacuation is carefully controlled, cathartically controlled by Aristotle. Not only a scene of vomiting, but every 'Scene' sees itself invaded by a certain red thing. Or else it's Nietzsche, whose 'overthrowing', Heidegger tells us, ends up in a 'pouring out (Herausdrehung) of Platonism'. The versions of the eternal return will thus have been pourings-out and flows cut and resumed. Potion, vomit, or blood, they are all

flows equal in their inequality. And Kantian cuts? By what metamorphoses did 'the sans of the pure cut' become the blood of the impure cut, of a mimachinic cut that cuts and re-emits the flux of the Kantian pure analytic, which shuts off and re-opens, according to another schema, the flow of the Wittgensteinian analytic of language, throwing into disarray the physiological, anthropological, and chemical codes of one and the logical codes of the other? Rendering the flows unequal to the equality of their inequality?[8]

Here the film is poured out and lost; it will not find itself again except in a state of unequal equality. It becomes a freeze-frame of an at once equal and unequal flux, and the guarantor of a good philosophical physiology. (See Script 4: *The Bacterial Film and the Synthesis of its Disappearance*).

Interruption ('cut!') and flux ('rolling again!') bring into contemporary philosophy a colour, red, a new addition to the various whites and blacks of light and shadow. The repetition of the movement and its arresting brings about, via intensification in the wake of philosophy, something like a colour. The latter gives philosophy a value other than black and white; and the black of the cave, the glare of the light that is never entirely white, thus take on a new consistency.

Colour gives philosophy a value other than black and white; and the black of the cave, the glare of the light that is never entirely white, thus take on a new consistency

Generalization of Colours by Philosophical Fiction

What is a philosophy 'without' colour? It is a philosophy that must be prolonged or extended in such a way as to replace by other means white, black, and red. A philosophy, in the classical linearity of its text, sees its discourse as an invisible film of reality that allows the colours of the latter to be seen, without having any colour of its own. But once philosophy becomes less linear, once it interrogates itself about its own gestures and integrates them into its own

6. J. Derrida, 'The Sans of the Pure Cut', in *The Truth in Painting*, tr. G. Bennington and I. McLeod (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 88–89. [The text plays on the similarity of sans ('without') and sang ('blood') when pronounced in French—trans.]

7. S. Agacinski, J. Derrida, S. Kofman, P. Lacoue-Labarthe, J.-L. Nancy, B. Pautrat, *Mimesis Desarticulations* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1975).

8. François Laruelle, 'La scène du vomi ou comment ça se détraque dans la théorie', *Critique* 347 (April 1976), 342.

writing, as in the two texts above, then mélanges appear between the colours of reality and the 'without' colour of philosophy. In depriving itself of the film transparent to the real that is its discourse, philosophy prepares to make itself fiction, a fiction which is not a distancing from reality but a passage from one point of reality to another, during which all colours may flood into philosophical writing. But this freedom is not yet grasped in the theoretical texts of the philosophicals, but more so in the texts of artists such as Kandinsky, with colour as sonority, or Klee, with the colour of geometrical form, colour 'without' colour. It is this colour-without-colour which is that of philosophical fiction.

Texts by philosophers that explicitly have colours are rare—François Laruelle's so-called experimental texts in the journal *La Décision philosophique*, or, in *Philo-fiction, la revue des non-philosophies*,[9] the essay 'Quelque chose rouge dans la philosophie [Something Red in Philosophy]' which I wrote, but which goes no further than red, white, and black.[10]

In the mini-scripts of lost films, I have tried, through the usage of film and non-film, to introduce other colours into philosophy: in scripts 6 and 7, the first telling the story of the invention of colours by film,

the second binding these colours to the verticality of film and to the subject's indexation to the World and to the Universe. But when I read back all of the mini-scripts, I realized that they are first of all linked to black and to light. The generalization of colours is as yet inchoate, and we will doubtless be in for some surprises when they are introduced into theoretical philosophy. One of François Laruelle's poems, 'On the Black Universe in the Human Foundations of Colour',[11] lays some foundations for this.

Let's imagine vertical films, they will bring colours

Let's imagine vertical films, they will bring colours into philosophy; let's put some verticality into philosophy, it will bring metaphor into films

into philosophy; let's put some verticality into philosophy, it will bring metaphor into films. One might construct a sort of solidarity between fragments of films and fragments of philosophies, in order to construct colours. (See Script 7: *Collapse of the Verticality of the Film*. The Black Universe, as seen from the Cave, is found in Script 1: *How the Philosopher Lost His Film*).

From Colours to Space: On the Use of 'Without' as Under-Determination

The effect of the 'without' is that no philosophy can dominate any other; they are in a certain sense side by side, whatever their times and spaces may be. How to think this simultaneity, this contemporaneity of juxtaposition? It will be said that it is precisely the work of 'Philosophy as such' to operate constrain philosophies in this way—and once again, we are back in the circle. To write scripts, the 'without' and its colours are not enough; we need a generic space, where philosophies all have the same value. (See Script 7: *Revolt of the Film*).

The concept of generic space was first invented to understand the interdisciplinary regimes of science. The latter have become so intense that the direct relation of one discipline with another is no longer enough.

9. See those included in F. Laruelle, *From Decision to Heresy* (Falmouth and New York: Urbanomic/Sequence, 2011).

10. 'Quelque chose rouge dans la philosophie. Sur la fiction comme method', in *Philo-Fictions, La revue des non-philosophies* 2 (2009), 117–128.

11. *La Décision philosophique* 5 (1988), 107–112. See E. Thacker, D. C. Barber, N. Masciandaro, A. Galloway, *Dark Nights of the Universe* (New York: [NAME] Publications, 2012), an illustrated work based on this poem of Laruelle's.

The generic space is a mid-place, a milieu, which allows heterogeneous modes of knowledge to be assembled together, at least fragment by fragment

What is needed is a space that permits indirect relations between disciplines, where each proposition of any one of these disciplines can be decomposed in order to be brought together, combined, and superposed with others. From the point of view of non-philosophy, generic man is capable of both science and philosophy. The generic space is a mid-place, a milieu, which allows heterogeneous modes of knowledge to be assembled together, at least fragment by fragment, and allows us, by following the method of 'without'—for example, *without* such and such a fragment of science or art—to make them produce a thing, an 'X', which perhaps has characteristics one would not expect from philosophy or from an artwork. But to pass from the 'without' to the generic space, the former must be transformed into 'underdetermination'. To pass from the great classical disciplines—philosophy, art, film—to superpositions brought about by the fragmentation of the 'without', we need a new coherence wherein one of the disciplines no longer appears as having to be positively added to the others, but on the contrary as having to be subtracted, in order for that which is not immediately visible to appear. In doing so light is transformed, as in an albedo of film. (See Script 7: *Collapse of the Verticality of the Film*).

Let's take for example the celebrated fresco in the Sistine Chapel, Michaelangelo's fresco of the Last Judgement: in it we can see stases between hells, the human world, the heavens, and the movements that set them into relation. It is not at all a static painting like the Judaic characters who are represented all around the chapel. Let's try to understand this fresco otherwise than spontaneously, by underdetermining it. Through theology, we will see the grace in this movement; through philosophy, we will see, like the philosopher Félix Ravaisson, the serpentine line;[12] or again, through non-philosophy, we will see the serpentine deprived of its common philosophical

12. G. Careri, *La Torpeur des Ancêtres. Juifs et Chrétiens dans la Chapelle Sixtine* (Paris, Editions EHESS, 2013).

or theological interpretations, just fragments of style of the generic man in the subjects science, philosophy, art. The serpentine line becomes a device with which to see the fresco otherwise, decomposing movement, philosophy, theology, art theory.

The space is that which collects and processes these fragments and allows them to be recombined, by attributing them to art, to science, or to philosophy, depending on the chosen under-determination. Philosophy, Science, and Art are as if on the horizon, as a guarantee of compatibility—this is not a destruction of the major disciplines, but their drifting into a place which is no longer the milieu, that which one creates, but a sort of multi-dimensional space of freedom to which film and philosophy seek to index themselves. (See Script 3: *The Idea of the Film*).

In this space, the philosopher no longer writes 'in' a particular philosophy (I am Cartesian, Kantian, Sartrian, etc...) but writes with philosophies, through a free play that comes from all of them, in a fidelity that manifests them together. Philosophical writing changes profoundly, and can give rise to scripts, whether aesthetic, scientific, technological, or any other unknown thing that it may invent. The 'without' becomes 'with': this is the mutation of underdetermination as it is exercised: it becomes style, and in doing so also joins with man, animal, vegetable, in movement and music. (See Script 8: *Closing Credits*).

Conclusion: On an Obscure Cogito

To place fragments of philosophy into a story supposes a cogito which is no longer that of Descartes, that of clear ideas and natural light, but a far more secret cogito, in so far as it knows that there is at least one philosophy that it doesn't understand and which, escaping the story, melts into the ocean of ideas. (See Script 5: T*he Obscure Cogito of Film*, definitely my favourite, which brings together Malebranche, Poincaré, and Leibniz, in an imaginary chronology).

But this obscurity is not opposed to light; it is an open secret, which every man can see if he only allows himself to remain ordinary. Something that one can sometimes see at the cinema, an obscure crime on an open plain in full sunlight, as in Hitchcock's

There is no longer a philosophy of film, only lost films that make philosophy drift, a philosophy of which all that remains is an obscure cogito in the ocean of ideas

North By Northwest. The film then dies in a too-full light (Script 7: *Collapse of the Verticality of the Film*). Rather than a simple image, let's set up a device that allows us to see and consider both film and philosophy otherwise. There is no longer a philosophy of film, only lost films that make philosophy drift, a philosophy of which all that remains is an obscure cogito in the ocean of ideas.

The Mini-Scripts

1. How the Philosopher Lost His Film

The philosopher was in the cave; his film was there too, projected between light and shadow, and this film suggested a way out towards a freer space. He therefore thought he might be able to leave the cave, but did not understand that in doing so, he would be abandoning his film, and would lose it forever. Outside, everything was fragmented and incomprehensible; images flashed, photographs were overexposed. He was startled, and longed to return to the cave. But the film was no longer there. The philosopher found himself in a dark universe, disorientated and with no line of sight. Could he even feel the walls of the cave, which were nothing more than extinguished images? What could he do to retrieve human colours and keep himself surrounded by them? He didn't know. He couldn't even speak about it, he was alone and language was of no help. So what was the darkness telling him? Only the sparkle in his own eyes, the film proliferated, but was invisible to him. Could he invoke the gods, then? Zeus, the god of gods, said to him: I can only give you thunder—

He was nostalgic for the cave, and found it without even seeking it, in darkened rooms where films made by human hand were projected; but the image of the real was no longer there

it will give you light, but only for an instant, in an inverse vision. It is yours to take. The man, who was a philosopher, seized the light with a turn of his gaze, and, despite his conflicts with the gods, lived in the light, which he was able to adapt to the span of his life. But he was nostalgic for the cave, and found it without even seeking it, in darkened rooms where films made by human hand were projected; but the image of the real was no longer there. And this is how the philosopher found humans again, abandoned his philosopher's prerogatives, and accepted the common light.

'Immobility is an illusion, and you are fleeing behind images; you do not see the Ideas, nor even their daguerreotypes'

2. The Film That Knew Itself

There was once a film that thought it was conscious of itself, without knowing that this consciousness was nothing but the reflection of its images, a fleeting appearance—precisely that which moved within the image. The film thought it was continuous and impervious to time; it believed it was fully enlightened. 'Cut,' someone said. Cut what? the film asked itself. I am and I will remain as I am, I am film and neither Rome nor a king will be able to divide me up. I contain the whole light of the real; I give men something that makes sense of their lives—Who could give me such an order? The film did not yet understand that human beings had attempted to make films. He had heard about it, a rumor...films that could be watched—an absurdity—and which, what is more, could speak. No longer did they need a chorus, an orchestra. Just a dark room, no longer the sun of consciousness. It is at this moment that the film had a vision of its own consciousness, melting in the solar light. Its consciousness emerged from its disappearance, it was already too late. The film was an idol as it approached its own downfall. Human beings understood this, and tried to reproduce thousands and thousands of copies of the film; but the film escaped, and could no longer be grasped. This is how the film disappeared and was replaced by moving images produced by human beings.

(With thanks to Nietzsche and Deleuze.)

The film thought it was continuous and impervious to time; it believed it was fully enlightened. 'Cut,' someone said. Cut what? the film asked itself

3. The Idea of the Film

'It's moving,' grumbled the philosopher, 'I thought Ideas were stable and exempt from variation and movement.' 'You're right,' replied the film, 'I'm not moving myself, I'm just letting the images get away.' 'But an image of an Idea should never move,' answered the philosopher, surprised. 'Immobility is an illusion, and you are fleeing behind images; you do not see the Ideas, nor even their daguerreotypes. Ah, courage, look at me, you need only turn and raise your head as you flee.' This is what the film said, not having realized that Ideas had disappeared, and remained neither in the Sky nor in the World. So the film was nothing but a probable subject, an 'X' that no longer knew what to index itself to. Where to turn? To the Earth? But the light there is always changing. To the world? The dark rooms are in ruin there. To the universe? The light is so strong there that the film's images were no longer visible. The film said: 'What to do with images? They are nothing but pale imitations of film, extinguished and lightless.' The Idea, however, awoke, and it was a movement. The philosopher was defeated; there were ideas that could generate other ideas. From that day on, full of light, the philosopher called this passage from one film to another the Idea of the film. The film was this passage; it could not be an Idea. The film too was defeated, and sought some kind of tacit, if not visual, agreement with the philosopher. And that was the end; the philosopher became a man again, and the film became his future, a future with neither concept nor idea, just the aesthetic of his life.

(With thanks to Laruelle.)

4. The Bacterial Film and the Synthesis of its Disappearance

Module! Module! The synthesis needed to destroy the bacterial film. Let's write the bacteria's script, then; let's be masters of the scenario, just like in the movies. Cut, cut! Let's cure the disease, let's master the microbes! But the module was not alive, it needed

film! But what film? Another film, without a prosthetic support. And the synthesis? It became biology, but it was mistaken. The synthesis alternated between being technical and automatic, and the film no longer had anything resembling the aesthetic of a scenario. What to do? Call upon every scientist, mathematician, computer scientist, and specialist in materials. 'So where is precision to be found,' they asked themselves, 'in amongst all of these disciplines?' The film and the scenario escaped. Secretly, the module was jealous, and made itself into an aesthetic. But it did not know that by becoming mute in this way, it would make the destruction of the film impossible, and allow it to carry on indefinitely. This is how the module became a synthesis of scenarios, and the film—a human creation—aspiring to the unity of body and soul, collapsed, so that the bacteria resisted and formed a new pathogenic film. The film was angry at itself for not having been able to get along with the micro-worlds. Nothing was left but an immense image, which knew nothing of the modules' problems, and wrongly believed that it could be a remedy for human beings.

(With thanks to the biologists.)

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5. The Obscure Cogito of Film

The film's whole consciousness passed by way of images…. But intuition, that most delicate feeling of order, made images drift and go astray. The projector tried to set the film itself in motion, so that all the images would be accelerated in their drifting. They went so fast that they could no longer be seen. And this is why, in the ordinary, the minimal form of order, one finds films without images, without intention, without orientation. But how can they be recognized, then? They must have other effects than the image, like music, scent, or touch. The image will definitively be a thing of the past, something that belongs to each person's memories. A film will be made up of diverse little perceptions that only the combination of consciousness and the unconscious will be able to reconstruct, in a chaotic way. There are now only fragments of films. So how do we know they are films, rather than fragments of the soul? From knowledge comes taste and flavor, from intuition, an obscure cogito—a source of partial light, a source of imageless blots that could be projected onto the infinite surface of the ocean of thought. Upon which the film would blend with the endless multitude of the non-perception of the ocean's waves; it would no longer be distinguishable from the superficial and mobile perspectives of the ocean. 'Where is the film?' ask the nostalgic ones. 'You must ask Poseidon, Dionysus left a long time ago,' the Muse would answer. 'There is no more inebriation, only sea-sickness.' The film drowned itself. Perhaps something of it will remain in thought.

(With thanks to Malebranche, Leibniz, and Poincaré.)

6. Revolt of the Film

'Humans are so dumb': in their metaphysics of morals, they reduce the essence of film to the image; they go to darkened rooms thinking they will better glean light's effects there! They are blind! My truth is other than the image; it is just a thought in motion, but a thought that seeks neither terror nor sufficiency. By concentrating on images, humans seek to gain mastery and to start the war again! While my essence of film is to turn them away from war. How? By siding with a non-thought, a thought that does not seek to dominate others but instead to stand side-by-side with them, allowing for a multiplicity of films and thoughts? But humans like to fight; they have ceaselessly fought, even while speaking of perpetual peace. How will I survive in this human atmosphere? The film had an idea: it invited colours, and each human could choose their colour and find rest in it. The film was very proud of itself, but it was soon to be disappointed. For now humans were fighting for their colours! How could they be pacified? The film brought in music, which aligned fragments of film with human emotions. But the film had understood that its task was an endless one: it would never find the peace it dreamt of, and whatever it produced would be no more than a proclamation of the film's future death. Waiting for

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the end, the film had a last spark of intuition: that perhaps the constraints of darkened rooms might allow for a local peace by letting war express itself as an image.

(With thanks to Kant and Laruelle.)

7. Collapse of the Verticality of the Film

A film wanted to be produced and projected so that everything in it appeared to be vertical. It wanted to be like grace itself, a serpentine line. So it connected the Sky to the World, the world to the Earth, and finally, the Earth to a darker lived experience, that which unites all living beings in the universe: the lived-without-life. The film harmonized gods with the living, be they in the air, on earth, or in the depths of the deepest wells. In these wells the film found darkness; on earth, green; in the air, blue; in the universe, white, which can turn into black without passing through any of the other colours. The film made itself into a

ladder; it thought it could reflect the totality of the world and of things. It climbed so high that it encountered the moon, and became as pale as the moon's albedo. Then it felt sick, and wanted a real colour: a real black, a real white, instead of having to make do with a feeble redness. The film had not yet realized that it would have to be content with human colours alone. The film thought it would be cured by climbing yet higher, to the most high, as metaphors enticed by the gods desire to. It climbed so high that it met

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with the sun and disappeared into the explosions of whiteness. Later, much later, traces of the film were found in the cave of the lived-without-life, which was at last lit up by a few sparks.

(With thanks to Levinas.)

8. Closing Credits

A film knew that it had to address every nuance, every narrative fragment, every colour, every music, so that they might find an echo in every human. And the film made itself into an echo; it was no longer the sound itself, the image itself. It became generic, an opportunity for encounters with sounds and legends that were new among human beings. Animals could also understand this film and benefit from it. They ran swiftly to follow the image, but they also often remained immobile, for love of the music. The film called for speed, while the music compelled one to stop, to mix intention with intuition, efficiency with Socrates's demon. And this contradiction was too great. One day, the film had the idea of bringing together humans and animals to create a space without contradiction. Some of them were empathetic and charismatic and became actors. But the generic remained an obstacle to the manifestation of their art; they felt constrained and reduced to an echo; with every gesture their bodies split asunder, into elements they could no longer recognize. It is then that they asked that the credits be concentrated at the beginning of the film. The space of the film itself became generic, but in a sense freer and richer, because the echo of the film found that it was once again human, animal, and vegetable ecology, according to the Earth's algebra, HAV.

(With thanks to Laruelle and to the founders of generic epistemology.)